

UEFA



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ON TOP OF THE GAME

Referees gear up for the
second half of the season

MEET THE PRESIDENT

Aleksander Čeferin talks
to UEFA Direct

THE TECHNICIAN

Silvia Neid looks back on her
golden coaching career

THE ROAD TO CARDIFF

The UEFA Women's
Champions League heats up





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ADAPTING AND STAYING IN TUNE WITH THE TIMES

Over the years, UEFA has been proud of its ability to keep pace with the ever evolving European football landscape. The constant expansion of the game owing to financial, commercial, legal and political developments has seen our organisation transform itself from a purely administrative body into a modern, versatile sporting and business enterprise committed to staying in tune with the times.

Certainly, time waits for no one in football and, once again, UEFA is now recognising the need to adapt and re-evaluate its structures and strategies, to become even more far-sighted in its outlook. The new era which began last autumn with Aleksander Čeferin's election as UEFA president has been the catalyst for invigorating ideas, plans and measures that are now being implemented to give the body an enhanced dynamic and contemporary feel. Key visions in the president's election manifesto are coming to fruition.

In line with UEFA's mission to safeguard football and its essential values, the creation of a 'protection of the game' section within our administration will lead to greater priority being given to security issues, club licensing and the crucial campaigns against match-fixing and doping.

The introduction of a new and separate women's football unit will lend fresh impetus to the development of this flourishing sector, and an effective corporate governance and compliance framework is being put in place with the establishment of a specialist team. This means that, together with tried and trusted areas of activity that have already proved their worth, UEFA is laying the foundations to become increasingly proactive in fulfilling its role of guiding and nurturing European football.

As the evolution of UEFA continues, our wish is for our organisation to be a model of openness, transparency and innovation, with football's overall well-being at the heart of its every act. We will never stand still, as we work with the aim of serving the beautiful game that we all cherish.



Theodore Theodoridis
UEFA General Secretary



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“I WANT TO BRING THE FOOTBALL COMMUNITY TOGETHER”

The new UEFA president **Aleksander Čeferin** looks back at his favourite football memories and sets out his blueprint for the future.

What is your first football memory?

I remember watching the 1978 World Cup final on TV. I was ten years old and have great memories of that game between Argentina and the Netherlands. I remember the full stadium, all the little pieces of paper that the supporters threw onto the pitch – and I remember Mario Kempes. What a player!

Did you follow football when you were younger and if so, which team in particular?

Yes, definitely. All the time. I especially followed Hajduk Split, who were one of the best teams in the former Yugoslavia in those days.

What do you feel when you enter a stadium?

Going to a stadium is always a magical experience for me. You can really feel the electricity and excitement in the air when you are there. The sights and sounds are really special.

What was the first game you ever attended?

I will never forget it. It was a World Cup qualifier between Yugoslavia and Denmark in Ljubljana in 1980. That Yugoslavian team was great and I really liked Safet Sušić and Zlatko Vujović; they were amazing players. It was funny because the stadium was completely overcrowded – they had sold too many tickets – so I couldn't really see the pitch most of the time ... there were too many grown-ups in front of me. But it was an unforgettable experience!

Who is your favourite player and why?

I would have to say that my favourite player of all time is the Brazilian Ronaldo. What a phenomenon ... his technique, his physique, his natural raw talent. What an amazing player to watch. He was simply the best.

What is the most beautiful goal you have ever seen?

My two favourite goals are the incredible volley Marco van Basten scored against the USSR in the final of EURO 1988 and the amazing goal Zinédine Zidane scored in the final of the 2002 UEFA Champions League. Those are two really exquisite goals.

What has been your most memorable moment in football, as a fan or as president of the Slovenian FA?

It has to be when Slovenia qualified for the 2010 World Cup. We beat Russia at home 1-0 and were guaranteed a place in the tournament in South Africa. Zlatko Dedić scored the winning goal in that play-off. It was a great day.

Did you or do you play football? And if so, in what position?

I have always played football, ever since I was a kid. When I was in 11-a-side teams, I normally played as a central midfielder. Now I mostly play futsal with friends.





How did you become active in the Slovenian FA?

Well it's an interesting story. In 2011 the then president of the Slovenian FA stepped down and I was approached to take over. I was told the FA really wanted someone who could come in and put some order into the organisation. They managed to persuade me to do it and the rest, as they say, is history.

A few years later you were elected UEFA president in Athens. How did that feel?

To be honest, the day of the Congress was a surreal experience for me. I had been so busy the previous weeks, travelling to meet so many people around Europe, that when I won the election, it didn't sink in right away. It took a while for me to realise what I had achieved and it was only on my first day at the office in Nyon that I thought ... "Wow. This really happened."

"I have always played football, ever since I was a kid. When I was in 11-a-side teams, I normally played as a central midfielder. Now I mostly play futsal with friends."



Getty Images



UEFA



UEFA

"My favourite player of all time is the Brazilian Ronaldo. What a phenomenon ... his technique, his physique, his natural raw talent. What an amazing player to watch. He was simply the best."

Tell us about your first days as UEFA president, your first trips. How did you feel?

I felt great when I took office. Right after I was elected, I spent a lot of time meeting with many presidents and general secretaries of national associations, but also with many other stakeholders such as directors of clubs, sponsors and so on, because we need to be united and we need to be aligned in order to achieve our common goals and overcome all the challenges. I would also like to say that, regarding the people who work at UEFA, I have been really pleased to see that so many of the administrators and staff are really enthusiastic about working to promote and protect our beautiful game. This makes me optimistic that we can do great and positive things in the future.

How can your experience at the head of the Slovenian FA help you at UEFA?

My role as president of the Slovenian Football Association gave me valuable knowledge and insights into how middle-sized and small national associations work. This was very important on the campaign trail and it is very important now as well, as I look across Europe and at all the different profiles of our national associations. I feel I understand them.

What are your priorities as UEFA's seventh president?

I want to bring the football community together through dialogue, inclusion, solidarity and gender equality.

We must protect the game overall. I am talking about working on anti-doping, club licensing, financial fair play, safety and security, integrity and discrimination, while at the same time implementing good governance based on transparency and efficiency.

Finally, I want to grow the sport by increasing participation in the long term through sustainable and socially responsible initiatives.

What about women's football, what ideas would you like to bring in to help develop it?

I am committed to developing women's football and that is why I have introduced a women's football unit at UEFA. I feel there is huge potential for us to develop and improve this side of the game. I am also looking at ways we can improve the UEFA Women's Champions League to get it even more attention than it draws today.

How important is grassroots football?

Grassroots is crucial to the well-being of football and I want to implement the best grassroots programme in history.

In close cooperation with all the member associations, we will build a short-term, medium-term and long-term strategy to ensure that football remains the most popular sport in Europe for generations to come. And this can only be achieved by implementing a global grassroots programme to increase participation and retention.

The national associations are the cornerstone of football development. How will you work with all 55 UEFA member associations?

I will involve all 55 national associations and their active presidents in decision-making processes through a number of measures, including giving even more importance to the Top Executive Programme and UEFA committees. I think that it is only possible to achieve our common goals through open dialogue, by examining the interests of different stakeholders, analysing the broader environment and looking for the opportunities and strengths shared by our national associations. Their input is key for UEFA.

How important are the fans for the health of football?

Without fans, there is no football. Fans are at the heart of the game and we need their passion and excitement to keep the game alive. They are incredibly important for the health of football and I am very happy that so many millions of fans love our competitions.

You were not a professional player. Is it important that former players are involved in football affairs?



“Without fans, there is no football. Fans are at the heart of the game and we need their passion and excitement to keep the game alive.”

Yes, I feel it is important to bring the knowledge of former footballers into the administration of the game. They can offer a new perspective and I value that.

What do you think of UEFA's club licensing and financial fair play action?

Financial fair play is working and European football losses have decreased by more than 80% since it was introduced. What is important is that the financial fair play

requirements are not only applied to clubs which want to participate in UEFA competitions; they should also gradually be introduced at domestic level to ensure that clubs live within their means and are managed in a sustainable way, regardless of what competition they are in.

Finally, you once mentioned introducing term limits for Executive Committee members and UEFA presidents. Why?

I believe there should be term limits for the UEFA president and the members of the Executive Committee. There needs to be fresh blood after a while so that people come in with new ideas to foster the development of the game. 🌐

REFORMS ON THE CONGRESS TABLE

A series of good governance reform proposals were endorsed by the Executive Committee at its first meeting of the year in Nyon on 9 February, and will now be presented to the 41st Ordinary UEFA Congress in Helsinki on 5 April for adoption by UEFA's 55 member associations.



The proposed reforms require a vote in Helsinki because they would necessitate various amendments to the UEFA Statutes. They include the introduction of term limits for the UEFA president and UEFA Executive Committee members. The limit being proposed is a maximum of three four-year terms. In addition, candidates for election or re-election to the Executive Committee would have to hold an active office – that of president, vice-president, general secretary or CEO – within their respective national association.

Two full Executive Committee member seats would be granted to representatives of the European Club Association (ECA), while the three-member UEFA Governance and Compliance Committee would be reinforced by the addition of two independent members.

Another proposal entails the inclusion of a specific article in the UEFA Statutes ensuring that venues for all UEFA competitions are selected in a fully

objective manner through a transparent bidding process. An article would be also added to lay down promoting ethical standards and good governance as a statutory objective of UEFA. Finally, the Congress will be invited to adopt a proposal allowing national association experts to chair UEFA committees.

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, welcomed the Executive Committee's support for reforms which, he said, were "essential for the strengthening of UEFA, and which formed a key pillar of my presidential manifesto. I am convinced that our member associations will also endorse these good governance proposals to create a stronger and more transparent governing body for the good of European football."

Executive Committee candidates

Following the Executive Committee meeting, it was announced that 13 candidates would be standing for the eight Executive Committee seats up for election

at the Helsinki Congress. The seats are for four-year terms from 2017 to 2021.

The 13 candidates are: Zbigniew Boniek (Poland), Kairat Boranbayev (Kazakhstan), John Delaney (Republic of Ireland), Armand Duka (Albania), David Gill (England, standing for re-election), Reinhard Grindel (Germany), Marios N. Lefkaritis (Cyprus, standing for re-election), Elkhan Mammadov (Azerbaijan), Karl-Erik Nilsson (Sweden), Kieran O'Connor (Wales), Michele Uva (Italy), Michael van Praag (Netherlands, standing for re-election) and Servet Yardımcı (Turkey).

European Parliament backs UEFA policies

On 2 February, UEFA responded positively to the European Parliament resolution on an integrated approach to sport policy: good governance, accessibility and integrity, describing it as "a significant step in the right direction for the healthy development of sport in Europe."

The Takkula Report, named after its rapporteur, Finnish MEP Hannu Takkula, endorses UEFA's model of governance, as well as many core values and initiatives, along with the modernising reforms proposed by the UEFA president. The resolution firmly backs the ban on trading the so-called 'economic rights' of players, reiterates support for financial fair play, and emphasises the need for a zero-tolerance policy to protect the integrity of sport. The resolution also endorses the European sports model and its main features such as financial solidarity through the selling of media rights on an exclusive territorial basis.

"With the increased support of the European Parliament," said the UEFA president, "we will intensify our efforts to promote good governance at all levels and ensure a positive future for football." 

TRANSFER OF SKILLS FROM FUTSAL TO FOOTBALL IN YOUTH PLAYERS

In order to give readers a taste of the work supported by the UEFA Research Grant Programme, UEFA Direct has been showcasing research projects funded by the 2015/16 programme. This month, Luca Oppici presents details of his study, which compared passing performance in football and futsal.

Elite football coaches and players, including Arsène Wenger, Lionel Messi, Cristiano Ronaldo and Andrés Iniesta, have stated that practising futsal at a young age fast-tracks the development of football-related skills. Indeed, the high-intensity nature of futsal, which is played on a hard surface with a ball that has less bounce than a regular football, might promote the acquisition of finer technical skills and quicker decision-making skills, which are then transferable to football.

However, there is a lack of evidence supporting this. The objectives of the study, therefore, were to compare passing performance in football and futsal, and then to investigate the transfer of passing skills from futsal to football. In simple

terms: are the game's demands and the passing performance similar in football and futsal? In addition, is the performance of futsal players superior to that of football players when playing football?

A total of 48 elite male youth players (24 football players and 24 futsal players, aged 13 to 15 years old) played six-a-side football and futsal games, lasting five minutes each, on scaled-down pitches. Decision-making and technical skills associated with passing performance were evaluated. Furthermore, the players wore special goggles that assessed where they were looking when passing the ball, to examine the processes underpinning their decisions. Game and performance-related variables were analysed and compared between the groups.

Results of the investigation

The main statistically significant findings can be summarised as follows:

1. Football-futsal comparison: the technical game demands were higher in futsal than football, as more passes a minute were performed, under higher opponent pressure and with less time for the execution. As a result, futsal players were quicker in executing passes, focusing their attention more on making decisions than controlling the ball compared with football players.
2. Transfer of skills from futsal to football: in the football games, futsal players performed at higher technical intensity (23% more passes a minute), executing passes that were quicker (by half a second) and more accurate (by 18%) than football players. Very small differences were found in the gaze behaviour, with the futsal players generally focusing more on making decisions than controlling the ball.

In conclusion, the study showed that futsal had higher demands on passing performance than football. Consequently, futsal players developed quicker technical and decision-making abilities to cope with these increased demands. When futsal players then played small-sided football games, they were able to transfer the technical intensity of futsal and their quick and accurate passing ability. This study, therefore, suggests that futsal could be an effective training stimulus for developing quicker technical and decision-making skills in youth football players. 🌐



Luca Oppici is a PhD student at the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL) at Victoria University, in Melbourne, Australia. ISEAL is a research institute that is internationally renowned for outstanding research in high performance in sport, exercise science and active living. Luca's research spans skill acquisition in sport, motor learning and development, and sports expertise.

LYON AND WOLFSBURG ON COLLISION COURSE

Last season's UEFA Women's Champions League finalists face a rematch in this season's quarter-finals, while upstart debutants are ready to cause an upset: the story of the 2016/17 campaign so far.



Manchester City's Jane Ross outmanoeuvres Brøndby goalkeeper Katrine Abel in the round of 16.

Getty Images

Records have tumbled and new names have emerged – but when the Women's Champions League quarter-finals are played in March, the competition's most familiar forces will be again battling for the title.

However, one thing will definitely be different when the trophy is won on 1 June at Cardiff City Stadium in the Welsh capital: it will not be a rematch of the 2016 (or indeed 2013) final between Olympique Lyonnais and VfL Wolfsburg, the only two past winners left in this season's competition, who between them have taken the trophy five times in the last six seasons.

Last season, Lyon became only the second team to win three UEFA women's club titles when they defeated Wolfsburg on penalties in Reggio Emilia, to avenge their loss in the decider in London three years earlier.

Even before winter signings including US striker Alex Morgan, the defending

champions look the side to beat. When they stage the second leg of their quarter-final at the Stade de Lyon, they will be seeking to improve on their European record of 29 goals in four games at their new stadium. They have already moved three clear of 1. FFC Frankfurt's previous best of 54 wins in the competition. Meanwhile, their opening trip to Germany will be their 75th match in the UEFA Women's Champions League, keeping them on course to catch Arsenal LFC's record of 79.

Two Franco-German encounters

However, Wolfsburg are not to be underestimated, not least after having taken Lyon all the way last May. Wolfsburg have never failed to reach the semi-finals in their four appearances in the competition, and whereas Lyon also have a perfect last-eight record of played seven, won seven, they have fallen twice in the round of 16. Wolfsburg also boast both this season's

leading scorer, Zsanett Jakabfi – whose eight goals include a hat-trick at Stamford Bridge against Chelsea LFC and four away to Eskilstuna United DFF – and the all-time number one, Anja Mittag, who remains on 49, having only been used as a substitute by her new club so far in the Women's Champions League, following her move from Paris Saint-Germain to Wolfsburg.

Wolfsburg's meeting with Lyon is not the only Franco-German quarter-final. Paris Saint-Germain, runners-up in 2014/15 but beaten by Lyon in the last four a year later, are up against FC Bayern München, German champions for the last two seasons. Bayern are in the quarter-finals at their third attempt, having fallen in the last 16 in 2009/10 and the round of 32 last season, making them the only German team not to have won the title on their debut (unlike Frankfurt in 2001/02, 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam in 2004/05, FCR 2001 Duisburg in 2008/09 and Wolfsburg in 2012/13).

Still, Bayern – with their line led by seven-goal Netherlands striker Vivianne Miedema – comfortably saw off Hibernian LFC and WFC Rossiyanka on their way to the quarter-finals, and include among their ranks former competition winners Verena Faisst, Simone Laudehr and Gina Lewandowski (an American, who is not related to Robert Lewandowski). Paris had to overturn a first-leg deficit to beat Norwegian champions LSK Kvinner FK in the round of 32, but in new coach Patrice Lair they have the man that led Lyon to their first two European titles, in 2010/11 and 2011/12.

Awaiting either Bayern or Paris in the semi-finals will be one of FC Rosengård or FC Barcelona. While the Spanish championship runners-up are in their third quarter-final in four years – though have never got further – they are likely to be underdogs against the team from one of the competition's traditional powerhouses, Sweden.

Rosengård reached the 2003/04 semi-finals under their old name of Malmö FF, and are in the last eight for the fifth time in six seasons – on all but one occasion losing to German teams. Up front, they not only have the evergreen Marta, but also Lotta Schelin, who returned to her homeland this summer after eight years and three European titles at Lyon.

