Lisbon, Portugal, 23 August 2020.

Kingsley Coman scores the winning goal for Bayern against PSG in the Champions League final.

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UEFA ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

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ALEKSANDER ČEFERIN
UEFA President

The 2019/20 season put European football’s unity and resilience to the test like none before. What lessons can we draw from the experience?

The season brought one of European football’s toughest ever challenges. For a few, long months in 2020, the continent’s most popular sport was brought to a standstill. Halting our competitions was an essential decision to help slow the spread of the pandemic and to reduce the burden on services safeguarding our health and society. On behalf of UEFA, I would like to thank all key workers, whose courageous efforts protected our lives and gave us hope.

Looking back at our community’s response, UEFA and its partners learnt about the importance of working together to overcome adversity. Any one of the obstacles that European football faced in 2019/20 would have seemed insurmountable in more normal seasons. But, as this report—Adapting to the Pandemic and Teamwork sections document, we adjusted to take the right decisions at the right time, whether rescheduling EURO 2020, reformatting four club competitions or rewriting UEFA’s 2020/21 match calendar.

We also understood the strength of football’s ties to the communities and countries it represents. I was proud of the way that countless associations, clubs, players and fans rallied to help local and national institutions, purchasing medical equipment, delivering food and spreading public health messages. Time and again, our community demonstrated the kind of leadership and teamwork off the pitch that befits winning performances on it.

Shortly before football stopped, you addressed the 2020 UEFA Congress in Amsterdam about the importance of putting ‘purpose over profit’. How did this principle guide UEFA during the pandemic? The pandemic has served as a reminder of our true purpose as a governing body: to take care of all of football – not just our competitions. This principle underpinned UEFA’s decisions throughout the crisis, starting with EURO 2020’s postponement so domestic leagues could complete their seasons in the summer. Everybody understood that we did this to help national associations, clubs and league.

The same spirit of sacrifice saw us show solidarity towards associations and clubs in their time of need. To offset revenue losses, UEFA advanced funds from its HatTrick assistance programme, which channels UEFA revenue into development projects. We also reassured associations that UEFA would honour its 2020–24 HatTrick pledges and adapted our financial fair play rules to take account of the challenges facing elite clubs. Each of these actions set the tone for football’s overall response.

How did the five-year strategy, launched in 2018/19, help UEFA to keep delivering across the full range of its mission in such a tumultuous season? UEFA’s Together for the Future of Football strategy was designed to tackle issues that European football expects to face over the next decade. While no one could have predicted the scale or nature of its first challenge, the strategy proved to be more relevant than ever. At a time of deep uncertainty, its long-term goals brought direction and focus to our work.

The strategy has made encouraging progress against its goals for increased participation, competitiveness and prosperity as well as good governance. Maintaining momentum will be critical to sustaining football’s standing as Europe’s most played sport.

Women’s football is a key element of the UEFA strategy. How did the successful conclusion of the UEFA Women’s Champions League in Bilbao put the game back on the front foot? By staging one of the first international women’s sports competitions to return to action, UEFA achieved two objectives: firstly, we helped associations to accelerate the resumption of domestic competitions across Europe; secondly, we demonstrated our commitment to women’s football.

There is more to come. Over the next four years, our Time For Action strategy will invest more than ever in the women’s game. There are already positive returns. We estimate that more women and girls are playing football compared with 2019. These numbers should increase thanks to UEFA and Disney’s innovative Playmakers partnership, which aims to attract more young girls to our sport.

We also announced a new format for the 2021/22 Women’s Champions League that will centralise commercial rights and increase the competition’s value and visibility. Similarly, postponing the Women’s EURO by 12 months guarantees the competition pride of place in the sporting summer of 2022.

Sport, like society, will continue to live with the consequences of the coronavirus in the 2020/21 season. How confident are you that UEFA can successfully stage EURO 2020 and its other elite competitions? There are four good reasons to believe that EURO 2020, and our club competitions will go ahead in summer 2021: the successful conclusion of the 2020 men’s and women’s Champions League finals, the Europa League and the Youth League in August 2020. Together, they proved that UEFA has a tried and tested formula for safely staging its competitions: the Return to Play protocol developed by our Medical Committee.

Despite the challenge of organising matches in multiple countries, each with different health and travel restrictions, the protocol established common medical and operational standards for all our matches. It also won the trust both of governments and public health authorities—a sine qua non for staging EURO 2020 in 12 different countries.

There are other grounds for optimism. As this report explains, UEFA ‘harnessed’ EURO preparations, ready to maximise the countdown in 2021. With all host cities committed to go again, everything remains in place to stage the EURO’s 60th anniversary edition.

Sadly, we cannot yet say the same for fans – our sport’s lifeblood. Until their voices fill stadiums again, we cannot truly say that football has returned. For now, we have asked all EURO 2020 host cities to plan a range of potential scenarios that minimise health risks while maximising attendance – as soon as conditions permit, we will be ready to welcome fans back.

The efforts of associations, clubs and players to support communities underlined football’s power to connect with everyone – regardless of age, colour, gender or belief. How can UEFA capitalise on the game’s potential for driving positive change in society? We have always recognised the power for good of our sport. UEFA’s football social responsibility activities are rooted in every aspect of its work, promoting diversity and inclusion. Last season, the UEFA Foundation for Children marked five years of using football to improve children’s lives around the world.

In 2019/20, we started to raise our game by exploring how football can make a real difference to the world’s biggest challenges. We invited players, past and present, to share experiences of systemic racism. We are also looking at the role of football both in fighting climate change and supporting the rapid take-up of new coronavirus vaccines.

The world faces multiple challenges, from discrimination and sustainability to health and vaccine hesitancy. European football can and will do more.
COMPOSITION OF UEFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 30 JUNE 2020

Aleksander Čeferin
President, Professional Football Strategy Council chairman, FIFA vice-president

Karl-Erik Nilsson
First vice-president, Hat-trick Committee chairman

Sándor Csányi
Vice-president, National Team Competitions Committee chairman, FIFA vice-president

Fernando Gomes
Vice-president, Club Competitions Committee chairman, FIFA Council member

Luis Rubiales
Vice-president, Development and Technical Assistance Committee chairman

Michele Uva
Vice-president, Club Licensing Committee chairman

David Gill
UEFA treasurer, Finance Committee chairman, Compensation Committee chairman

Zbigniew Boniek
Member, Youth and Amateur Football Committee chairman

Armand Duka
Member

Florence Hardouin
Member, Marketing Advisory Committee chairman

Jasper Moller Christensen
Member

Andrii Pavelko
Member, Players’ Status, Transfer and Agents and Match Agents Committee chairman

COMPOSITION OF UEFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, 30 JUNE 2020

Ljubljana – Executive Committee

Approved:
• Commercial concept for 2021–24 UEFA club competitions
• Name of third men’s club competition: UEFA Europa Conference League
• Terms of reference and composition of the Referencing Development Panel
• Format and regulations for the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League and draw date and venue (Amsterdam, 3 March 2020)
• Final adjustments to the composition of the UEFA committees and panels for 2019–23
• Launch of a feasibility study regarding creation of an independent European agency against match-fixing in football
• UEFA president’s proposal that UEFA solidarity distributions in principle be paid to clubs via the national associations
• Reintroduction of the board of administration of UEFA Club Competitions SA, from 18 to 12

Approved deployment of video assistant referees (VAR):
• For UEFA Women’s Champions League finals from 2019/20 and at UEFA Women’s EURO 2021
• From knockout stage of 2019/20 UEFA Europa League
• UEFA European Under-19 Championship: 2021 – Romania; 2022 – Slovakia
• UEFA European Women’s Under-17 Championship: 2021 – Faroe Islands; 2022 – Bosnia and Herzegovina
• UEFA European Under-17 Championship: 2021 – Cyprus; 2022 – Israel
• UEFA Champions League final: 2021 – Saint Petersburg Stadium; 2022 – Fussball Arena München; 2023 – Puskás Aréna, Budapest
• UEFA Europa League final: 2022 – Juventus Stadium, Turin; 2023 – PSV Stadium, Eindhoven
• 2020 UEFA Medical Regulations
• 2020/21 UEFA Champions League, Europa League, Super Cup, Youth League, Regions’ Cup and Futsal Champions League regulations
• 2020/21 UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play regulations for participation in UEFA Women’s Champions League