Playing for the right to face Lyon or Wolfsburg are Fortuna Hjørring and Manchester City WFC. Fortuna, the only Danish finalists ever (in 2002/03), finally broke a run of seven round of 16 exits by beating Brescia CF. But although City do not boast that European pedigree, as they are making their debut, the newly crowned English champions have already beaten Fortuna's arch domestic rivals Brøndby IF in the round of 16 and have assembled a talented and experienced squad.

For City there is also the incentive of a final in the United Kingdom, whereas Cardiff Met Ladies FC's attempt to earn the shortest of trips to the decider ended in the qualifying round. They were part of a record entry of 59 clubs – boosted as the number of leagues given two berths increased from 8 to 12. City, however, are the only one of nine debutants to remain, though the first Kosovan entrants, WFC Hajvalia, did manage two draws in their three qualifiers, including against the competition's sole 16-season ever-present, Klaksvíkar Ítrottarfelag from the Faroe Islands.

Even more records

Once the knockout phase started with the round of 32 in October, records started to fall. The 9,127 at San Mamés to see Athletic Club's ultimately reversed first-leg defeat of Fortuna was a record for the round of 32, and Austrian debutants

SK Sturm Graz, Norwegian newcomers Avaldsnes Idrettslag and Scotland's Hibernian all attracted the highest crowds recorded in their countries for this competition, while Chelsea's 3,783 attendance at Stamford Bridge against Wolfsburg was the best ever in England other than for the 2011 and 2013 finals.

There were also some tight ties, most notably Brescia needing away goals to pip KKPK Medyk Konin and Fortuna defeating Athletic in the penultimate minute of extra time, while SK Slavia Praha came back from two down to beat Apollon Ladies FC 3-2 in their second leg at Eden Arena. The round of 16 was more one-sided, City's 2-1 aggregate defeat of Brøndby by far the closest.

With the well-matched, high-quality teams in the quarter-finals, though, there is no predicting how the competition will go from here on. But whoever emerges from the tie between Lyon and Wolfsburg will take a lot of beating. 🍀

Quarter-finals (22/23 & 29/30 March)

Fortuna Hjørring (DEN) v Manchester City (ENG)
 Rosengård (SWE) v Barcelona (ESP)
 Wolfsburg (GER) v Lyon (FRA)
 Bayern München (GER) v Paris Saint-Germain (FRA)

Semi-finals (22/23 & 29/30 April)

Rosengård/Barcelona v Bayern/Paris
 Fortuna/Man. City v Wolfsburg/Lyon

Final: 1 June, Cardiff City Stadium

Getty Images



Cardiff City Stadium (in the foreground), the venue for this season's UEFA Women's Champions League final.

TRAINING WOMEN COACHES ACROSS EUROPE

Women's football has been growing, and this growth needs to be reflected in the number of female UEFA-licensed coaches.

UEFAs coach development project for women, which started in earnest early last year, aims to increase the number of qualified female coaches, as well as the number of clubs and national teams that are coached by women. UEFA's coach education programmes – for C, B, A and Pro diplomas – are already open to women in 53 of the 55 UEFA member associations.

In essence, the UEFA project funds the training of aspirant female coaches through scholarships for UEFA A or Pro diploma courses. UEFA also supports B and C diploma courses tailored to female coaches by tasking a UEFA technical instructor with running part of the course, or by providing funding to national associations to cover some of the costs.

One year on, the project has already achieved a number of successes, as shown by the following two examples from the Football Federation of FYR Macedonia and the Hungarian Football Federation.

FYR Macedonia

Former Macedonian international Milena Stevanovska had always dreamt of pursuing a career in coaching but never thought it would be possible for professional and financial reasons.

However, a scholarship obtained through UEFA's coach development project for women set her on her way to achieving her dream. "I'd been thinking about starting a coaching career since I stopped playing football some years ago, but if I hadn't received the scholarship, I would not be a UEFA B coach right now," she says.

"Meeting other women with the same goal, sharing experiences and getting some insight from the men's approach to the game was incredibly useful," Stevanovska, who took part in a mixed course, explains. A UEFA B diploma requires 120 hours of study, including match analysis, reading the game, phases of player development,



Milena Stevanovska

principles of fitness training and principles of scouting.

"I realised that being involved in football as a coach is totally different from being a player," says Stevanovska.

"Coaching requires a great deal of knowledge – both practical and theoretical – and dedication. I have a lot more respect for coaches now, and I am convinced that I made the right choice in getting further education."

UEFA's financial support for women's coaching is paying dividends in FYR Macedonia, with the number of women applying to follow B diploma courses

increasing fourfold immediately after the UEFA project was launched.

Hungary

The Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) launched its first women-only UEFA B course in April 2016, with the support of UEFA. Following a preliminary selection process, a total of 16 candidates were offered UEFA scholarships.

The course was held in several locations, including Budapest, Bukk, Telki, Felcsut and Dabas. The participants took their final exams at the beginning of November 2016 and all graduated.

According to Sándor Pari, who is in charge of the programme at the MLSZ, having a women-only UEFA B course, as opposed to a mixed course, paid off:

"During the training, it became quite clear that a women-only course format had many advantages that significantly increased the efficiency of the education process. Those advantages included greater openness, self-confidence and enthusiasm, and better sociability and support levels in the working group



Participants and educators on the Hungarian course.

M. Staab

sessions. Based on our previous experiences, these features were less present in mixed-gender courses.”

Julia Nemeth, one of the participants in the Hungarian coaching course supported by UEFA, shares her views on having women-only training:

“It was a nice opportunity to learn among women. We could make mistakes without being frustrated. The participants were tolerant and understanding with each other and we could ‘spread our wings’ bravely. I don’t know if we could have done it in the same way with male participants. And as we also had a female UEFA instructor, we felt we were more understood and safe.”

As Julia mentions, UEFA also provided support to the course by sending UEFA instructor Monika Staab to run some of the sessions, offering her expertise throughout the course as well as taking part in the practical assessment at the end, as part of the examination board.

“Monika’s presence, expertise and passion lifted the level of the course. She proved how dedicated UEFA is about women’s football,” Sándor said. “Along with the local instructors and educators, she successfully conveyed the UEFA philosophy, spirit and approach to football. It meant a great deal to the candidates to be able to exchange with an instructor from a recognised, high-level football culture.”

Monika herself says: “The UEFA B diploma coaching course in Hungary was again a great experience. It was gratifying to see the participants’ coaching improvements throughout the course. Driven by their passion and commitment, they learned fast and grew strongly as a team. The aspiring female coaches needed to feel secure to be allowed to make mistakes, as most of them do not have the same experience and self-confidence as many male coaches. And in that respect, having a female instructor and being among fellow women students was undoubtedly beneficial.”

“Taking part in UEFA B course was a decisive experience for me,” adds Julia. “When I applied, I thought that it would be an opportunity for me to learn about football, as I have loved the game for the past 15 years. All the participants soon became a real team and learned a great deal from each other. Our self-confidence increased day by day because of our instructors’ positive attitudes



M. Staab

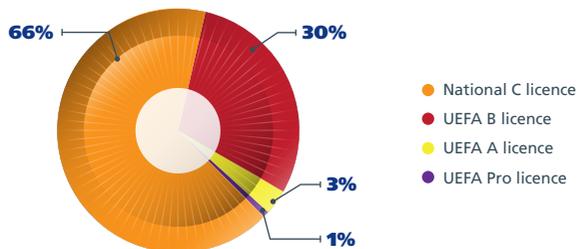
and encouraging words – that meant a lot to us!”

It is rewarding to see how UEFA’s coach development project for women has already started to bear fruit. The number of female coaches is going up

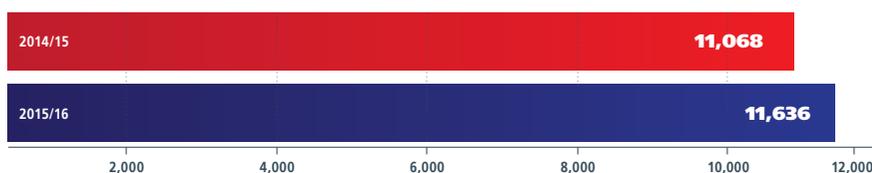
and the scholarship scheme also leaves a legacy behind, by requiring that the newly qualified coaches are given a coaching role afterwards, in order to put their education into practice, build on it, and turn it into results on the pitch. ⚽

WOMEN IN COACHING

Qualified female coaches (as of 2015/16)
17,553



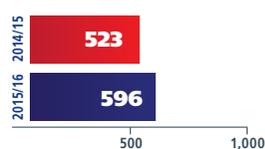
National C licence



UEFA B licence



UEFA A licence



UEFA Pro licence





REFEREES PRIMED FOR FUTURE CHALLENGES

The high-pace, high-stakes nature of modern football has a significant impact on referees on a variety of levels. Consequently, UEFA is engaged in a constant quest to ensure that its match officials are ready for the challenge.

As January turned into February, the Spanish resort of Malaga hosted the annual UEFA winter courses for referees, and no stone was left unturned in giving them ideal preparation for the coming months – especially the female referees who will form the 17th team at this summer’s Women’s EURO 2017.

A spring-like Costa del Sol greeted the 128 referees – 51 for the introductory course for newcomers to the FIFA international list and 77 for the advanced course for elite referees. They were joined by members of the UEFA Referees Committee and fitness specialists who would be instructing and briefing the referees and putting them through their training paces. The two courses have specific objectives. International newcomers are taught the ropes of being a European referee, while the more experienced officials undertake, among other exercises, a comprehensive review of incidents that have occurred in major club and national team competitions, and provide invaluable feedback to the Referees Committee, in particular in a series of intensive group discussions.

“We are coming out of the winter break... We check the referees’ fitness and touch base on what happened in the first part of the season, while giving them input on the matches they are going to referee very soon,” said UEFA’s chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina. “We tell the introductory course referees what being an international referee means and highlight the key points that can be important for them.” This includes proper preparation, putting over the correct image as UEFA’s representatives on the field, protecting football’s image, and understanding the need to be total professionals and dedicated athletes as they embark on their European careers.

Instruction and education

Instruction sessions at the winter courses are prepared in advance, and they were presented in Malaga by Collina, UEFA refereeing officer Hugh Dallas and Referees Committee member Vlado Sajin, with specific tailor-made sessions for the women delivered by committee members Dagmar Damková and Bo Karlsson.

The production of video clips of incidents from the first half of the season requires assiduous collection and editing work.

“All of the match incidents from the beginning of the season are put together,” Dallas explained. “Then, there is a process where around 800 clips have to be viewed, reduced in number and put into categories for the various topics, and this sets the menus for the courses. Vlado and I share the workload. It can take two or three days just to reduce the clips before we categorise them into topics. It’s quite a process, but it’s very enjoyable.”

UEFA’s 55 member associations also benefit from the compilation of video clips for these courses. The material is sent to the associations twice a year, after the winter courses and the summer gathering in August, for their own referee education programmes. “It’s all about education

“We tell the introductory course referees what being an international referee means and highlight the key points that can be important for them.”

Pierluigi Collina
Chief refereeing officer

from top to bottom,” Dallas explained. “The clips are sent with a briefing as to what the UEFA guidelines will be for any particular incident, whether it’s serious foul play, challenges or penalty-area incidents.” Achieving consistency is a major thread of the instruction sessions, because of the necessity for decision-taking to be uniform among UEFA referees, irrespective of where they come from in Europe. “Sometimes there are incidents that are becoming a trend, so we analyse them quite carefully,” said Collina. “There are decisions that we want to highlight to the other referees – either positive decisions or mistakes. The aim is not to highlight the mistakes themselves, but to look for solutions, to ensure that the same mistakes are not made again in the future.”

Match preparation has recently taken on an important new dimension. UEFA’s referees are now assisted by analysts, qualified coaches who brief them on teams’ tactics and players’ characteristics. The European newcomers received a particularly extensive briefing in Malaga on an aspect of football that helps referees stay one step ahead of events on the field. →



Fitness focus

The days of portly match officials are long gone. Top referees are now high-level athletes along with the players they manage, and constant attention is given to their physical condition and nutritional intake. The referees all follow specific fitness programmes throughout the year – drawn up by a team led by UEFA’s specialist, Werner Helsen, who provides them with regular personal advice, instructions, statistics and data. In turn, the referees send feedback and questions to Helsen and his experts for processing, analysis and response.

The referees showed their impressive fitness levels in a stringent session in Malaga, featuring sprint work and yo-yo intermittent endurance tests. Nothing at all is left to chance, and the meticulous

attention to detail in this area was underlined by injury prevention exercises, body fat measurements, medical checks and eye tests.

Positive reactions

The referees view the training and education given by UEFA as totally indispensable. Romania’s Ovidiu Hategan was a member of last summer’s EURO 2016 referee team. “This is my sixth course, and I feel the same positive emotions,” he reflected. “It very much motivates me to be here, and to get even better. A main benefit is that the referees can talk together and share experiences, and we learn a great deal from Referees Committee members who have previously been down the same road.”

“For myself, it’s an honour to be here,” added Swedish elite referee Sara Persson.

“It means a lot, because this is one of the goals that I’ve worked so hard to reach, to be in the elite group with the top referees in Europe. We have so many different experiences that we can share and that we can all improve from, to take into the future.”

Europe’s referees have earned widespread respect and recognition for the calibre of their performances over the years – with particularly strong plaudits forthcoming at EURO 2016. However, the message in Malaga was crystal clear: the past is now quite definitely the past. Only the future matters in the search to get the best out of the continent’s refereeing crème de la crème, and UEFA is doing its utmost to guarantee that this best is actually still yet to come.

WOMEN REFEREES RAISING THE BAR

The Malaga winter course week was key for Europe’s women referees – the new officials setting out on what they hope will be long and rewarding careers, and the elite referees who are already performing and excelling at the highest European levels.

An important summer awaits those selected this spring to officiate at the 31 matches at Women’s EURO 2017 in the Netherlands, from 16 July until 6 August. In Malaga, the quality of the interaction in discussion and instruction sessions, and the positive impression made in the fitness tests, gave ample proof of just how professionally the referees are

approaching their role, in line with the rapid ascent of the women’s game over recent years.

Female referees joined their male counterparts on the winter courses for the first time in 2013. This judicious decision by UEFA has inspired them to raise their overall standards, particularly in terms of fitness – the Malaga week brought a 100% success rate in the tests led by Werner Helsen and his team.

All the referees were involved in joint group discussion sessions. “It’s really useful for the female referees to meet the men and share ideas and experiences,” said Referees Committee

member Dagmar Damková, a former international referee herself who took charge of a host of major club and international occasions.

“The Laws of the Game are the same in men’s and women’s football. The male and female officials speak together about situations, incidents and developments, and come up with common conclusions.”

The new female referees taking part in the introductory course relished the chance to meet their elite counterparts in Malaga – an aspect greeted warmly by Referees Committee chairman and UEFA first vice-president Ángel María Villar Llona. “I ask the experienced referees to give the younger officials all the help they can,” he said, “because they need to be role models for them.”

UEFA is encouraged by the overall progress of women’s refereeing in Europe. “They have certainly reacted positively to what is needed today,” said Pierluigi Collina. “Women’s football is played faster than before, and the quality of play is definitely higher than before, so the referees today are also better athletes than before. Their ability to read a match is getting higher and higher. So they are coping with the increased level of women’s football.”



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WERNER HELSEN

'I HAVE TO SAY THAT THE WOMEN HAVE PERHAPS MADE MORE PROGRESS OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS THAN THE MEN'

The UEFA referee fitness expert **Werner Helsen** tells us about fitness factors in women's refereeing.

There are great fitness benefits in women referees attending the UEFA winter courses ...

There are many common aspects with respect to physical preparation for male and female referees, and there are many similarities with respect to the objectives. For example, the assessment we do in the fitness test is practically the same – 40-metre sprints and the yo-yo test. The standards are different, but the principles are the same.

What differences are there in the training that you do with the men?

One of the biggest differences concerns speed, explosiveness and acceleration – sprint work, let's say. We have seen in many disciplines, especially in endurance sports, that differences between men and women have narrowed over the past few decades. However, there remains one big difference, which is speed,

and speed equals strength. This means that female referees who would like to improve their sprints need to do strength training, and this has been a primary objective for many female referees. We also started collecting skinfold data from the women to measure body-fat percentage and body composition. This is now considered to be extremely important, and we can also see the progress that we want to achieve in this area.

"Women's EURO 2017 referees will receive a six-week programme, which will be different for the referees and the assistant referees."

Werner Helsen
UEFA referee fitness expert

Werner Helsen gives feedback at a women's referee training session in Malaga.



Have you noticed significant developments in recent times in terms of female referees' fitness?

I have to honestly say that the women have perhaps made more progress over the past 15 years than the men. This is because the men started from a higher level, and obviously they've improved in many different areas – but the women started from a lower level, and they have progressed so well in that period.

Women's EURO 2017 is just around the corner. What training programme will you be giving the selected referees ahead of the tournament?

They will receive a six-week programme, which will be different for the referees and the assistant referees. Important training objectives such as interval training, speed training, strength training and injury prevention will be included in the plan, so the closer we get to the tournament, the more specific the exercises will be, and the more we expect the training sessions to translate into on-field performance. →

DAGMAR DAMKOVÁ

“THE BIGGEST CHANGE IS IN TECHNICAL TERMS”

The UEFA Referees Committee member and former Czech international referee **Dagmar Damková** reflects on women’s football and refereeing.