Ryen – Executive Committee

Approved:
• League phase draw and fixture list procedures for 2020/21 UEFA Nations League
• Match schedule for UEFA Women’s EURO 2021 in England (7 July to 1 August 2021)
• New format, access list, calendar and commercial concept for the UEFA Women’s Champions League from 2021/22
• Use of URAW in European Qualifiers play-offs in March 2020 and European Qualifiers for 2022 World Cup
• Child safeguarding policy and toolkit for member associations
• Introduction of transitional period until at least 2025/26 for application of Article 12(2) and (3) of UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations for participation in UEFA Women’s Champions League

Appointed hosts/venues for UEFA finals and final tournaments:
• For UEFA Women’s Champions League finals from 2019/20 and at UEFA Women’s EURO 2021
• UEFA Futsal Champions League finals in 2020 (23–26 April) – Minsk
• Introduction of transitional period until at least 2025/26 for application of Article 12(2) and (3) of UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations for participation in UEFA Women’s Champions League

Appointed hosts/venues for UEFA finals and final tournaments:
• UEFA Futsal Champions League finals in 2020 (23–26 April) – Minsk
• Child safeguarding policy and toolkit for member associations
• Use of URAW in European Qualifiers play-offs in March 2020 and European Qualifiers for 2022 World Cup
• UEFA president’s proposal that UEFA solidarity distributions in principle be paid to clubs via the national associations
• Reintroduction of the board of administration of UEFA Club Competitions SA, from 18 to 12

Amsterdam – Executive Committee

Approved:
• 2020/21 UEFA Champions League, Europa League, Super Cup, Youth League, Regions’ Cup and Futsal Champions League regulations
• 2020/21 UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play regulations for participation in UEFA Women’s Champions League

Appointed hosts/venues for UEFA finals and final tournaments:
• UEFA Europa League final: 2022 – Puskás Aréna, Budapest
• UEFA Super Cup: 2022 – Olympic Stadium, Helsinki; 2023 – Kazan Arena, Kazan
• UEFA Women’s Champions League final 2022 – Jacks Stadium, Turin; 2023 – PVG Stadium, Eindhoven

Amsterdam – 44th Ordinary UEFA Congress

Elected (by acclamation):
• IBF Executive Committee for 2020-21: Rainer Koch (Germany), member
• European member of the FIFA Council for 2020-23: Neil Le Graët (France)

Reelected:
• Composition of UEFA Organs for the Administration of Justice
• Composition of UEFA Governance and Compliance Committee

Approved:
• 2019/20 financial statements and budget for 2020/21
• Proposed amendments to the UEFA Statutes:
  • Article 20(3) and 20(5) to specify that the UEFA treasurer would have the same status as a UEFA vice-president but would not be entitled to vote
  • Article 32(2) to clarify in the amendment that not only the UEFA administration, but also the European Club Association and the European Leagues, in addition to the UEFA member associations, could propose candidates for UEFA’s Organs for the Administration of Justice for election by the Executive Committee

Elected:
• Composition of UEFA Organs for the Administration of Justice

Appointed:
• IBF Executive Committee for 2020-21: Rainer Koch (Germany), member
• European member of the FIFA Council for 2020-23: Neil Le Graët (France)

Appointed hosts/venues for UEFA finals and final tournaments:
• UEFA Europa League final: 2022 – Puskás Aréna, Budapest
• UEFA Super Cup: 2022 – Olympic Stadium, Helsinki; 2023 – Kazan Arena, Kazan
• UEFA Women’s Champions League final 2022 – Jižní Stadium, Turin; 2023 – PVG Stadium, Eindhoven
European football's unity in adversity allowed UEFA to respond quickly and decisively to the biggest ever challenge in its 66-year history.

By guaranteeing financial support to national associations, leagues and clubs in their hour of need, UEFA helped secure the immediate future of the game in Europe.

From Amsterdam to Zagreb, football players, clubs and fans showed their power for social good by raising funds for medical equipment, delivering public health messages and helping the elderly and vulnerable.

UEFA and its stakeholders performed logistical miracles to return to play in time for the safe conclusion of the 2019/20 season.
\[ \text{Decided: prudent enough: improved and resuming playing was appropriate and possible limitation or removal of exclusive calendar slots, to reschedule European Qualifiers for FIFA World Cup EURO 2020 from 12 June – 12 July 2020 to 11 June – EURO 2020 play-off matches from March to June 2020, Under-21 Championship final tournament and Women’s matchdays 3 and 4 originally planned in June 2021} \]
As government after government announced travel and health restrictions and imposed national lockdowns to safeguard society from the global pandemic, football ground to a halt across the European continent.

With the majority of domestic leagues placed on hold, together with its own club and national team competitions, UEFA convened European football’s key stakeholders for an extraordinary videoconference on 17 March. Participants included representatives from all 55 UEFA member associations, the European Club Association (ECA), the European Leagues (EL) and the International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPRO Europe).

Faced with its biggest crisis since the Second World War, the European football community found strength in solidarity. Everyone attending the meeting committed to a united in solidarity. Everyone attending the match community amid the crisis made the impossible possible.

Pan-European solutions

The videoconferences provided general secretaries with the ideal forum for raising COVID-19-related challenges that required a pan-European solution, for example, the consequences of country-by-country variations in quarantine rules for players travelling with their national teams. Working together, UEFA and its members agreed that host associations should secure exemptions from their governments for visiting teams, on the grounds that regular testing of players according to its Return to Play protocol minimised infection risks. Without this exemption, associations would have to request UEFA’s authorisation to stage the match at a neutral venue.

As the 2019/20 European season drew to a close in August, UEFA and national associations explored the possibility of allowing fans to return to stadiums for UEFA competitions. It was agreed to permit a limited number of supporters to attend September’s 2020 Super Cup match in Budapest, subject to strict hygiene and sanitary measures – essential to guarantee the health and safety of everyone attending the match.

Working together

At the extraordinary videoconference held on March 17, UEFA and European football’s key stakeholders set up two working groups:

1. The European match calendar

Composition: UEFA, ECA, EL
Objective: complete the 2019/20 season and adapt the 2020/21 fixture list
Tasks: reschedule postponed matches for both clubs and national teams

2. The financial and legal impact of football’s temporary stop

Composition: UEFA, ECA, EL, FIFPRO Europe
Objective: assess the economic, financial and regulatory impact of the pandemic
Tasks: propose measures to help mitigate consequences, particularly with regard to UEFA’s club licensing and financial fair play

Based on the first working group’s recommendations and in close coordination with FIFA, UEFA’s Executive Committee agreed to a comprehensive overhaul of the schedule for men’s and women’s national team competitions.

In particular, these affected the EURO 2020 play-offs, the 2020/21 Nations League finals and the 2021 Under-21 Championship finals, which would now take place in two stages (March 2021 and May–June 2021).

Women’s EURO 2021 in England was rescheduled for July 2022. By avoiding a direct clash with EURO 2020 and the Summer Olympics, this decision ensured the final, and therefore women’s football, will remain centre stage in the 2022 international sporting calendar.

The European football community has demonstrated that by working together in a spirit of compromise and understanding, acting as a team and striving for the same objectives, we can surmount any obstacle. It is a lesson that will serve us well in the future.”

Andrea Agnelli, European Club Association (ECA) Chairman

“Europe is facing its biggest challenge in a generation, one which is impacting all levels of society, including football. The challenge to our game is massive and, as leaders, we have a responsibility to do all we can to protect its long-term health by mitigating the impact of the virus.”

Aleksander Čeferin, UEFA President

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Time of need: how three national associations used UEFA funds to sustain clubs

Finland
The Football Association of Finland has reserved €1.5 million to compensate clubs in its top leagues for match revenue losses. In total, the fund will help 50 clubs, including teams from the men’s premier league (€75,000–€100,000 per club) and first division (€20,000–€30,000 per club), the women’s premier league (€5,000–€15,000 per club) and teams participating in the final three rounds of the Finnish Cup (€70,000 in total).

France
In June 2020, the French Football Federation (FFF) created an extraordinary solidarity fund, valued at approximately €20 million, to help restart the national game and to support the nation’s 14,182 amateur clubs hit financially by football’s shutdown. Under the fund’s conditions, every affiliated amateur club will be entitled to €10 for each registered player, with the FFF investing €7 and the leagues and districts covering the remainder. It is projected that more than two million registered players will benefit from the fund.