The course in Malaga came at an important time for women referees ...

I think this course has been a special one because we have the Women’s EURO this year and it was one of the last chances for the referees to show that they are ready.

What have been the main changes in women’s football alongside the development of women’s refereeing?

The biggest change is in technical terms. It’s not just a matter now of passing the ball and running; you can really see that teams have technique, and they play intelligently. More and more teams are emerging from an increasing number of countries. In the past, you’d see a lot of landslide victories. Nowadays, there are not so many games like this.

“It’s not just a matter now of passing the ball and running; you can really see that teams have technique, and they play intelligently.”

Dagmar Damková
UEFA Referees Committee member

Is there more pressure on women referees as a result of this?

There might be more pressure, because there is growing interest – TV coverage of women’s football has increased, for example. But, on the other hand, I think it also depends on the referees themselves, and if they let the pressure get to them or not.

There are some big matches on the horizon – the Women’s Champions League final, an eagerly awaited EURO... What is it like taking charge of such big matches?

It’s very difficult to express the feelings, because they are not ‘normal’ games. It’s something special, it’s something that might



Sportsfile

happen once in a lifetime. So when it happens, you are proud, you feel you are the one, you are chosen. You are really proud, and have to prove that you are one of the best. There are feelings of responsibility, and all the surroundings, everything around you, gives you goose bumps.

What would be your advice to women and girls who might want to take up refereeing?

Go for it! It’s a great job, and it’s worth it. 🌍

Passing on advice and experience –
Dagmar Damková speaks
with the current generation of
female referees.



How well do you know the Laws of the Game? At its courses, UEFA tests Europe's top referees on the laws, to ensure that they take the correct decisions. Test yourself by answering the following questions...

1 An attacker kicks the ball towards the goal when there is no defender in position to intervene. In an attempt to prevent the ball going into goal, a ball boy enters the field of play and kicks the ball, which continues into the goal. **Decision of the referee?**

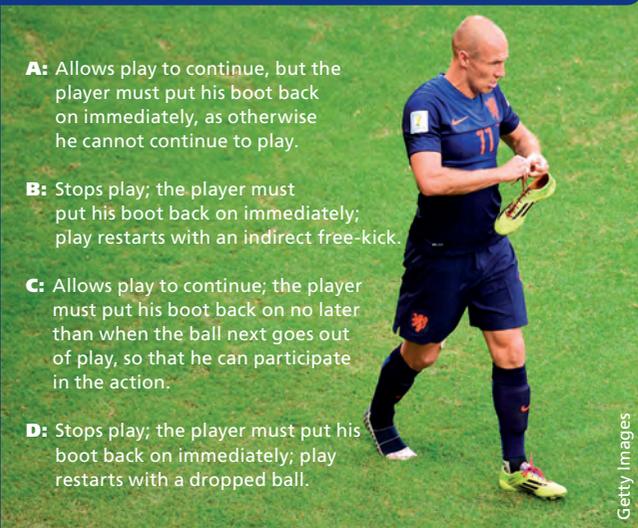
A: Dropped ball. **C:** Penalty kick.
B: Indirect free-kick. **D:** Awards the goal.

2 An attacker kicks the ball towards the goal when there is no defender in position to intervene. In an attempt to prevent the ball going into the goal, a substitute enters the field of play and kicks the ball, which goes into the goal. **Decision of the referee?**

A: Penalty kick; substitute is sent off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity.
B: Penalty kick; substitute is cautioned for unsporting behaviour.
C: Indirect free-kick for entering the field of play; substitute is cautioned for unsporting behaviour.
D: Indirect free-kick for entering the field of play; substitute is sent off for denying an obvious goalscoring opportunity.

3 A player accidentally loses his boot and passes the ball to his team-mate. **Decision of the referee?**

A: Allows play to continue, but the player must put his boot back on immediately, as otherwise he cannot continue to play.
B: Stops play; the player must put his boot back on immediately; play restarts with an indirect free-kick.
C: Allows play to continue; the player must put his boot back on no later than when the ball next goes out of play, so that he can participate in the action.
D: Stops play; the player must put his boot back on immediately; play restarts with a dropped ball.



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4 An attacker running with the ball sees an opponent in front of him and runs over the goal-line ten metres from the goalpost in an attempt to continue to play the ball. The opponent (defender) then tackles him off the field of play in a reckless manner to prevent him continuing his run. **Decision of the referee?**

A: Dropped ball. The offender is cautioned.
B: Awards a penalty kick.
C: Indirect free-kick for leaving the field of play without permission; the offender is cautioned.
D: Awards a penalty kick; cautions the offender.

5 When the ball is in play in the middle of the field of play, the goalkeeper, in his own penalty area, punches his team-mate in a violent manner. **Decision of the referee?**

A: Indirect free-kick and goalkeeper sent off.
B: Indirect free-kick and goalkeeper cautioned.
C: Awards a penalty kick and sends off the goalkeeper.
D: Play continues; the goalkeeper is sent off when the ball next goes out of play.

6 When does the referee have the authority to take disciplinary action?

A: From entering the field of play for the pre-match inspection until giving the final whistle.
B: From entering the field of play with the players before kick-off until leaving the field of play after the match ends.
C: From kick-off until leaving the field of play after the match ends.
D: From entering the field of play for the pre-match inspection until leaving the field of play after the match ends.

Answers: 1D; 2A; 3C; 4D; 5C; 6D.

SILVIA NEID

“WOMEN’S FOOTBALL HASN’T HAD ITS HEYDAY YET”

At the start of the year, Silvia Neid was named FIFA Women’s Coach of the Year for the third time, capping an unprecedented coaching career. She stepped down as national team coach after winning gold at the Olympics in Brazil, and now heads up the DFB’s women’s and girls’ scouting department. The Technician met up with the former world and European champion to talk about her new role and the future of women’s football.

Silvia Neid, congratulations on being named FIFA Women’s Coach of the Year. How was the awards ceremony?

I was very happy just to be there as one of the three shortlisted nominees. It’s always a wonderful evening; you meet some really exceptional people. It was a great honour to win the award for the third time. It felt like the icing on the cake. There’s no better way to end my career with the women’s national team. Although I’m well aware that I couldn’t have done it alone. You can’t win without your team, and the team behind the team. I really can’t emphasise that enough.

You are now running the DFB’s women’s and girls’ scouting department. Can you tell us what that involves and what your priorities are in this new role?

We want to keep an eye on other countries. It’s important to be looking out for new trends and developments in women’s football. That’s my responsibility. Our aim is to be a few years ahead of the game and the players need to be trained accordingly. I share my findings with the new national team coach, Steffi Jones, and she decides what to do with the information.

To what extent is your role as head of scouting about watching

“We want to keep an eye on other countries. It’s important to be looking out for new trends and developments in women’s football. That’s my responsibility.”

matches on the one hand, and discussing what you see on the other?

After 20 years in various coaching roles, I’ve learned a thing or two. Anyone involved in women’s football will have noticed that the Asian countries are making great strides. It’s not for nothing that they’re winning so many titles at youth level. I’m thinking of North Korea and Japan in particular. And in my new role, I’m very keen to know how they’re doing it. How has Japan got so many well-trained players? And consistently over time, also at youth level, i.e. Under-17 and Under-19. That’s something that’s really struck me. They must be doing something special in terms of player development, and that interests me. There are also things happening in Spain. These are all trends that we have to keep an eye on.

Can you share with us your initial insights? What makes the Japanese so good, for example?

They place a lot of emphasis on the basics and on technique. They work very hard and coach intensively in these areas. Take looking over your shoulder as an example: every player looks over her shoulder three times before receiving the ball. So she knows what’s going on behind her. I find that pretty impressive, and fascinating. I would love to go to Japan to see for myself what exactly they’re doing there. At the same time, I must say that in Germany →



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we are also trendsetters, and will continue to be so in the future. We're already doing a good job, but you have to keep your eyes open and want to learn from what you see going on elsewhere.

The boom in women's football development over the last few years has been plain for all to see. What are your thoughts on this and how do you see things now?

The progress has been incredible. When I think back to my first international in 1982, it really is unbelievable what has happened since then. Everything has improved, athletically, tactically, technically, and in terms of speed. It's now more or less on a par with men's football. Everything has progressed and improved.

What tactical improvements have impressed you the most?

Lots of trends are taken from men's football. Like screening midfielders, for example. At the Olympics, Sweden showed that they play deeper than usual. They tried to allow very little space in their own half. These are also trends and tactical developments. The players are simply better trained. In that sense, we're all on the right track.

To what extent have tactical elements and even playing styles been taken over from the men's game because of all the footage available that you can use with the team?

I have done that. I really like how Dortmund were playing a few years ago. I still really like their style of play. We watched a few bits and pieces and took some footage to show to our players. Then it was a question of putting it into practice.

Did you also have technical discussions with Joachim Löw, the men's national team coach?

A few times a year at least. I used a few of the things they were doing in the men's game. I already had a good relationship with the scouting department and when I found something interesting, I could get whole sequences edited together. In that respect, there was always a lot of very close cooperation.

How would you describe what Joachim Löw has achieved with the men's national team, starting as assistant coach and over the course of the DFB's restructuring in the early 2000s?



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The city of Frankfurt welcomes the national team home from Sweden in style on 29 July 2013, the day after they claimed their eighth European title.



Getty Images



“There are excellent teams all over the world that are capable of winning the World Cup. Every country is investing a lot more than they were just a few years ago, to prepare their players for such tournaments.”

Joachim Löw has done a lot for the men’s game. He has shaped men’s football in Germany and moved it forward. He has also been FIFA Coach of the Year and is world champion. I think we play really excellent football. We play offensively and had some great games at the EURO in France. Obviously there’s also always an element of luck involved. You have to hit the back of the net at the right time.

Let’s talk briefly about grassroots football. Which particular areas need more attention, in your opinion?

I think we can be very pleased, just looking at the numbers. Lots of women and girls play football. In Germany, at least, it’s the number one sport. We have schools and academies where football is offered. We’re very much on the right track. Obviously it’s good for the sport when you get titles. We see that in tennis too: Angelique Kerber is now world number one and tennis has become more popular again among youngsters as a result. We need to keep winning in women’s football and make sure that girls get interested in the sport. Naturally, we must then also ensure that we have a strong elite. It’s all about player development.

Research in Europe shows that you can get lots of girls into football but most of them drop out as teenagers. What’s your take on this trend?

It’s perfectly normal. Perhaps girls that aren’t so good or aren’t 100% into football decide they’d prefer to play tennis. Perhaps they’re better at tennis. Often they only work these things out as teenagers. But I honestly don’t see this as a problem. We can be proud that we’re the number one sport overall.

What do you think can be done Europe-wide to promote ambitious coaches, male or female, in women’s football?

We’ve always tried to encourage female players to train as coaches. And it’s paid off. We have lots of women who used to play on the national team now working in coaching. Germany has been leading the way for years in that respect. [Former national team coach] Tina Theune started it off and I kept it going. The important thing is to have players who really put their hearts into it. They have to pass on their experience to the next generation. To be honest, I don’t really know what it’s like in other countries. I can only say that the tendency seems to be to promote women. In Japan, for example, they have now appointed the first woman as head coach of the [women’s] national team. →



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Why do you think it's important for national associations to try to keep successful female players in football after they hang up their boots?

Because they obviously serve as role models for young girls and they do what they do first and foremost because they are passionate about it. When you love what you do, you can give it your all. We've had very good experiences of this.

As long-standing European champions, the expectations on Germany at Women's EURO 2017 will once again be extremely high. How do you deal with that pressure?

Everyone expects you to win. But the teams that ultimately do know only too well how hard it is. You need absolute concentration. It's hard work and you need a pinch of luck too, to come out on top. I have only ever taken it one match at a time. Germany certainly have the potential, but it's never a foregone conclusion. It has to all come together at the decisive moments. You need to score at the right time, and when you make tactical changes, they have to be the right ones.

Which team could cause an upset at the Women's EURO?

Spain, perhaps? The favourites are the four usual suspects: Norway, Sweden, France and Germany. Unfortunately for France, they have still never won a title, despite being considered one of the favourites for years now. They really have first-rate players who

"When I think back to my first international in 1982, it really is unbelievable what has happened since then. Everything has improved; athletically, tactically and technically."

are very technically accomplished. They play a very intelligent game, but somehow it's never quite been enough. I've got my eye on Spain, and maybe also England. Both teams have made outstanding progress over the last few years.

The field has been expanded from 12 to 16. What effect will that have?

I'm very curious to see. There are definitely enough good teams in women's football, in my opinion, to increase the field by four without there being any drop in quality. Take Scotland, for example, where we've also seen steady progress. I think we have a good format. It's clear at the outset that the top two teams in each group go through and the third and fourth-placed teams go home. I don't know what will happen but I think it'll be good.

Berti Vogts once said it was 'getting crowded at the top' – to what extent does that also apply to women's football over the last few years?

A lot of countries have made a great deal of progress. There are more favourites now than 12 years ago. Obviously I'm thinking of France, Sweden, Norway, Spain, England and Germany. But more and more countries have come along that are now out to win titles.

No European team has won the Women's World Cup since 2007. There wasn't even a European team in the last two finals. Do you think this is just a question of luck or is Europe being overtaken by other countries?



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There are excellent teams all over the world that are capable of winning the World Cup. Take Canada, for example, who have taken bronze in the last two Olympic Games. And the US, who we know have been preparing together very intensively for a long time. Then there's Japan, whose praises I've already sung. And Brazil. Obviously Europe also has to keep advancing if we're to have another world champion. But it's not that easy. I think that every country is investing a lot more than they were just a few years ago, to prepare their players for such tournaments.

How do you view the evolution of the UEFA Women's Champions League?

It's fundamentally a good competition and one I really like. There are four teams that are contenders for the title. The others are still a bit too far behind the pack.

The quarter-finals are fast approaching. Who do you think has the best chances?

The four best teams have been drawn against each other: Paris against Bayern München, and Lyon against Wolfsburg. All of them have the potential to go all the way, but only two of them can get past the quarter-finals. My favourites are Bayern München and Wolfsburg.

Clubs are signing lots of top players from Brazil, Japan and the US. To what extent is this a challenge for European clubs and local player development?

If you look at it in a positive light, the overall standard is being driven up. Players coming in from other countries add a lot of quality to the mix. We just have to make sure that the young players don't get sidelined or perhaps get loaned out. It's important that they get to play. And it's important that when they're at that stage of maximum potential, they're given the opportunity to develop it. That may mean they have to play for other teams and push their way through the ranks. But young players at teams that sign the big names can also learn a lot. There are pros and cons, at the end of the day. Ultimately each team has to decide for itself.

Where do you see women's football in five years' time?

Reaching new heights. Perhaps even faster and more athletic. I think there will be even more players and bigger squads. In any case, I see it advancing. Women's football hasn't had its heyday yet. 🌱



SILVIA NEID'S CAREER HIGHLIGHTS

Winner of four major honours as head coach of the Germany women's senior team over an 11-year period

Coached the side to victory at the 2007 Women's World Cup in China, securing Germany's second successive title

Masterminded the country's first-ever gold medal in the women's Olympic football tournament at Rio 2016

Three-time winner of the FIFA Women's Coach of the Year award

Capped 111 times for the national team during her playing career, scoring 48 goals

BENCHMARKING REPORT SHOWS POSITIVE IMPACT

UEFA's eighth club licensing benchmarking report highlights how financial fair play has turned around football finances, creating a more stable and sustainable financial position for Europe's top-division clubs.

The report offers an exhaustive and exclusive review of the continental club game and a thorough analysis of the financial development of European football.