Romania
The Romania Football Federation invited 221 clubs to apply for up to €5,000 in funding to invest in the protection of everyone involved in playing and running football. The grants were used for the procurement of personal protective equipment and technology to store digitally registered temperatures, both critical for clubs to return to play while complying with health measures.

Adapting financial fair play rules
As well as providing assistance to European football in its time of need, UEFA recognised that financial hardship, rather than mismanagement, might prevent clubs from complying with their financial fair play obligations. In response, the second COVID-19 emergency response working group adapted financial fair play rules to take account of the extraordinary economic circumstances. Changes included:

• Extension of the deadline by one month for overdue payments relating to transfers, employees and social/tax authorities for the first assessment during the 2020/21 season – from 30 June to 31 July 2020.
• Postponement of the assessment of the financial year ending 2020. This will now take place together with the assessment of the financial year ending 2021.
• Reduction of the 2020/21 monitoring period to cover two reporting periods only (financial years ending 2018 and 2019) rather than the normal three.
• Extension of the monitoring period for 2021/22 to cover four reporting periods (financial years ending 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021). Combining the assessment of the financial years ending 2020 and 2021 allows the cumulative deficit for this single period to be averaged.

While UEFA gave clubs an additional month to meet payment deadlines, the deterrent effect of its club licensing and financial fair play rules played a critical role in ensuring transfer and employee debts were settled on time. This avoided the worst-case scenario of liquidity being frozen. While club balance sheets in the reporting period were €8 billion healthier than before the introduction of financial fair play, the global pandemic’s impact on football clubs’ business models remained unprecedented and cannot be underestimated.
Helping countries and communities

From local clubs to elite teams, European football demonstrated the power of the beautiful game to touch people’s lives, even in the hardest times.

Clubs and players demonstrate football’s power for good

The teams remaining in the delayed Champions League, Europa League and Women’s Champions League competitions were among those who played their part.

Together with the three other German sides participating in the 2019/20 Champions League – Borussia Dortmund, RB Leipzig and Bayer 04 Leverkusen – eventual winners FC Bayern München established a €20 million solidarity fund to help clubs in Germany’s top two divisions deal with the financial repercussions of the crisis. The teams remaining in the delayed Champions League – winners of the Women’s Champions League – arranged for team members to make virtual visits and record video messages for hospitalised children. The club also competed in an esport tournament involving young people from the city, using the event to remind participants to stay at home and comply with social distance regulations.

UEFA acknowledges frontline workers

When its club competitions returned to play in August, UEFA echoed football’s chorus of support for local communities by finding a unique way of expressing gratitude for the vital contribution of everyone working to protect the people’s health and maintain vital public services: printing Thank You on players’ shirts in their team’s native language.

Dedicated television spots were broadcast during men’s and women’s Champions League as well as Europa League fixtures, in which participating players voiced their own thanks; a minute’s silence was also held before each competition’s quarter-final matches in remembrance of victims of the pandemic.

Football fans support communities

Last but not least, supporters’ groups from all over Europe distinguished themselves by going out of their way to assist local communities. For example, fan groups representing traditional English rivals Everton and Liverpool joined forces to create two emergency supply hubs, one for food to help feed the city’s vulnerable, the other for personal protective equipment to assist the production and distribution of visors, scrubs and face masks, both locally and nationally.

Fundraising campaigns were also launched to support organisations fighting the virus. In Spain, supporters’ groups associated with Real Zaragoza took just two weeks to raise €10,000 in cash donations for the Brotherhood of the Zaragoza Refuge, while fans of Bulgarian club Locomotiv Plovdiv secured funds for the purchase of hospital equipment and organised blood donations.

In the Russian city of Vladimir, Spartak Moskva fans mobilised to deliver food kits to more than 100 vulnerable families. Similarly, in Poland, Stadion Widzewa fan groups organised collections for locals to donate critical everyday items, such as water, coffee, tea, protective equipment and electric kettles, for the use of hospital staff and paramedics. In the Netherlands, the Feyenoord Rotterdam supporters’ group came up with a novel idea to personalise health workers’ protective suits at the Aukea Hospital by delivering 100 pairs of the club’s red and white socks.
Logistical triumph

After the suspension of football in March 2020, UEFA, in cooperation with its stakeholders, changed competition formats, venues and dates, as well as creating a medical and operational protocol, to ensure the safe completion of the season.