Aggregate operating profits have risen to €1.5bn in the last two years,

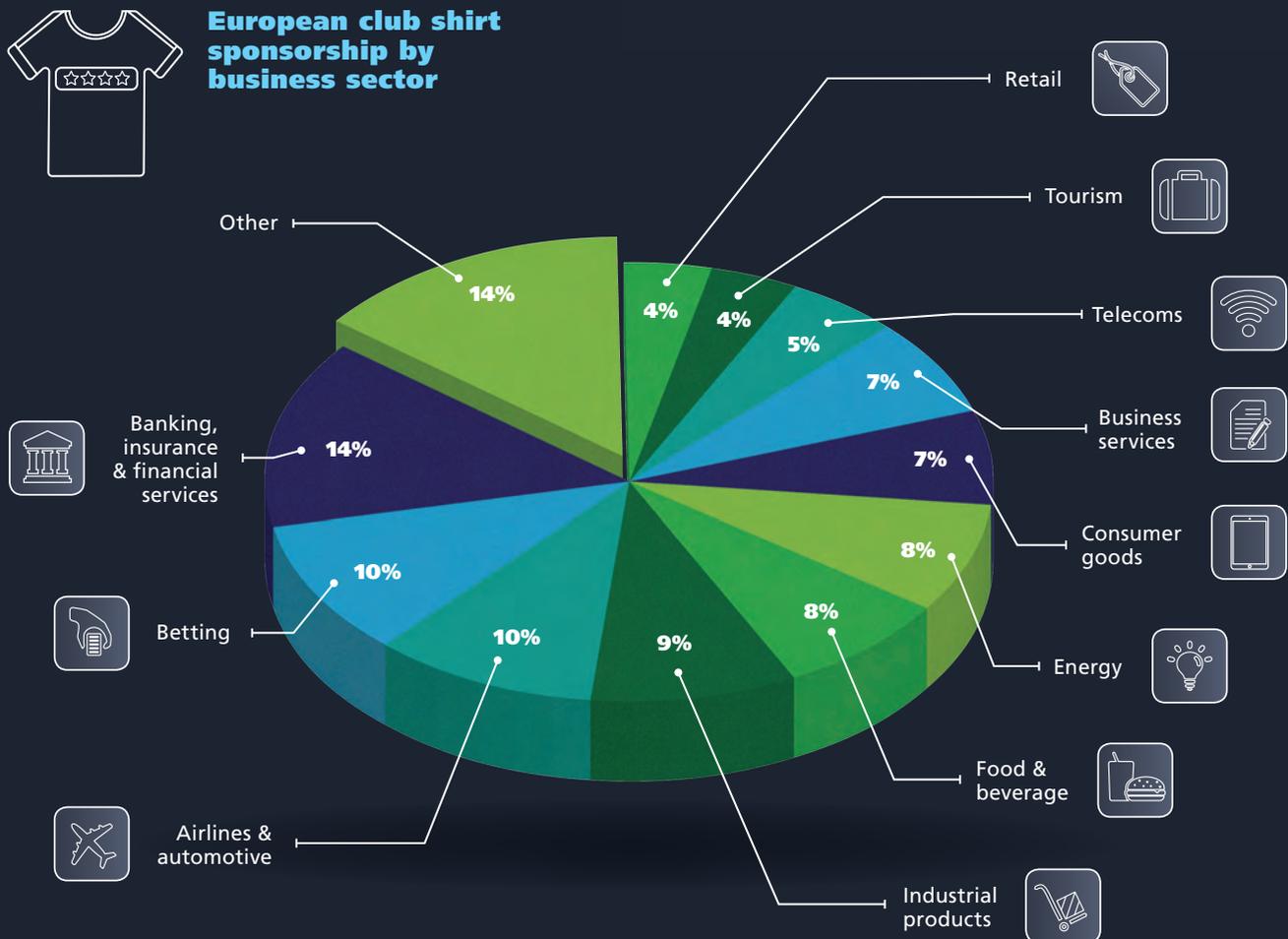
compared with losses of €700m in the two years immediately prior to the introduction of financial fair play, while aggregate losses have dropped by 81% – from €1.7bn in 2011 to just over €300m in 2015.

In his foreword to the report, the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, says: "The success story of football as a cultural and commercial force stands out once more. It shows that UEFA's regulatory role in financial fair play has not only steadied the ship of European finance, but also provided

the framework for unprecedented growth, investment and profitability."



UEFA's eighth club licensing benchmarking report is available to download from UEFA.org





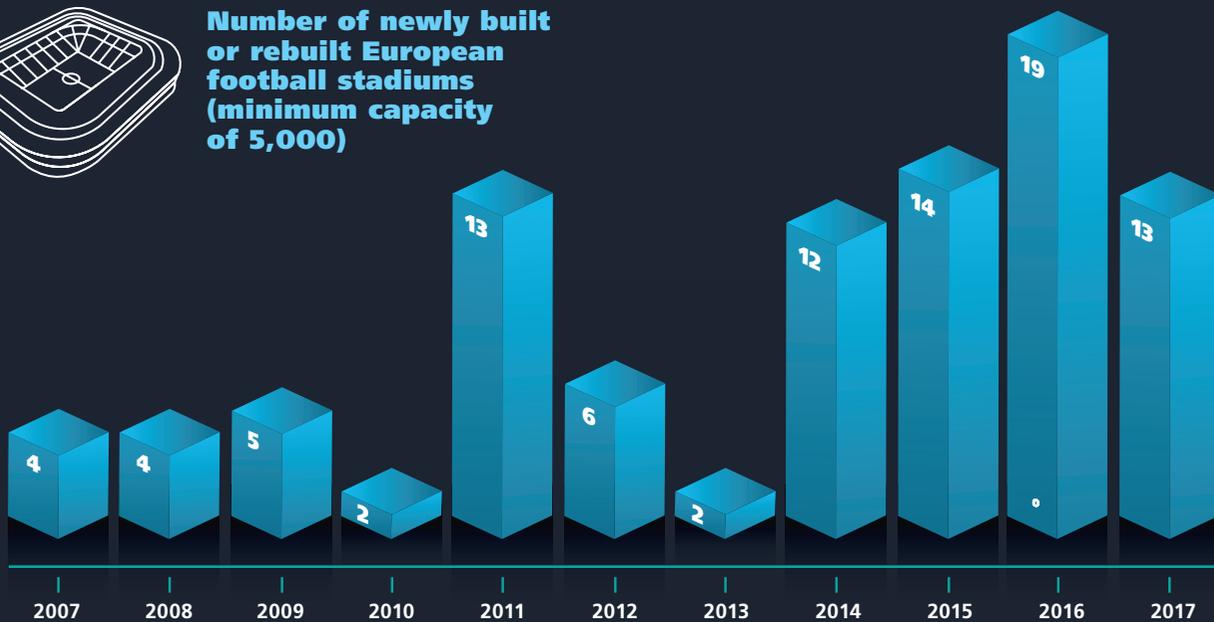
Total combined revenue of top-division European clubs (in €bn)



Aggregate losses of top-division European clubs (in €m)



Number of newly built or rebuilt European football stadiums (minimum capacity of 5,000)



CLUBS ALL OVER EUROPE BENEFIT FROM EURO 2016

A total of €150m has been distributed to clubs belonging to the 54 national associations that took part in the qualifying stage (278 matches) and the final round (51 matches) of the 2014–16 European Football Championship in return for those clubs releasing players.

That amount, which represents an increase of €50m relative to 2012, was made available for distribution to clubs in accordance with the new memorandum of understanding that was agreed by UEFA and the European Club Association in 2015.

On the basis of a payment distribution mechanism approved by the Executive Committee, €100m has been distributed to clubs that released players for EURO 2016, with the remaining €50m being shared among clubs that released players for the qualifying competition, regardless of whether their national team qualified for the final round. Clubs have been paid equal shares for each player who was released for each qualifying match, as well as a fixed amount per player per day for the final tournament, weighted on the

basis of FIFA's categorisation of clubs for training compensation. The precise calculations used for this distribution process can be found on UEFA.org.

A record 641 clubs have received such solidarity payments, with recipients ranging from elite football to the amateur game.

Commenting on those solidarity payments, the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, said: "I am very pleased to see that we are able to provide financial benefits to so many clubs of all profiles and sizes in order to reward their contribution to EURO 2016.

"By sharing revenues from a highly successful tournament, we continue to support football development in all our member associations."

A total of €200m is due to be distributed after EURO 2020. 🌐

AMOUNTS DISTRIBUTED PER ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION	Number of clubs concerned	Amount distributed (in €)
Albania	4	332,928.91
Andorra	6	564,859.65
Armenia	7	364,731.92
Austria	6	780,576.56
Azerbaijan	9	935,152.24
Belarus	8	533,089.38
Belgium	16	1,512,927.51
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4	89,468.13
Bulgaria	6	683,039.33
Croatia	6	1,280,771.54
Cyprus	15	1,082,650.84
Czech Republic	9	1,590,481.47
Denmark	17	1,945,591.44
England	60	38,329,085.28
Estonia	4	480,301.87
Faroe Islands	6	562,966.53
Finland	5	174,724.89
France	19	7,217,368.56
Georgia	4	159,416.96
Germany	39	18,483,390.89
Gibraltar	8	809,087.19
Greece	14	1,744,838.87
Hungary	13	2,318,695.61
Iceland	5	118,712.95
Israel	14	916,944.93
Italy	31	15,822,779.68
Kazakhstan	12	1,199,386.28
Latvia	6	366,018.57
Liechtenstein	3	710,336.59
Lithuania	6	360,586.51
Luxembourg	9	568,373.02
FYR Macedonia	5	325,890.60
Malta	12	826,794.37
Moldova	8	539,881.64
Montenegro	7	134,245.87
Netherlands	16	1,329,817.88
Northern Ireland	1	62,670.23
Norway	17	1,210,961.36
Poland	17	2,051,330.91
Portugal	9	2,442,421.30
Republic of Ireland	1	16,706.15
Romania	13	1,290,391.14
Russia	29	6,972,086.17
San Marino	10	939,721.06
Scotland	11	1,749,021.83
Serbia	5	247,878.72
Slovakia	6	495,222.39
Slovenia	5	159,209.91
Spain	34	10,455,648.11
Sweden	10	1,985,788.49
Switzerland	13	2,815,517.67
Turkey	28	6,781,660.19
Ukraine	10	3,729,095.83
Wales	3	1,735,376.15

The amounts per club are published on www.UEFA.org.



Getty Images

ASSOCIATIONS AND CLUBS WILLING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

European national associations and clubs gained comprehensive knowledge of the social responsibility principles applied to football during a four-day seminar organised by UEFA and Switzerland's St Gallen University.



Football is not just about winning the next game – it is also about making a difference in society. And the key players in European football are taking this on board.

The football associations of Serbia, Switzerland and Ukraine, as well as German clubs Bayer 04 Leverkusen and FC Schalke 04, all decided to take up UEFA's offer to attend a course aimed at creating a better understanding of social responsibility across European football.

The course emerged from the UEFA workshop on its new HatTrick incentive for football and social responsibility projects, held last February in Nyon, Switzerland. The course itself was held in

Social responsibility and sustainability were key focus areas for UEFA at EURO 2016.

November and was staged by the Institute for Business Ethics at the University of St Gallen, a highly reputable centre in the field. Including theoretical and practical modules, as well as an individual project, the course is designed to give the participants the tools to develop and implement a social responsibility strategy in their organisations and respond to current challenges.

Leaving a lasting legacy

Svitlana Shkil, head of international affairs and FIFA/UEFA programmes at the Football Federation of Ukraine, shared her views on the course: "Nowadays, expectations not only include the good performances of football teams and entertainment at the stadium, but also engagement with the different communities, involvement in sustainability and leaving a lasting legacy. The course expanded our visions when it comes to the possibilities for our national association and clubs from a corporate social responsibility angle."

Meinolf Sprink, director of fans and community affairs at Leverkusen, also commented positively on the experience: "It has been fascinating to find out how UEFA, together with several associations and clubs, are dealing with the increasingly important topic of corporate social responsibility. Sharing experiences was the most interesting part of the seminar. In addition, having various experts on board who defined CSR from different angles has been very beneficial."

The participants all received the St Gallen University's Certificate of Football and Social Responsibility. Depending on demand, further editions of the course will be held in 2017.

National associations and clubs who wish to take part in the course should send an email to fsr@uefa.ch. 🌐

LAWS OF THE GAME

The UEFA Football Law Programme provides invaluable insights into football’s legal framework.



4
intensive week-long sessions hosted across Europe

24
graduates from national associations, professional clubs, players’ unions and law firms

21
different nationalities represented

“It was a really useful course to do. It covered a big range of topics. I gained a lot of knowledge, and contacts too.” Polly Handford, legal and governance director at The Football Association, is in no doubt about the value of this recently launched UEFA course, which gives members of the football family the skills they need to tackle the ever-evolving challenges of sports – and specifically football – law.

The successful first edition of the UEFA Football Law Programme concluded last September, with 24 participants from national associations, professional clubs, players’ unions and law firms graduating from the 12-month course.

The programme, which requires a commitment to four intensive week-long sessions hosted by various academic institutions across Europe, aims to help UEFA



member association staff and other stakeholders to understand the increasingly complex legal issues in the modern game. Graduates are awarded a Certificate of Advanced Study in Football Law, which is issued by Istanbul’s Kadir Has University, in cooperation with the University of Padova, Rey Juan Carlos University in Madrid and UEFA.

The second edition begins this autumn, and the spring deadline for applications is approaching fast. Polly recommends that her peers in the legal departments of other national associations and football organisations sign up for this specialist course, which she found “enjoyable, beneficial and worthwhile”. “Engage in the course, do the preparation, and throw yourself into it,” she says. “It’s four lots of five days, and if you really dedicate that time to the course, you get a lot out of it.”

Indeed, Polly believes that the intense nature of those study weeks, which are spent with fellow legal professionals from across the continent (21 different nationalities represented in the first edition) and directed by international experts and practitioners, is a real aid to learning. “You get tested, having to apply the knowledge learned throughout the time you’re there,” she explains. “It’s very involved, it’s very focused, and it makes you pay attention, because you know you’re going to be tested at the end of the week.”

The course is not just comprehensive; it also looks in detail at the various topics, which participants will certainly encounter at some point, if not on a day-to-day basis.

“It was a great programme with a practical focus,” says Robin Steden, head of Borussia Dortmund’s legal department. “As a club lawyer, I already knew a lot of the legal framework, but the programme delivered insights which were extremely valuable and helpful for my daily work. It helped me to see the full picture.”

Polly, too, has put this learning into practice, both for her own benefit and for the benefit of her colleagues: “I kept all my course notes, and on various occasions since then, when something has cropped up or someone has come to speak to me, I’ve been able to say ‘I dealt with this on the course’. I’ve made sure I’ve spread this information throughout my team.” 🌐

UEFA CFM HELD IN UKRAINE CONCLUDES WITH SUCCESS

On 13 December, in Kyiv, the first Ukrainian edition of the UEFA Certificate in Football Management (CFM) programme came to a successful conclusion. The programme gives management staff from national associations, leagues and clubs the chance to expand their knowledge and expertise and thus improve in their specific roles.

Among those taking part in the first Ukrainian national edition were managers from the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU), Ukrainian premier league clubs and the professional football league, as well as representatives of the football associations of Kazakhstan, Moldova and Romania.

This course is important for the management team working on the development of Ukrainian football and on refocusing it in accordance with new trends in European football.

The FFU president, Andriy Pavelko, who brought the programme to Ukraine, thanked UEFA for the opportunity: "I would like to thank UEFA once again for supporting our initiative to conduct the UEFA CFM programme in Ukraine. Because of this, FFU specialists, football clubs and organisations, including colleagues from other national associations, have received free access to professional expertise, knowledge and best practices in football management, and the opportunity to enhance their individual work and teamwork. I am sure all of them have learned a lot. Such projects are extremely important for our specialists' further professional advancement and for organisational development in general. I have no doubt



that our graduates will contribute towards strengthening UEFA and FFU cooperation." At the graduation ceremony, 23 football professionals received certificates, including eight with distinction. The UEFA representatives thanked the FFU for its good organisation and management of the course, and hoped that the knowledge gained by the participants would help them in their work, especially in view of the UEFA Champions League final to be held in Kyiv in May 2018. 🌐

In Kyiv, 23 students graduated from the first Ukrainian edition of the Certificate in Football Management.



2016/17 UEFA FUTSAL CUP

Back to Almaty

The city of Almaty in Kazakhstan is set to play host to the final round of the UEFA Futsal Cup for the second time, having first hosted it back in 2011. The four group winners from the elite round will meet in Almaty from 28 to 30 April to fight it out for the European title. Those matches will take place in the new 12,000-capacity Almaty Arena, which opened in September 2016.

Reigning champions Ugra Yugorsk of Russia will be there to defend their title, alongside Spanish three-time winners Inter FS, 2011 runners-up Sporting Clube de Portugal and hosts Kairat Almaty, who have won the competition twice (in 2013 and 2015). Both semi-finals will be played on 28 April, with the third-place play-off and the final following on 30 April.



Sportsfile

2017-18 EUROPEAN FUTSAL CHAMPIONSHIP

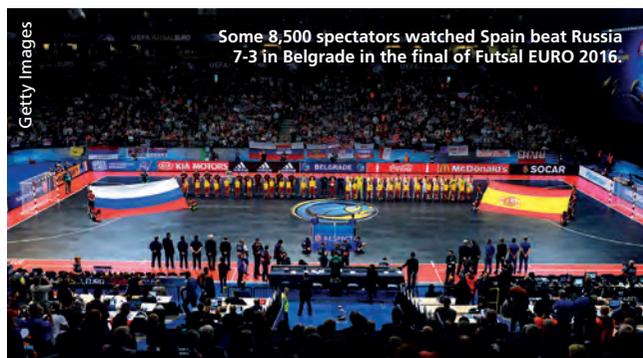
Main round in April

Now that all the preliminary round matches have been played, we know the final composition of the groups for the main round of the European Futsal Championship, with the winners of the seven preliminary round groups (Georgia, Moldova, Latvia, Albania, Denmark, France and Montenegro) joining the 21 teams that had byes in that round:

- Group 1** : Italy, Netherlands, **Belarus**, Georgia
- Group 2** : Azerbaijan, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania
- Group 3** : Ukraine, Croatia, Belgium, Montenegro
- Group 4** : Portugal, **Romania**, Finland, Latvia
- Group 5** : Spain, Serbia, **Poland**, Moldova
- Group 6** : Kazakhstan, Czech Republic, FYR Macedonia, Denmark
- Group 7** : Russia, Slovakia, **Turkey**, France

(Mini-tournament hosts in bold. Matches to be played from 3 to 12 April.)

The seven group winners will qualify directly for the final round, joining Slovenia, who qualify automatically as hosts. The seven runners-up and the best third-placed team will then play off for the remaining four places at the tournament, with the first legs of those play-offs taking place between 10 and 13 September and the second legs being played between 24 and 27 September. The final round will take place from 30 January to 10 February 2018 at Arena Stožice in Ljubljana.



Getty Images

Some 8,500 spectators watched Spain beat Russia 7-3 in Belgrade in the final of Futsal EURO 2016.



Sportsfile

2016/17 EUROPEAN U17 AND U19 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Programmes for elite rounds

On 13 December, representatives of the stars of tomorrow came to the House of European Football to attend the draws for the elite rounds of the European Under-17 and Under-19 Championships.

UNDER-17

In the Under-17 competition, the 32 teams were divided into eight groups of four:

Group 1 : Germany, **Turkey**, Finland, Armenia

Group 2 : Russia, Israel, **Hungary**, Norway

Group 3 : Spain, **Portugal**, Greece, Poland

Group 4 : **Scotland**, Switzerland, Serbia, Montenegro

Group 5 : **Netherlands**, Italy, Belarus, Belgium

Group 6 : Sweden, France, **Austria**, Ukraine

Group 7 : England, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Slovenia, Czech Republic

Group 8 : Republic of Ireland, **Cyprus**, Slovakia, Faroe Islands

(Mini-tournament hosts in bold. Matches to be played in March.)

The eight group winners and the seven best runners-up will join hosts Croatia in the final round, which will take place from 3 to 19 May.

UNDER-19

In the Under-19 competition, the seven elite round groups were drawn as follows:

Group 1 : **Netherlands**, Greece, Ukraine, Finland

Group 2 : **Germany**, Slovakia, Serbia, Cyprus

Group 3 : Spain, Norway, **England**, Belarus

Group 4 : Croatia, Turkey, Poland, **Portugal**

Group 5 : Israel, **France**, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria

Group 6 : Austria, **Czech Republic**, Hungary, Scotland

Group 7 : Sweden, Italy, Republic of Ireland, **Belgium**

(Mini-tournament hosts in bold. Matches to be played in March.)

The seven group winners will join hosts Georgia in the final round, which will take place from 2 to 15 July.

2017/18 EUROPEAN U17 AND U19 CHAMPIONSHIPS

Looking ahead to next season

As usual, in addition to the draws for this season's elite rounds, UEFA also conducted the draws for next season's qualifying rounds.

UNDER-17

In the Under-17 competition, there were 52 teams to be drawn – including debutants Kosovo. Germany and Portugal both have a bye in the qualifying round and will enter the competition in the elite round. The final round of next season's competition will be hosted by England, who qualify automatically.

Group 1 : Belgium, Switzerland, Northern Ireland, **Malta**

Group 2 : Spain, Croatia, **Albania**, Liechtenstein

Group 3 : **Czech Republic**, Turkey, Israel, Armenia

Group 4 : Russia, Iceland, **Finland**, Faroe Islands

Group 5 : **Serbia**, Greece, Norway, Gibraltar

Group 6 : France, Slovenia, **Belarus**, Kazakhstan

Group 7 : Scotland, Denmark, **Estonia**, Andorra

Group 8 : Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovakia, Moldova, **FYR Macedonia**

Group 9 : Netherlands, Wales, **Hungary**, Kosovo

Group 10: Austria, **Romania**, Lithuania, Luxembourg

Group 11: Republic of Ireland, Ukraine, **Bulgaria**, Azerbaijan

Group 12: Poland, Sweden, **Cyprus**, San Marino

Group 13: Italy, **Georgia**, Latvia, Montenegro

(Mini-tournament hosts in bold. Matches to be played this autumn.)

The top two teams in each group and the four best third-placed teams will all qualify for the elite round.

UNDER-19

The Under-19 competition has a similar format to the Under-17 competition, with 13 qualifying round groups, two teams (Spain and Portugal) entering the fray in the elite round, and the country hosting the final round (Finland) qualifying automatically.

Group 1 : **Croatia**, Denmark, Latvia, San Marino

Group 2 : Germany, **Poland**, Northern Ireland, Belarus

Group 3 : Czech Republic, Scotland, **Luxembourg**, Armenia

Group 4 : **Netherlands**, Slovenia, Hungary, Malta

Group 5 : Belgium, Switzerland, **FYR Macedonia**, Liechtenstein

Group 6 : **Austria**, Israel, Lithuania, Kosovo

Group 7 : Serbia, **Republic of Ireland**, Azerbaijan, Cyprus

Group 8 : England, **Bulgaria**, Iceland, Faroe Islands

Group 9 : Italy, **Sweden**, Estonia, Moldova

Group 10: Russia, **Greece**, Romania, Gibraltar

Group 11: France, Georgia, **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, Andorra

Group 12: Ukraine, Montenegro, Norway, **Albania**

Group 13: **Turkey**, Slovakia, Wales, Kazakhstan

(Mini-tournament hosts in bold. Matches to be played this autumn.)

The winners and runners-up in each group will join Spain and Portugal in the elite round.

2017-19 EUROPEAN UNDER-21 CHAMPIONSHIP



Getty Images

New season dawns for Under-21s

Although the 2015–17 European Under-21 Championship has not yet been concluded, with the final round set to be contested in Poland from 16 to 30 June, representatives of a record 54 national associations came to UEFA headquarters in Nyon on 26 January to attend the draw for the qualifying round of the 2017–19 competition. Italy and San Marino will share the hosting of the final round of that competition in summer 2019. However, while Italy will qualify for the tournament automatically, San Marino will have to compete for a place. Gibraltar and Kosovo will both be making their debuts in the competition.

The results of the draw for the qualifying round were as follows:

- Group 1 :** Czech Republic, Croatia, Greece, Moldova, Belarus, San Marino
- Group 2 :** Spain, Slovakia, Iceland, Albania, Estonia, Northern Ireland
- Group 3 :** Denmark, Poland, Finland, Georgia, Lithuania, Faroe Islands
- Group 4 :** England, Netherlands, Ukraine, Scotland, Latvia, Andorra
- Group 5 :** Germany, Israel, Norway, Republic of Ireland, Azerbaijan, Kosovo
- Group 6 :** Sweden, Belgium, Turkey, Hungary, Cyprus, Malta
- Group 7 :** Serbia, Austria, Russia, FYR Macedonia, Armenia, Gibraltar
- Group 8 :** Portugal, Switzerland, Romania, Wales, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Liechtenstein
- Group 9 :** France, Slovenia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Kazakhstan, Luxembourg

The nine group winners will qualify directly for the final round, with the four best second-placed teams playing off to determine the last two finalists. This will be the second time that the final round of the competition has been contested by 12 teams (the first being the tournament in Poland in June).

Qualifying matches:

- 20 – 28 March 2017
- 5 – 13 June 2017
- 28 August – 5 September 2017
- 2 – 10 October 2017
- 6 – 14 November 2017
- 19 – 27 March 2018
- 3 – 11 September 2018
- 8 – 16 October 2018

Play-offs:

- 12 – 20 November 2018

2016-17 UEFA REGIONS' CUP

Final tournament in Turkey

Istanbul has been chosen to host the final round of this season's competition for amateur teams, being selected from the eight sides that have reached that stage of the competition. Those eight teams, which qualified by winning their intermediate round groups, are as follows:

- Group 1 winners:** Ingulee, Kirovograd Region (Ukraine)
- Group 2 winners:** Castilla y Leon (Spain)
- Group 3 winners:** South Region (Russia)
- Group 4 winners:** Lisboa (Portugal)
- Group 5 winners:** Istanbul (Turkey)
- Group 6 winners:** Olomouc Region (Czech Republic)
- Group 7 winners:** Munster/Connacht (Rep. of Ireland)
- Group 8 winners:** Zagreb (Croatia)

The draw for the final round will be conducted on 2 March. The teams will be divided into two groups of four, with the winners of the two groups contesting the final. The final round will take place from 1 to 9 July.



Sportsfile

2019 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP

Four groups for the preliminary round

On 19 January, a draw took place at the House of European Football in Nyon to determine the four groups of teams that will contest the preliminary round of the European qualifiers for the next Women's World Cup, which will be hosted by France in summer 2019. For the first time ever, one of those teams will be representing Kosovo. Andorra will also be making their debut in the competition, having already taken part in the qualifying stage of the 2015–17 European Women's Championship.

Group 1: Kazakhstan, Estonia, **Georgia**, Latvia

Group 2: Greece, **Albania**, Malta, Kosovo

Group 3: Israel, Moldova, **Lithuania**, Andorra

Group 4: Turkey, **Faroe Islands**, Montenegro, Luxembourg

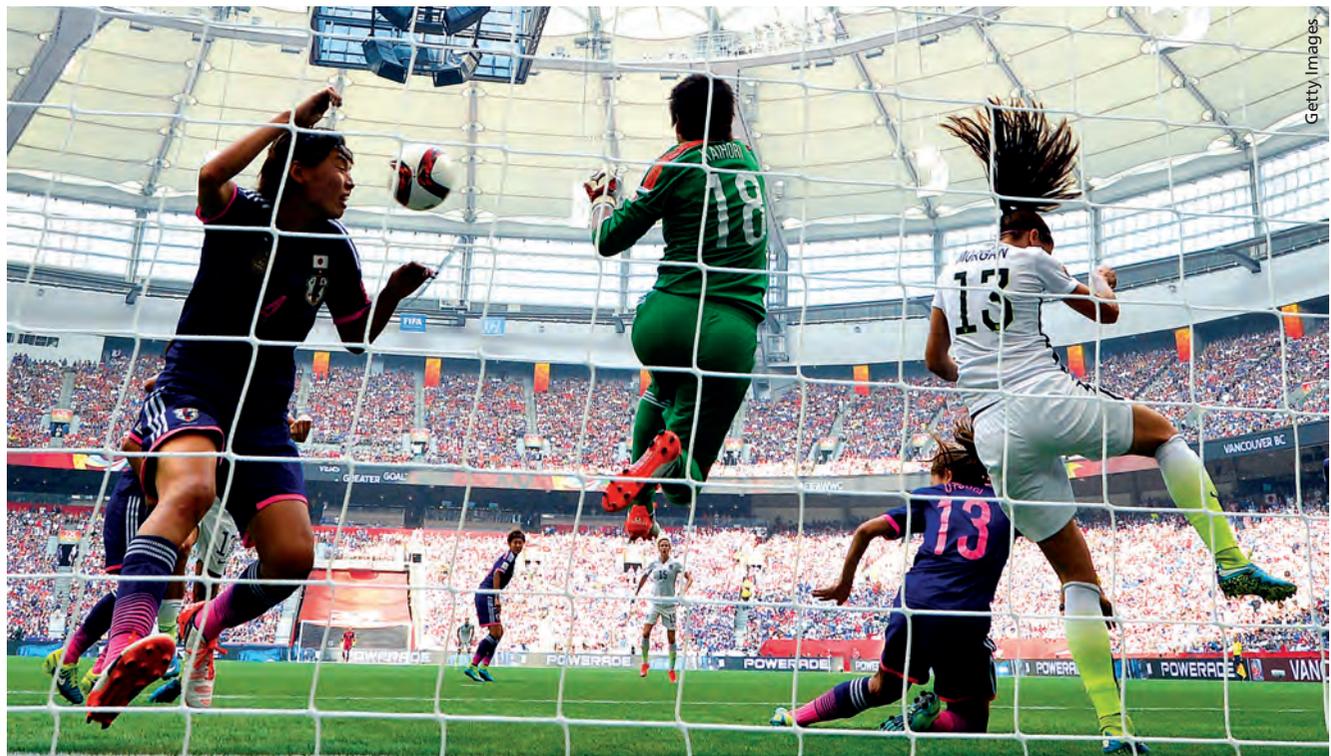
(Mini-tournament hosts in bold. Matches to be played from 6 to 11 April.)



The last two finals of the Women's World Cup have been between the USA and Japan. Will 2019 be Europe's year?

Getty Images

The four group winners and the best second-placed team will qualify for the next stage, joining 30 other teams in the draw for the qualifying round, which will be conducted on 25 April. Those teams will be divided into seven groups of five, with teams playing every other country in their group home and away between September 2017 and September 2018. The seven group winners will qualify directly for the final tournament, alongside hosts France, while the four best second-placed teams will battle it out in two rounds of play-offs in October and November 2018 to determine Europe's final representative.



Getty Images

2016 CLUB WORLD CUP

Ninth European victory in Club World Cup

On 18 December, Spanish club Real Madrid CF, representing Europe as the winners of the 2015/16 Champions League, won the Club World Cup, beating Japanese team Kashima Antlers 4-2 after extra time in Yokohama, Japan.

At the semi-final stage, Real Madrid overcame Mexican side Club América 2-0, while Kashima Antlers beat Colombia's Atlético Nacional 3-0. The Colombian

side went on to secure a consolation victory in the third-place place-off.

The Club World Cup is a happy hunting ground for Europe's clubs, with 9 European victories in 13 tournaments: 3 for FC Barcelona (2009, 2011 and 2015), 2 for Real Madrid (2014 and 2016), and a victory apiece for FC Bayern München (2013), FC Internazionale Milano (2010), Manchester United FC (2008) and AC Milan (2007). 🌐



CHILD PROTECTION: A TOP PRIORITY

The Turkish Football Federation is strengthening the welfare and child protection programme it launched in 2014 and making the matter one of its top priorities.

The Turkish Football Federation (TFF) has been stepping up its child protection measures since January 2014, when it launched its welfare and child protection programme, under the supervision of its head coach and director of football, Fatih Terim, who has made the matter one of his top priorities.

“Children are the future of our game. In order for their talent to emerge and develop, children need to be happy both on and off the pitch. That’s why we need to provide a healthy, comfortable and proper environment for our young players. Therefore, child protection is not a luxury but a necessity,” he said.

“I have personally witnessed children being exposed to mental and physical abuse in youth development,” he added. “Due to the ‘win at all costs’ mentality sometimes seen in youth football, children face serious trauma, with families and coaches both contributing to it. In addition, young players know they need to make sacrifices for football. This makes them more prone to abuse.”

Terim believes that the TFF’s child protection programme is a crucial initiative which can prevent such adverse effects and help children to become successful adults and players.

The crucial role of education

As part of the programme, a welfare and child protection unit has been set up within the federation. Its role is to educate all stakeholders in order to facilitate a healthy environment for young athletes, establishing reporting processes and then reporting cases of alleged abuse to the judicial authorities. In short, the aim is to have a ‘clean’ football structure within the country.

“You can’t just copy a successful programme from another country. Each culture holds its own risk factors for the young player.”

Gülhan Gündüz
Head of the TFF’s welfare and child protection unit

In parallel, all 420 coaches who have followed UEFA A and B licence courses received child protection education and signed the related charter, officially agreeing to abide by its code of conduct. Furthermore, all instructors who are part of the child football certificate programme for 6 to 13-year-olds and all TFF national team and regional coaches have also received the same child protection training.

Child protection specialist Gülhan Gündüz heads the TFF’s welfare and child protection unit. She previously worked with Fatih Terim at Galatasaray, where the very first child protection measures were introduced when the experienced coach was in charge of the Istanbul club between 2011 and 2013.

“We are inspired by other successful programmes. Nevertheless, you can’t just copy a successful programme from another country. Each culture holds its own risk factors for the young player. These cultural differences must be fully analysed to ensure an effective protective system” Gündüz said.

Why welfare and child protection go hand in hand

Gündüz also explained why the word ‘welfare’ was included in the name of the programme: “The urge to win for all involved should not override the player’s right to be happy as a child or a teenager. Young players should not feel threatened or intimidated by performance anxiety and only be positively influenced by sports. Welfare stands right in the middle between ambition to succeed and happiness and this makes it a suitable word.”

Speaking about the positive feedback they have received about this education, Terim added: “We have been teaching the coaches about child protection for three years now and have managed to create awareness on this subject in every part of Turkey. Coaches have openly expressed how much they enjoyed and benefited from these lessons. They have given us the biggest support.”

Spearheading the initiative in football, the TFF collaborated with Istanbul University on an educational scheme that can be taught in all institutions which wish to use it.

Following the additional education in coaching courses, the TFF wanted to institutionalise the initiative in clubs, and clubs participating in the development leagues (U14, U15, U16, U17 and U19) are now obliged to establish welfare and child protection units.

The TFF has designed various posters for clubs, targeting different stakeholders such as club officials, coaches and the children themselves and containing child protection statements.

Collaborating with the ministry of family and social affairs, the TFF has also published a child protection manual for boarding schools offering sports education.

Getting families on board

Families form one of the most important pillars in youth development and they are firmly part of the programme. “Their influence cannot be underestimated. This season we will start educating parents through our e-learning platform. We want families to be a positive influence in the young players’ lives and believe they may need assistance in defining ways to achieve this,” Terim explained.



“We have a zero-tolerance policy towards anybody who harms children or is inclined to do so.”
Fatih Terim, director of football

Gündüz emphasised the role of parents, saying: “They need guidance on this matter. Parents may harm their children, especially because of the pressure they put them under. We need to inform them and make them aware of our concepts.”

While one half of the child protection programme is informative, the other is operational. Members of the welfare and child protection unit observe matches even on weekends and try to identify whether any misconduct happens or not.

Child helpline ensures anonymity

When it comes to abuse in youth football, confidentiality has been a major concern for cultural reasons. Various kinds of abuse have been covered up because of the fears of the neighbourhood or community. The child protection helpline is therefore a vital resource, providing a place where anyone can seek advice or share their concerns, anonymously if they wish.

“We come from a culture where expressing such problems openly is difficult, but I believe we have showed the iceberg to people and are slowly melting it now.

Clubs are very cooperative on this matter. Mostly we receive complaints about coaches from well-educated parents. If there’s a criminal side to the problem, we report it to the Turkish police and then they take care of the situation. We have a zero-tolerance policy towards anybody who harms children or is inclined to do so,” Terim said.

“Our child protection programme fights discrimination too. We have seen that some coaches focus on the most talented players, showing little interest and giving less chances to less skilful ones.”

The TFF is now preparing to take further steps to extend the scope of its child protection programme. One such step is the preparation of a child protection manual for clubs, which should soon be ready for distribution.

Terim is totally confident about the programme he is leading. “Children in football are safer from abuse than in any other sport because the Turkish Football Federation is the only governing body to have a dedicated unit to tackle this problem. We are proud of what we have achieved.”



420 UEFA A and B licensed coaches have received child protection education



All TFF national team and regional coaches have received child protection education



U14 to U19 development league clubs have established welfare and child protection units

FIRST COACH EDUCATION EVENT OF 2017

CARMEN REDL

 From 20 to 22 January, the first Austrian FA (ÖFB) coach education course of the year took place in Maria Enzersdorf, near Vienna. Top-class speakers from Austria and abroad shared their knowledge with the more than 300 participants on various football-related topics. Speaking about the three-day event, Willi Ruttensteiner, the ÖFB's director of sport and head of coach education and further education, said: "For a few years now, we've been kicking off the football year with a coach education seminar at the end of January, enlisting top-class speakers to talk about current trends in the world of football in order to help us to train expert coaches for domestic and international football."

Among this year's international speakers was former Werder Bremen head coach Thomas Schaaf, who gave a presentation on coaches' changing skill sets. Another was Raymond Verheijen, the Dutch fitness coach of many top club and national teams, who spoke about training options to prevent injury, while Prof. Daniel Memmert, head of the institute of cognitive and sports research at the German sports university in Cologne, talked about tactical creativity in football. Experienced Austrian coaches Oliver Lederer and Klaus Schmidt discussed positional play and approaches to sporting failure and changing coach as a result. The ÖFB's Gerhard Zallinger, national team sports scientist, tackled

the topic of 'tactical periodisation' in football, while Willi Ruttensteiner and ÖFB goalkeeper coach Klaus Lindenberger illustrated international trends in football using the example of EURO 2016. Women's coach Dominik Thalhammer described the development of the national women's team and how they qualified for Women's EURO 2017 in the Netherlands.

Alongside the classroom presentations, Thomas Schaaf, Oliver Lederer and Klaus Schmidt led practical sessions at the ground of FC Admira Wacker Mödling. "Our aim is to increase the expertise of all our coaches. That involves football knowledge, but also personal and social skills in dealing with players, the media and the public," Willi Ruttensteiner explained.

THE 26TH MINUTE

ULVIYYA NAJAFOVA

 The CBC Sport TV channel, a rights holder for Azerbaijan championship and cup matches, which works in close cooperation with the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan

(AFFA), has produced a film devoted to Azerbaijan's 1-0 victory in their 1998 World Cup qualifying match against Switzerland in 1996 - the country's first home match in their first-ever World Cup qualifiers.

The first showing of The 26th Minute took place at the Baku Olympic Stadium conference hall. Volkan Ust, managing director of the CBC Sport TV channel, welcomed the audience and invited the film's production crew onto the stage, giving project leader Azer Javad Aliyev and script writer Vafa Aghabalayeva the opportunity to talk about producing the film.

Also at the first showing were the AFFA's general secretary, Elkhan Mammadov, former president Fuad Musayev, the then head coach, Kazbek Tuayev, veteran players Tarlan Ahmadov, Yunis Huseynov, Vidadi Rzayev, Arif Asadov, Samir Alakbarov and Igor Getman, sporting community members and media representatives.

Mammadov, Musayev, Tuayev and some of the players shared their impressions after the showing, and Mammadov presented AFFA gifts – clocks inscribed with '31 August 1996, 19:26' – to the players, coaching staff and AFFA officials involved in the momentous match.



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

ELVEDIN BEGIĆ RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT

FUAD KRVAVAC



In Sarajevo, the electoral assembly of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation (FFBIH), attended by all 60 delegates, re-elected Elvedin Begić, the only candidate, as the association's president. Ivan Beus and Milorad Sofrenić were elected as vice-presidents, and a new 15-member executive was also formed.

The FFBIH electoral assembly was preceded by assemblies at cantonal, regional and district levels, with the entity associations of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska then electing their delegates and candidates for the executive committee elections, as well as their own presidents: Irfan Durić and Mile Kovačević respectively. Entity presidents are automatically members of the executive committee. The remaining 13 members elected to the executive body for four-



Ranko Vučković, Milorad Sofrenić, Zlatko Spasojević and Dragan Kulina. The substitute members are Milan Bjelajac and Seadin Badić.

Under the leadership of Elvedin Begić, the FFBIH has gone through major changes: the senior national team qualified for the 2014 World Cup in Brazil and the Under-17s for their European championship final round in Azerbaijan in 2016, the number of teams in the premier league was reduced, the training centre

year terms were: Mato Jozić, Nurdin Peštalić, Muhamed Begagić, Muhidin Raščić, Midhet Sarajčić, Elvedin Begić, Dragan Soldo, Ivan Beus, Ivan Perić,

in Zenica was built and the association purchased a new building to house its headquarters.

In other news from the FFBIH assembly, Ivan Osim was made honorary president, and he, Dušan Bajević and Sead Kajtaž were elected as members of the advisory and mediation committee, for which a further three members will be elected at a later date. Following his re-election, Elvedin Begić thanked the delegates for their support and promised to do everything in his power to continue the development of football in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "I got a lot of support and I have to be grateful. It is the duty of myself and of the executive board to justify the trust placed in us, and to build the association on stronger and better foundations. I also thank UEFA, without whose support we couldn't do anything," he said.

BULGARIA

www.bfunion.bg

FUTSAL EURO 2018 PRELIMINARY ROUND MINI-TOURNAMENT IN VARNA

NIKOLAY DYULGEROV



From 24 to 27 January 2017, the Black Sea coastal city of Varna played host to the Group D mini-tournament in the preliminary round of the Futsal EURO 2018 qualifying competition. The national futsal teams of Albania, England and Malta vied alongside the host team for top spot in the group and a place in the main round.

The president of the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU), Borislav Mihaylov, who is a member of the UEFA Executive Committee and chairman of the UEFA Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee, opened the tournament at the Palace of Culture and Sport in a ceremony attended by the minister of youth and sport, Krasen Kravev, and the mayor of Varna, Ivan Portnih.



The mayor of Varna received a special award from the BFU president in recognition of the region's excellent cooperation and development of football. Varna is one of the cities chosen to host matches in the European Women's Under-17 Championship final tournament in Bulgaria in 2019.

The mini-tournament held a real treat in store for the spectators, who saw 38 goals across six very interesting and attractive matches, played in a spirit of fair play. All the matches were streamed live on the BFU's official YouTube channel, BFU TV.

Albania came out on top with three consecutive wins, beating Bulgaria 7-1, England 5-1 and Malta 3-2. England finished second with 6 points, followed by Bulgaria (3 points) and Malta (0 points).

VISIT OF THE UEFA PRESIDENT

TOMISLAV PACAK



The Croatian Football Federation (HNS) was honoured to welcome the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, to Zagreb in December, in one of his first official visits to a UEFA member association. The HNS management, led by the federation's president, Davor Šuker, greeted the new UEFA president and introduced him to HNS staff. "I am pleased that the UEFA president has visited Croatia. We hope he can help us with his experience and vision," Mr Šuker said at a UEFA-HNS press conference in Zagreb.

Mr Čeferin also held meetings with the Croatian prime minister, Andrej Plenković, and president, Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović. "I am glad that one of my first official visits is to my dear neighbours of Croatia. Croatia is a football phenomenon, a miracle on the field of play, but there are issues to be solved – I spoke about those topics with Davor and the country's political leaders," Mr Čeferin said.

In other news, in January the Croatian national team took part in the inaugural China Cup in Nanning, finishing fourth after losing two penalty shoot-outs



(against Chile and China). Luka Ivanušec became the youngest goalscorer in the Croatian senior team's history when he scored against China at 18 years and 49 days old.

After a brilliant year with Real Madrid CF, Luka Modrić deservedly won several prestigious awards. During the end-of-year awards season he was selected for a number of best player line-ups, including the FIFA FIFPro World11, the UEFA.com users' Team of the Year and the L'Equipe team of the year. He also won the Silver

Ball at the Club World Cup while helping Real Madrid to win the title, and was unanimously chosen as Croatian footballer of the year for the fifth time in his career.

To ensure that Croatia develops a new generation of Modrićs, the HNS has held its traditional winter camps for boys and girls.

Last but not least, the HNS has published a special book about the Croatian national team's EURO 2016 experience, featuring interesting accounts and exclusive photographs.

IT'S BACK! THE FA PEOPLE'S CUP RETURNS

DANNY LYNCH



This year's FA People's Cup – a nationwide five-a-side competition run in partnership with BBC Get Inspired – has launched with a call-out to teams across the country to get involved. The competition is for any amateur player who loves playing football. It is free to enter and welcomes male and female players of all ages and abilities. The 11 categories range from Under-14s through to veterans (Over-35s) and include walking football and disability categories.

Players can register whether they are part of an established team or individuals who can join 'wild card' teams that

are formed prior to the tournament starting. Once registration is complete, the competition will take place over three rounds: round one, semi-finals and finals.

The FA People's Cup was formed in 2015 and saw 30,000 people take part in its first year. Last year, it returned with more than 35,000 players entering from over 4,000 sides across the country. A closely fought finals' day was held in Sheffield and the eventual winners from each category were invited to attend The FA Cup final at Wembley Stadium.

This year, we aim to make the competition even bigger and better. Played alongside The FA Cup and



supported by the BBC, The FA is aiming to give 40,000 players the chance of tasting cup glory.

ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

YOUTH SKILLS PROGRAMME GOES FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH

MAARJA SAULEP



The youth sports programme SPIN offers children from the ages of 10 to 18 the opportunity to play football and also develop the social skills they need in life. It was launched in 2015 and now operates in three cities. The main values of the programme are activeness, openness and selflessness. Children can learn how to take the initiative, how to be considerate of others and how to be a thoughtful person and citizen. There are three sessions each week: two for football-related activities and one for other skills.

In 2015 and 2016 more than 450 children took part in the programme. Currently there are 12 groups in total in the capital, Tallinn, and the fifth-largest city, Kohtla-Jarve. At the end of January new groups were set up in the country's third-largest city, Narva, on the Russian border. Andrei Liimets, director of communications and development for SPIN, explained why the programme

leaders decided to expand it there:

"We opened three new groups in Narva, since Ida-Virumaa county, where Kohtla-Jarve and Narva are located, has been a priority for us since we started, because of the assessment of the ministry of the interior and the police and border guard agency. We are targeting regions with the fewest opportunities for extracurricular activities and the highest percentage of youth delinquency."

The bar is set high and those in charge of the programme rely on a scientific approach to see results. "We gather a lot of information about the programme and the children's progress. The programme has been running for a short period of time, but the initial analysis has shown that grades have improved by up to 7% and behaviour has improved by about 10% in the children who have taken part in the project for at least a year," Liimets said. "For detailed results we rely on coaches, schools, police contacts and parents for feedback. It has been mostly positive. Many schools have shared stories

with us where children have been able to focus better and their behaviour has also improved. A lot of kids have started communicating more freely, and they have found the motivation to set up goals for themselves over a longer period of time. There are also a lot of good one-time stories, where kids have suddenly gained enough courage to perform in front of people or get on better with their parents."



FAROE ISLANDS

www.football.fo

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS HEAD TO THE FAROE ISLANDS

TERJI NIELSEN



From 6 to 11 April, the Faroese women's national team will host a World Cup preliminary round tournament on home soil for the very first time. The Faroese women have been drawn in the same group as Luxembourg, Montenegro and Turkey.

"It's a very strong group but, of course, our goal will be to make it through to the next stage," says Pætur Clementsen, head coach of the national team.

In all, four preliminary-round mini-tournaments are taking place, from which the section winners and the runner-up with the best record will progress to the qualifying group stage.



Considering his team's chances, Clementsen says: "On paper, Turkey is the strongest team in the preliminary round, so that will be a tough test. We played

Luxembourg recently and feel we have a chance against them. But I don't know much about Montenegro so I don't know what to expect."

GIBTELECOM BECOME ROCK CUP TITLE SPONSOR IN MULTI-YEAR DEAL

STEVEN GONZALEZ

 Gibtelecom, Gibraltar's leading telecommunications company, has signed a multi-year deal to become the title sponsors of the Rock Cup – Gibraltar's premier domestic cup competition, which will now be known as the Gibtelecom Rock Cup. The deal, which runs for four years, starting with the 2016/17 season, was announced at Gibtelecom's headquarters in Gibraltar on 13 December.

Speaking at the launch, Gibtelecom's CEO, Tim Bristow, expressed his delight at Gibtelecom becoming the Rock Cup's first-ever title sponsor and his desire to explore further ways of collaborating with the Gibraltar FA: "This sponsorship is the first step in what Gibtelecom hopes is a long-lasting partnership with the GFA, in which we can leverage the combination of Gibraltar football and Gibtelecom's global communications reach. We are excited about joining the football community at a time when its success continues to grow, at home

and abroad, and look forward to seeing Gibtelecom Rock Cup winners in future UEFA competitions. The local teams and their players' commitment to success, and their culture of nurturing young talent, are values we share at Gibtelecom."



Dennis Beiso, general secretary of the Gibraltar FA, said: "Our new collaboration with Gibtelecom will help promote the sporting and commercial success of club football in Gibraltar and will help the Gibtelecom Rock Cup to grow from strength to strength. The Gibtelecom Rock Cup is, after all, Gibraltar's national cup competition, and the eventual winners will go on to represent us in the UEFA Europa League. The partnership with Gibtelecom is therefore a positive step in the association's continued growth and development, and an excellent opportunity to collaborate with a brand that shares many of our core values. We are very keen to develop commercial initiatives such as these going forward."

The competition will now have a brand-new trophy to be presented to the winners as of this season, and in another first, the Gibtelecom Rock Cup will have its own bespoke logo. All is set for a very exciting 2016/17 Gibtelecom Rock Cup!

SMALL KIDS, BIG NUMBERS

MÁRTON DINNYÉS

 The OTP Bank Bozsik programme has set a participation record in the pre-school age group this season. A total of 30,574 children aged three to six and around 1,500 nursery schools have been involved in the initiative, which is organised and overseen by the grassroots department of the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ). Its aim is to increase the popularity of football among children and to identify and nurture young talents.

Five years ago, 8,986 children from 339 nursery schools took part in football-themed events and festivals, but participation has grown in spectacular fashion since then, particularly in the last

year and a half. Since September 2015, as many as 500 new nursery schools and 10,000 young children have taken part. The programme has reached 8,602 new children from 410 nursery schools in 23 cities outside of the capital, as well as 3,299 young children from 188 establishments in Budapest.

Within the programme, nursery schools agree to hold a football session with a minimum of ten participants at least once a week. There are no winners or losers: the primary aim – in accordance with UEFA's grassroots strategy – is to give the children the opportunity to enjoy themselves, to do some physical activity and sport, and to develop a love



for football. The MLSZ provides each participating educational establishment with a publication that includes tasks and exercises to improve children's skills. In addition, the adults running the sessions can participate in a free voluntary 16-hour training course and have the opportunity to gain their grassroots level C coaching qualification.

ITALY

www.figc.it

NINE NAMES ADDED TO THE ITALIAN FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME

DIEGO ANTENOZIO



The magnificent Salone dei Cinquecento in Florence's Palazzo Vecchio was once again chosen as the venue for the now traditional ceremony of the Italian Football Hall of Fame, an institution established in 2011 by the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and the Italian Football Museum as a way of recognising individuals who have left an indelible mark on the history of football in the country. The cream of the Italian football world were present to lend their support as nine more legends of the Italian game, selected in October by the editors of Italy's major sports newspapers, were inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Paolo Rossi and Giuseppe Bergomi, who both starred in Italy's victorious 1982 World Cup campaign, were joined by Leicester City manager Claudio Ranieri, 1970s and 1980s Roma and Brazil legend Paulo Roberto Falcão, and Melania Gabbiadini, captain of the national women's team. Silvio Berlusconi, meanwhile, was recognised in the 'Italian club official' category, while Nils Liedholm, Giulio Campanati and Cesare Maldini were inducted posthumously. Sharing the spotlight was a certain Diego Armando Maradona, who returned to the



Palazzo Vecchio two years after his own election to the Hall of Fame. "Here, I feel I am part of football," declared the 'Pibe de Oro' (the golden boy), "I feel I have come home."

Meanwhile, the FIGC president, Carlo Tavecchio, offered his own thoughts: "The Hall of Fame is a celebration of a tradition and a footballing culture that shines a light from the past to help us build a present and a future of great potential."

"Young players today," added the federation's director general, Michele Uva, "need to be aware of the history of Italian football, to understand its culture. As always, the new inductees represent the pinnacle of the sport in Italy, and President Tavecchio has asked us to emphasise the importance of a ceremony like this, where we find history, culture and timeless values brought together in a splendid setting like the one we have here at the Palazzo Vecchio."

LATVIA

www.lff.lv

VANINS NAMED PLAYER OF THE YEAR FOR A RECORD FOURTH TIME

TOMS ĀRMANIS



Andris Vajņins, goalkeeper of the Latvian national team and Swiss Challenge League club FC Zürich, has been named the best player in Latvia for 2016.

The 36-year-old was named the best in his country for the fourth time in his career – having previously earned the accolade in 2008, 2013 and 2015 – and thus becomes the most titled football player in Latvia since the award

was introduced back in 1992. He has overtaken Vitālijs Astafjevs – holder of the European record for the most international matches played (167 caps) – and former Southampton FC player Marians Pahars, who were both named player of the year three times.

The player of the year was chosen in a vote in which Latvian Football Federation board members, the coaches of the national teams, the clubs in the

top two divisions and journalists were invited to take part.

Meanwhile, another Latvian national team goalkeeper, Marija Ibragimova, who also plays for the Latvian women's champions, Rīgas Futbola skola, received the first award in her career as the best female player of 2016.

The Latvian football season gala evening took place at the Splendid Palace theatre, where the laureates were announced and honoured in 26 different categories.

E-LEARNING PLATFORM FOR GRASSROOTS COACHES

VAIDOTAS JANUŠKA

 The Lithuanian Football Federation (LFF) has launched its first e-learning platform and will soon start pilot C licence courses as part of its strategy to boost the number of qualified coaches.

The new platform is mainly targeted at grassroots coaches who work with children aged up to 11 and volunteers, but also parents and kindergarten or school teachers. "It's the first course of this type to be launched in Lithuanian sport," said the LFF president, Edvinas Eimontas. "It has been made to be



easily accessible and user-friendly. Innovation is one of the LFF's values, and we have a plan to prepare at least 500 grassroots coaches or volunteers."

In other news, in January the LFF joined with the country's basketball and handball organisations to hold a

coaching seminar about performance analysis. Chris Barnes, performance enhancement consultant at West Bromwich Albion FC and Queens Park Rangers FC, was the main speaker at the seminar, which almost 200 coaches attended.

EUROPEAN WEEK OF SPORT

ALEX VELLA

 In conjunction with the European Commission, UEFA and its member associations celebrated the European Week of Sport. The occasion, incorporating UEFA Grassroots Week, promotes participation in all forms of sport, including football. The Malta Football Association (MFA), through its

grassroots department and its affiliated youth football association, played an important part in this week of activities.

The programme kicked off with the women's Super Cup. In a historic first, children from Frame Football Malta, a body that organises football for players who require the use of a walker-style

frame, escorted the players and referees onto the pitch. Afterwards, the Birkirkara FC players surprised the children by giving them their medals.

The MFA and the youth football association also joined forces to support the activities of the physiotherapy department of the ministry of health's child development and assessment unit for this year's World Physiotherapy Day, which took place just before Grassroots Week. This was also an occasion to organise a number of activities for the youngsters taking part, assisted by MFA staff, including the Under-16 head coach, Noel Turner.

For the closing event of Grassroots Week, children from Frame Football Malta and Under-12 players from Maltese Premier League club Hamrun Spartans FC had a training session with coaches from the club and player Saturday Nanapere.

All these activities organised by the Maltese football family convey the message that sport, especially football, is for everyone, including those with disabilities, and that social inclusion is the key.



MOLDOVA

www.fmf.md

PAVEL CEBANU RE-ELECTED PRESIDENT

PRESS OFFICE



The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) held its annual congress at the futsal arena in Ciorescu on 20 January to elect its president and the members of the executive committee. The presidential election was won by the outgoing president and only candidate, Pavel Cebanu, who received 165 votes and, as a result, enters his sixth consecutive four-year term of office. "Thanks to all of you," he said to the congress after he had been elected. "We now have four years of hard work ahead of us. Our priorities will be the development of youth football, football infrastructure and, of course, we will try to improve the results of our national teams."

A number of changes to the FMF statutes, the fundamental legal basis for Moldovan football, were also discussed and approved at the meeting, which was attended, among others, by the minister of youth and sports, Victor Zubcu; and the chairman of the national Olympic and sports committee, Nicolae Juravski. The executive committee elections

resulted in several new members joining the 20-strong body, including Vazha Tarkhnishvili (FC Sheriff director), Petru Jardan (FC Milsami vice-president), Mihail Usatii (Petrocub-Hîncești president) and Anatol Teslev (European champion with the Soviet Under-18 team in 1966). Nicolai Cebotari, the federation's general secretary, was also appointed for a new four-year term, which is also his sixth in a row.

The FMF order of merit was awarded to Leonid Terteac, Ion Clipa, Gheorghe Sajin, Iurii Hodâchin, Grigorii Cadîn, Iurie Conusevici and Petru Muntean in recognition of their major contributions to the development of football in Moldova.

The newly re-elected president, whose four-year mandate will take him to 2021, identified the objectives for his new term of office: "I hope to continue our work for the development and benefit of Moldovan football," he said. Pavel Cebanu, 61, enjoyed a distinguished playing career. The Reni-born midfielder scored 45 goals in 341 appearances for FC Nistru Chişinău in the former Soviet



Vadim Caftanat

Union championship. He was also chosen as Moldova's outstanding player of the past 50 years to mark UEFA's golden jubilee in 2004. After finishing his playing career, he coached in Moldova and Romania. He served as general secretary of the FMF before he was elected FMF president for the first time on 1 February 1997.

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

TOURNAMENT SET TO GROW WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

NIGEL TILSON



This year's European Women's Under-19 Championship final round will provide a great opportunity to drive women's football forward in Northern Ireland, according to the tournament director, Sara Booth. Eight national teams, including hosts Northern Ireland, will participate in the tournament from 8 to 20 August. The qualifiers are already under way, with elite rounds being staged in April and June to determine the finalists.

In Sara's words: "This is the single biggest opportunity for the Irish Football Association to grow women's football.



Sara Booth

By putting our country on the world stage and hosting this event, we hope to inspire a new generation of girls, and boys, to dream of wearing the Northern Ireland jersey. Not only do we want more young people taking up the sport, but we want to encourage more administrators, coaches, referees, officials and volunteers to get involved at their local girls' and boys' clubs as a consequence of this tournament."

A local organising committee has been set up to deliver the event, and more than 30 members of the Irish FA have been involved in some capacity to date – the first time in the history of the association that so much support has been mobilised for a women's football event. Comprehensive marketing and digital media plans are already in place, while a legacy and participation plan is being developed.

THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ERA

MATILDE DIAS

 The Portuguese Football Federation's activities away from the pitch may not fill back pages in the way the conquest of the EURO 2016 trophy has, but one of the greatest changes to the federation during the last eight months has been the importance placed on social responsibility work and the creation of a public relations and social responsibility department.

One of the first initiatives of this new department was to team up with the Portuguese professional players' union and the Portuguese referees' association in a campaign to promote respect across

the game, under the slogan 'On the pitch we all play the same game'.

A lot of important work has been undertaken to combat discrimination of all kinds. The federation, with the national team head coaches and players, male and female, has been supporting important actions such as the fight against domestic violence and child abuse, and has been a proactive presence within the local community.

The Portuguese Football Federation has also launched workshops for deaf referees and has been helping children in institutional care and grown-ups who, for



social or financial reasons, may be unable to acquire safe and adequate housing.

A REPORT FOR CLUBS AIMING TO RECRUIT NEWLY ARRIVED REFUGEES

STEPHEN FINN

 The Football Association of Ireland has been involved in a two-year project on migrants volunteering in sport, on which the baseline study has just been issued. Along with European partners from six other countries, a 24-month sports inclusion (www.sportinclusion.net) collaborative partnership project (European Sports Inclusion Network-ESPIN) was conducted in conjunction with the EU's Erasmus+ sport programme.

The project's research study sought to examine barriers, challenges and benefits to volunteering in sport from the perspective of people with a 'migrant' background as well as from the perspective of sports clubs. The ESPIN project produced a number of outputs over its 24 months, including national round-table sessions designed to gain insights for the production of a handbook on volunteering in sport, national club-based volunteering in football information sessions, volunteering events focused around the European Week of Sport, an international



conference and training workshops.

A number of recommendations were made in the report intended for sports clubs aiming to recruit newly arrived refugees – as players or athletes to begin with, but also as volunteers in the long term. Two basic approaches were recommended. On the one side, it could be useful to begin with special offers tailored to refugees so as to be able to adapt to their specific needs and specific situation and to facilitate interaction among them. On the other side, it could also make sense to incorporate them directly into existing groups or teams, since mixed teams facilitate intercultural exchange and can thus further the inclusion of refugees.

Other recommendations included:

- Consulting refugees and developing special offers based on their requirements
- Persisting in the face of setbacks
- Avoiding paternalistic attitudes, ensuring that communication takes place on an equal footing
- Encouraging refugees to engage while recognising the limitations of volunteer work
- Providing transport to and from sports events and training facilities, if necessary
- Providing sportswear and equipment
- Treating refugees as normal members
- Creating shared experiences
- Combining sports with educational opportunities
- Promoting inclusion both within and without the club and avoiding rivalries

The full report is available at: www.footballforequality.org/fileadmin/mediapool/pdf/spin/ESPIN_Baseline_Study_Equal_access_for_migrant_volunteers_to_sports.pdf

ROMANIA

www.frf.ro

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

PAUL ZAHARIA



Ensuring the future of Romanian football is one of the main pillars of the action plan of the Romanian FA (FRF). This, of course, requires hard work in the present, as well as the necessary financial resources for youth football activities. Given the current global financial crisis, the FRF came up with an imaginative way to move its youth football development plans forward.



Last autumn, via its official Facebook page, it invited fans of the Romanian national team to vote for the best development projects launched by the FRF at youth level. The voting campaign started ahead of Romania's first home 2018 World Cup qualifier against Montenegro at the beginning of September, and will be repeated before each home qualifier.

In the first vote, the two winning projects were:

- The creation of a scholarship system to create an elite group of youth coaches, given that one of the most important periods in a player's career, if not the most, has to be managed by experienced and properly educated coaches. The vision of the FRF with regard to the education of children and young players involves intensive specialised youth coach education

courses, including training at renowned youth academies in several European countries.

- Summer and winter camps for the most talented young players aged between 12 and 14. It is crucial to invest in the younger generations, and the FRF plans to lower the minimum selection age to 12.

The projects are being financed by the profits from Romania's first two home World Cup qualifiers, against Montenegro and Poland. Thus, €30,000 has been allocated to the first project, to provide scholarships for 20 youth coaches, while €80,000 is being directed at the national scouting project targeting young players born in 2003, from among whom the 120 most-talented will be selected for a training camp. After four days, those 120 will be whittled down to 66 players, who will stay on at the camp for a further six days and form the basis of the youngest Romanian national youth team, the Under-15s.

SAN MARINO

www.fsgc.sm

THIRD C LICENCE COACHING COURSE

EMILIO CECCHINI



The first half of the 2016/17 season saw the San Marino Football Federation (FSGC) run its third UEFA C licence course, with the aim of improving the standard of coaching in youth football.

A total of 19 participants were accepted onto the course by programme director and FSGC general secretary Luciano Casadei. The first session was held on 19 September, and the course concluded on 26 October. It was well attended throughout, which is doubtless testament to the highly professional organisation, the pleasant atmosphere and relaxing setting. The sessions ran from 18.30 to 23.00, three evenings a week. They were carefully designed to complement one another, with particular consideration given to the need to provide an introduction to coaching at this level, and to make the course relevant to youth

football. Two key topics that the organisers were especially keen to include were 'training methods' and 'development of the young footballer'.

During the course, sessions focusing on these topics were carefully worked into the programme to provide participants with the expertise and knowledge needed for effective youth football coaching.

Course coordinator Emilio Cecchini, who oversees the federation's department

of education and teaches coaching methodology and theory, was able to make use of the expertise of a number of leading instructors working in San Marino and the surrounding regions of Italy. With the multimedia seminar rooms at the FSGC's headquarters and the adjacent all-weather synthetic pitch at its disposal, Emilio Cecchini and his team were able to deliver an extremely successful and rewarding programme.



WINTER FOOTBALL SCHOOLS GET THE NEW YEAR OFF TO A GOOD START

MIRKO VRBICA

 Under the coordination and direction of Ivan Djukanović, the Football Association of Serbia kicked off the new year with winter football schools at the association's sports centre in Stara Pazova. First up, from 3 to 10 January, was the school for players born in 2002 and 2003. Right after them, from 10 to 17 January, it was the turn of players born in 2004 and 2005.

At the same time and place, the women's Under-19 and Under-17 teams, led by Lidija Stojkanović and Suzana Stanojević respectively, had seven days of practical and theoretical training, coordinated by Nikoslav Bjegović. Sports director Goran Bunjevčević was present throughout, demonstrating how much attention and importance the association places on children's and women's football.

More than 100 boys and over 50 girls were accommodated at the sports centre, training in temperatures of below zero for most of the time.

"I am glad that no one was injured or sick during the winter camp. Everyone returned to their families and clubs healthy, with a lot of emotions and memories," Ivan Djukanović said. "Due to the low temperatures, which dropped at some point to minus 15, we had to improvise a little in order to successfully carry out the programme. But we succeeded. We assessed the possibilities and potential of all the players and now have some additional players to choose from for the different teams."

"Many of the youngsters see themselves as a future Matić, Vidić, Tadić or Ivanović, dreaming that one day they will become football stars, too,"

said Bunjevčević. "Our primary goal is to steer them towards sport and football, to have a nice and healthy childhood, and football does all of that. The FA of Serbia and the clubs are there to help them develop."



ŠESTÁK BIDS FAREWELL TO THE NATIONAL TEAM

PETER SURIN

 He felt it was the right time to quit, saying goodbye to the Slovakian national team on their exit from EURO 2016. "I am happy and honoured to have been part of the national team for 12 years," Stanislav Šesták said after his last match for Slovakia, in June 2016 in Lille in the EURO 2016 round of 16 against Germany.

The Czechs had Vladimír Šmicer, a symbol of a successful era and the team's talisman. The Slovaks had Šesták. He brought good luck to the national team. His name will always be linked with Slovakia's successful 2010 World Cup qualifying campaign and the goals he scored along the way. He made his national team debut in August 2004, in a World Cup qualifier against



Luxembourg. By the time he finished his international career, he had gained 66 caps and scored 13 goals. "It's a fantastic number; I am so happy about it," he said after he had taken off the Slovakia jersey for the last time.

The former Presov, Slovan Bratislava, MŠK Žilina, VfL Bochum, MKE Ankaragücü and Bursaspor player agreed to terminate his contract with Ferencváros in September 2016. "We will see what happens in the future, but my career abroad is definitely over," he said. In November 2016, at half-time during the European Qualifier against Lithuania, a ceremony was held in his honour in front of a full house in the stadium in Trnava. After that, Šesták considered ending his playing career and spending more time with the family. But then a new opportunity came along that gave him the motivation he needed to carry on playing. In January, second-division club FK Poprad made him an offer, which he accepted. In six months' time, both sides will sit down and discuss further cooperation.

With a tally of 123 goals in top competitions in Slovakia, Germany, Turkey and Hungary, Šesták has made his mark on the international football stage. But at the age of 34, he is not yet ready to hang up his boots for good.

SLOVENIA

www.nzs.si

RADENKO MIJATOVIČ ELECTED PRESIDENT

MATJAŽ KRAJNIK

On 15 December 2016, representatives of members of the Football Association of Slovenia (NZS) came together to elect a new president, choosing someone to fill the position vacated by Aleksander Čeferin following his successful ascent to the pinnacle of European football. Those delegates put their faith in Radenko Mijatović – a 53-year-old businessman who, in addition to being an ex-player and a former football and futsal referee, was also one of the NZS's vice-presidents under Čeferin.

Mijatović is a calm and collected man. He comes from a hard-working family,



and that is exactly what he has done himself – worked his way up the ladder in everything he has set his sights on. He has recently spent 11 years running a successful company after climbing the ranks at that firm.

Before his career in business, though, Mijatović was a footballer. He played for Litija, Slovan, Ilirija and Svoboda, before moving to Austria, where he played for a number of lower division clubs. When his playing career came to an end, he

became a referee, officiating in both football and futsal. Indeed, he was a FIFA-accredited futsal referee.

He subsequently became an administrator, and he has since performed many different roles of varying degrees of importance. In addition to being a vice-president of the NZS and sitting on various committees (including its executive committee), he has also been a referee assessor and a UEFA match delegate.

A rational man, Mijatović knows that stability is one of the key pillars of success. Indeed, that is one of the reasons he decided to run for president. He wanted to ensure that Slovenian football remains on the path that has been mapped out for it in recent years – the path that was identified in the NZS's operational strategy, which runs until 2020, and plans to cement football's position as the most popular sport in Slovenia.

SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL ON THE UP AND UP

PIERRE BENOIT



Since the girls' football training centre opened its doors in Huttwil in 2004, moving to Biel/Bienne in 2013, girls' and women's football in Switzerland has been flourishing. The number of registered female players has multiplied in the past 20 years, with more than 26,000 women



and girls playing in clubs today. The rise in the number of players is just one side of the success story. The performances and results of the leading players and national teams in all age categories are also impressive. The women's Under-17 and Under-19 teams qualify for the European championships almost as a matter of course, in 2010 the Under-19s qualified for the U-20 Women's World Cup for the first time, and in 2015 the Under-17s reached the final of the European Women's Under-17 Championship in Iceland, while the senior team played in their first Women's World Cup in 2015 and have qualified for Women's EURO 2017 in the Netherlands. Like their male counterparts, most of the players in the senior women's national team are making names for themselves playing for clubs outside Switzerland.

This success story is no accident but the result of serious hard work which begins at the youngest age. In order to give them the best possible football training, talented girls train with the best boys for

as long as possible. The development of elite girls' football depends on this co-education. In order for it to work, girls have to join boys in the same children's age group in order to then be able to make the move into the corresponding FooTeCo category. FooTeCo – which stands for football, technical and coordination – is the Swiss FA's talent development programme for U12s to U14s. When they reach the point when they can no longer keep up physically with the boys in their own age group, the girls have the possibility to continue in the FooTeCo programme for a further year in a younger age group. After that, the most promising ones make the transition into elite girls' football.

Many of the current cohort of senior women's national team players have successfully taken this route to the top and many of the national youth team players started out in the same way. By all accounts, women's football in Switzerland has an exciting future ahead of it!

TURKEY

www.tff.org

USE OF VIDEO ASSISTANT REFEREES

AYDIN GÜVENİR

 The Turkish Football Federation has announced that video assistant referees (VARs) will be tested in the Turkish Super League in forthcoming seasons.

At its 2016/17 winter referees course, first vice-president Servet Yardımcı said that the federation would shortly be signing an agreement with the IFAB to take part in its VAR experiments. He told the referees: "Our general secretary, Kadir Kardeş, the chairman of the referees committee, Yusuf Namoğlu, and other members of the referees committee have researched the system by following some Dutch and Italian league games. Some of our referees attended a VAR seminar in



Amsterdam, where the equipment was explained and demonstrated by the IFAB.

"Also, our FIFA referee Cüneyt Çakır was trained in the VAR system at the course for 2018 World Cup referees and he has shared his experiences with the referees committee. We are going to run offline tests in the second half of this season."

UKRAINE

www.ffu.org.ua

UNICEF FOOTBALL CUP FOR DISPLACED CHILDREN

YURI MAZNYCHENKO

 The Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) and UNICEF have signed an agreement to organise a tournament, the UNICEF Football Cup, for children aged 12 and under. The aim is to promote the social integration of displaced children affected by the military conflict in eastern Ukraine.

It is planned that nearly 5,000 children from the eastern regions of Ukraine will participate in the tournament, which will begin in late March. The children will come from 302 schools from the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhya and Dnipropetrovsk.



Each team should comprise 18 players, including at least six girls, for the 9-a-side matches. The Viktor Bannikov stadium in Kyiv will be the venue for the final in May.

After signing the agreement with UNICEF's representative in Ukraine, Giovanna Barberis, the FFU president, Andriy Pavelko said: "We must now combine our efforts to provide comprehensive assistance to displaced children and their families. I hope that this children's football tournament, which will be held for the first time this year, will become an annual event. They have to enjoy life and get into sport. It is important that we not only encourage children to take part in the tournament and get involved in football, but that we also take steps to develop our infrastructure. We are going to build 30 football pitches in five regions and will provide 7,000 balls for children to practise their favourite sport."

WALES

www.faw.cymru

CHRIS COLEMAN HONOURED

ROB DOWLING

 Chris Coleman was recently presented with an honorary MSc (Master of Science) at Swansea University's Great Hall by registrar Raymond Ciborowski during the degree ceremony for the College of Human and Health Sciences. On receiving his award, Chris Coleman said: "I am delighted and honoured to have received this recognition from Swansea University. It means so much that the recognition comes from my home city. I accept this on behalf of all my family and friends who have helped me succeed in my chosen profession."



Raymond Ciborowski said: "EURO 2016 alone will secure Chris Coleman and his team a place in sporting history. Chris Coleman has indeed proved an inspiration for football fans and to all those who identify as Welsh. In Swansea, we can be particularly proud to call him one of our own. I am honoured to present this award to him."

In October, Chris was also given the Freedom of Swansea, a privilege also enjoyed by Mel Nurse, who was awarded an honorary degree from Swansea University in 2015. Chris received a Special Recognition Award in December at the Wales Sport Awards for guiding Wales to the semi-finals of EURO 2016, and most recently he was appointed an OBE for services to football in the Queen's New Year's Honours list.

TWELVE NEW PROJECTS GIVEN THE GO-AHEAD ON FOUR CONTINENTS

At its meeting last October, the board of trustees of the UEFA Foundation for Children considered 177 proposals and approved 12 new projects, using sport as a means to promote education and social cohesion.

To be eligible for selection, the projects had to be in keeping with the foundation's statutes, be proposed by a credible organisation, have a viable budget, involve local partners and be sustainable. Priority was given to projects promoting education and social inclusion through sport.

The following new projects will receive financial support from the UEFA Foundation for Children, including projects run by European organisations on other continents:

- **Goal Plus**, a project supported by PluSport, a Swiss disabled sport organisation which uses football and other ball games, including Raftball (a mix of football, handball and basketball), to integrate disabled people in Switzerland.
- **Brincar de Rua** (Street Play), a project run by the Portuguese organisation Ludotempo, which organises street-play activities for children in disadvantaged urban areas of the Leiria region of Portugal.
- **Inter Campus**, an educational, health and social inclusion programme for children in disadvantaged communities in Israel and Palestine. Inter Campus is a non-profit social project founded

- and run by FC Internazionale Milano.
- **The Game, The Life**, set up by the Swiss organisation IMBEWU, which provides extracurricular activities combining sport and education in townships around Pretoria, South Africa.
- **Solidarité aveugle** (Blind Solidarity), run by the French organisation Libre Vue for visually impaired boys and girls aged 6 to 20 from an institute in Bamako, Mali.
- **Football for All in Vietnam**, a partnership between the Football Association of Norway and the Vietnam Football Federation which promotes education and socio-cultural values through football for 17,000 young people – in particular girls, minorities and disabled children.
- **The League: fathers and daughters, together, putting teenage pregnancies and child marriages offside**, set up in Nicaragua by Plan Nederland and the Johan Cruyff Foundation. This project uses football as a vehicle to make girls more independent, with the help of their fathers, in order to strengthen the process of social change.
- **Le sport après le livre et le jeu** (Sport after reading and play),

which builds multipurpose pitches (for football, handball, volleyball and basketball) in disadvantaged areas in Benin, Cameroon and Togo.

- **Extra Time – Tackling the Dead Zone**, set up in Guatemala by the English organisation Education for the Children, which aims to promote education through sport by giving children something to do after school and to keep them out of gangs. The project also distributes school materials, uniforms and food.

The board of the foundation also selected projects in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Philippines and Brazil. The project in the Democratic Republic of Congo is the **Life Skills Curriculum Project**, which promotes education and life skills through basketball and training to improve young people's employability. The **Football for Life: Champions Academy** is helping the most marginalised children in the Philippines by using football to encourage them to continue their studies and help them escape poverty. Finally, in Brazil, where football is seen as a powerful tool for social change, **Beyond the Pitch** will enable 300 instructors to be trained in Football3 methodology, benefiting more than 900 young people in disadvantaged communities in 15 towns across the country.

UEFA's commitment to children's rights through the foundation reflects its desire to reach out to those who are most in need, using the values of football and following the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Together, the football family is working to ensure that children's rights are respected, to ensure their dignity and to provide them with equal opportunities so they can find their place in tomorrow's society. 🌍



FindLife International

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DIARY OF EVENTS

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, continues to meet with European and world football leaders, in Nyon and further afield.



The president of the Croatian Football Federation, Davor Šuker



The new president of the Football Association of Slovenia, Radenko Mijatović



The president of the Asian Football Confederation, Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa



The president of the Italian Football Federation, Carlo Tavecchio



The president of the Football Association of Moldova, Pavel Cebanu



The president of the Football Federation of Kazakhstan, Seilda Bayshakov



The president of the Russian Football Union, Vitaly Mutko (left), and the governor of St Petersburg, Georgy Poltavchenko



The president of the Irish Football Association, David Martin



The president of the Israel Football Association, Ofer Eini



The president of the Andorran Football Federation, Victor Santos



The president of the Football Association of Wales, David Griffiths



The new president of the San Marino Football Federation, Marco Tura

BIRTHDAYS

Benny Jacobsen (Denmark, 1 March)
Peter Frymuth (Germany, 1 March) **60th**
Luis Medina Cantalejo (Spain, 1 March)
Damir Vrbanović (Croatia, 2 March)
Jenni Kennedy (England, 2 March)
Hans Lorenz (Germany, 3 March)
Zbigniew Boniek (Poland, 3 March)
Alexandru Deaconu (Romania, 3 March)
Carolin Greiner Mai (Germany, 3 March)
François Vasseur (France, 3 March)
Patrick McGrath
 (Republic of Ireland, 4 March) **70th**
Kuddusi Müftüoğlu (Turkey, 4 March)
Crawford Wilson (Northern Ireland, 5 March)
Zoran Bahtijarević (Croatia, 5 March)
Boris Durlen (Croatia, 6 March)
Ichko Lozev (Bulgaria, 6 March)
Hervé Piccirillo (France, 6 March) **50th**
Dan Ashworth (England, 6 March)
Dušan Maravić (Serbia, 7 March)
Tomás Gea (Andorra, 7 March)
Josep Lluís Vilaseca Guasch (Spain, 8 March)
Kris Bellon (Belgium, 8 March)
Alexis Ponnet (Belgium, 9 March)
Vladimir Aleshin (Russia, 9 March)
Henk Kesler (Netherlands, 9 March)
Herbert Fandel (Germany, 9 March)
Otar Giorgadze (Georgia, 9 March)
Mateo Beusan (Croatia, 10 March)
Ilkka Koho (Finland, 10 March)
Jasmin Baković (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 10 March)
Diana Andersen (Denmark, 10 March)
Lucien Kayser (Luxembourg, 11 March)
Olga Zhukovska (Ukraine, 11 March)
Jean-François Crucke (Belgium, 12 March)
Miroslav Vítković (Croatia, 12 March)
Thomas Partl (Austria, 13 March) **70th**
Yngve Hallén (Norway, 14 March)
Neil Jardine (Northern Ireland, 14 March)
Nikola Prentić (Montenegro, 14 March)
Ivan Ćurković (Serbia, 15 March)
Götz Dimanski (Germany, 15 March)
Michael Thomas Ross
 (Northern Ireland, 15 March)
Cornelis Bakker (Netherlands, 17 March)
Simeon Tsolakidis (Greece, 17 March)
Christos Skapoullis (Cyprus, 18 March) **70th**
Marcello Nicchi (Italy, 18 March)
Paul Elliott (England, 18 March)
Marina Tashchyan (Armenia, 18 March)
Ronald Zimmermann (Germany, 19 March)
Sándor Csányi (Hungary, 20 March)
Edward Foley (Republic of Ireland, 20 March)
Vanessa Martinez Lagunas (Germany, 20 March)
Jim Boyce (Northern Ireland, 21 March)
Kai-Erik Arstad (Norway, 21 March)
Ginés Meléndez (Spain, 22 March)

Chris Georghiades (Cyprus, 22 March)
Michail Kassabov (Bulgaria, 22 March)
Pascal Fritz (France, 25 January)
Luca Zorzi (Switzerland, 22 March)
Hugo Quaderer (Liechtenstein, 22 March)
Pafsanias Papanikolaou (Greece, 22 March)
Andrew Niven (Scotland, 22 March)
Franz Krösslhuber (Austria, 23 March)
Andrea Lastrucci (Italy, 23 March)
Miroslaw Malinowski (Poland, 23 March)
Mahmut Özgener (Turkey, 23 March)
Hilda McDermott (Republic of Ireland, 23 March)
Outi Saarinen (Finland, 23 March)
Fernando Ruiz Hierro (Spain, 23 March)
Dejan Dimovski (FYR Macedonia, 23 March)
Gianni Infantino (Switzerland/Italy, 23 March)
Christoforos Zografos (Greece, 24 March)
Michael Kirchner (Germany, 25 March)
Gitte Holm (Denmark, 26 March)
Jelle Goes (Netherlands, 26 March)
Steen Jørgensen (Denmark, 26 March)
John Peacock (England, 27 March)
José Antonio Casajus (Spain, 27 March)
Armen Minasyan (Armenia, 27 March)
Pavel Cebanu (Moldova, 28 March)
Edgar Obertüfer (Switzerland, 29 March)
Stefan Ormandjiev (Bulgaria, 29 March)
Alan Snoddy (Northern Ireland, 29 March)
Ignacio Sitges Serra (Spain, 29 March)
Bernadette Constantin (France, 29 March)
Bernadino González Vázquez (Spain, 29 March)
Sanna Pirhonen (Finland, 29 March)
William Hugh Wilson (Scotland, 30 March)
Richard Havrilla (Slovakia, 31 March)
Marina Mamaeva (Russia, 31 March)
Matteo Simone Trefoloni (Italy, 31 March)

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

2 March, Istanbul

UEFA Regions' Cup: final round draw

3 March, Nyon

Club Competitions Committee

10 March, Nyon

National Associations Committee

14 March, Nyon

HaTTrick Committee

17 March, Nyon

UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League: quarter-final draws

23 March, Nyon

Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee

NOTICES

- On 15 December, Radenko Mijatović was elected president of the Football Association of Slovenia.
- On 22 December, Elvedin Begić was re-elected as president of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation.
- On 20 January, Pavel Cebanu was re-elected as president of the Football Association of Moldova.
- On 30 January, Marco Tura was elected president of the San Marino Football Federation, replacing Giorgio Crescentini.
- Jovan Šurbatović has replaced Nebojša Ivković as general secretary of the Football Association of Serbia.
- Pål Bjerketvedt is the new general secretary of the Football Association of Norway. He replaces Kai-Erik Arstad, who was performing the role on an interim basis.
- As of 1 January, the contact details for the Football Federation of Kosovo are as follows:
 Rruga "28 Nëntori"
 10000 Pristina
 Kosovo
 Tel: +381 38 600 220
 Fax: +381 38 548 560

Competitions

7/8 March

UEFA Youth League: quarter-finals

7/8 & 14/15 March

UEFA Champions League: round of 16 (return legs)

9 March

UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (first legs)

16 March

UEFA Europa League: round of 16 (return legs)

22/23 March

UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (first legs)

22–28 March

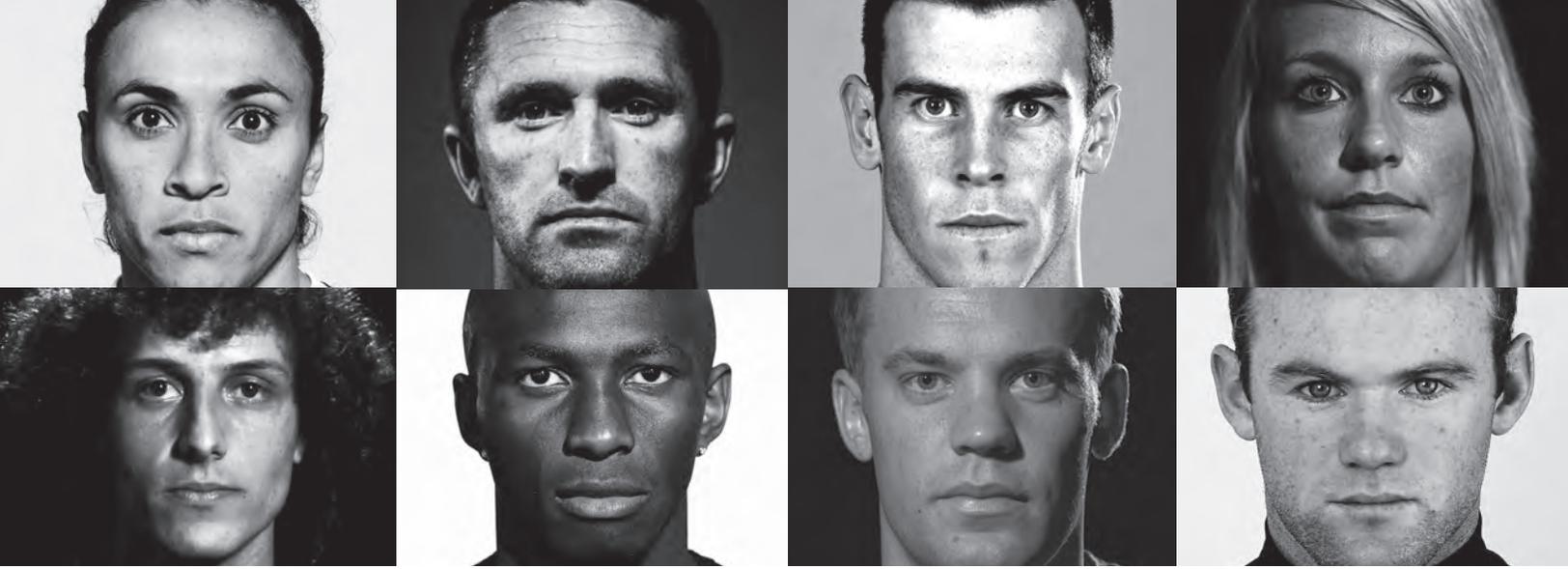
2017-19 European Under-21 Championship: qualifying round

24–26 March

European Qualifiers for the 2018 World Cup

29/30 March

UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-finals (return legs)



NO TO RACISM



 **RESPECT**

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