Even with the tough decision to put its club competitions on hold in the early days of the pandemic, UEFA kept the goal of completing the 2019/20 season. With the agreement reached in March to postpone EURO 2020 to 2021 and allowing clubs to complete their domestic competitions, the European football community was already creating time and space to resume both the men’s and women’s Champions Leagues, as well as the Europa League and the Youth League later in the summer.

Over the next two-and-a-half months, UEFA, together with national associations, European leagues and clubs, laid the foundations for an August restart. Given the need to minimise risks and safeguard the health of everyone involved, the Executive Committee quickly realised that staging four competitions would be contingent on:

- limiting international travel;
- reducing the match schedules to lessen the physical burden on players;
- identifying secure accommodation and training facilities for players, staff and officials.

WHAT THEY SAID

**UEFA Champions League finals host**
Fernando Gomes, President of the Portuguese Football Federation

“We set out on the adventure to stage the 2020 UEFA Champions League finals with a strong sense of mission and responsibility. Portugal has an enormous capacity to host major sporting events – a demonstration of our nation’s entrepreneurial capacity and passion for football.”

**UEFA Europa League finals host**
Fritz Keller, President of the German Football Federation

“We were proud that UEFA chose Germany and North Rhine-Westphalia to host the 2020 Europa League finals. We had the infrastructure and experience to organise a tournament of this dimension, while the health and hygiene protocol strengthened confidence in the DFB.”

**UEFA Women’s Champions League finals host**
Luis Rubiales, President of the Spanish Football Federation

“It was truly an honour for Spain and the city of Bilbao to host the UEFA Women’s Champions League finals and to contribute to the return of the game. It will have served as an inspiration for young girls to start practising and enjoying this wonderful sport.”

**UEFA Youth League finals**
Aleksander Čeferin, UEFA President

“The Swiss town of Nyon can be proud of helping to organise the 2020 UEFA Youth League finals – an important bridge connecting young players to the senior game. The competition conveys crucial values, such as fair play and respect, to footballers at an early stage of their development.”

**UEFA Europa League finals host**
Fernando Gomes, President of the Portuguese Football Federation

“We set out on the adventure to stage the 2020 UEFA Champions League finals with a strong sense of mission and responsibility. Portugal has an enormous capacity to host major sporting events – a demonstration of our nation’s entrepreneurial capacity and passion for football.”
New format and venues

To meet such strict criteria, all four 2019/20 club competitions had to switch format and – with the exception of the Youth League – venues.

Based on the recommendations of two working groups, the Executive Committee decided to complete each competition as a final eight, single-legged knockout tournament hosted by one country.

After careful consideration of the prevailing epidemiologic situation and close consultation with the relevant football associations and local authorities, UEFA selected the following host nations:

- Portugal: Champions League
- Germany: Europa League
- Spain: Women’s Champions League

Each of these nations offered tried and tested operational expertise in staging elite football tournaments, as well as state-of-the-art stadium infrastructure.

To protect players’ physical well-being, participating teams were permitted to register three new players and to make five substitutions per match, in accordance with a temporary change to the Laws of the Game. To further limit travel and to fit into the condensed calendar, the qualifying phases for the 2020/21 Champions League and Europa League – also due for completion in August – were reduced from home-and-away legs to a single tie.

Return to Play protocol

By mid-June, with lockdown conditions easing across Europe and a rising number of domestic league competitions back in action, everything was in place for UEFA’s club competitions to return to play. After a videoconference meeting on 17 June, the Executive Committee gave its go-ahead for an August restart – without fans, following a subsequent decision on 9 July to play all remaining 2019/20 club competition matches behind closed doors.

The scene was set for an unprecedented logistical feat as the European football community worked together to simultaneously organise four final tournaments in four different countries in less than two months. A critical step involved the design of a bespoke medical and operational protocol to establish common health and safety standards across multiple national jurisdictions.

The official Return to Play protocol was published in July, setting medical, sanitary, hygiene and operational procedures for all parties taking part in and/or organising UEFA matches. These covered:

- testing players, staff and officials as provided by leading European medical diagnostic services provider SYNLAB;
- requirements for social distancing, mask wearing and handwashing;
- adoption of travel and accommodation policies aimed at further minimising the risk of infection and transmission.

Framework for the new season

By rescheduling, reformatting and restarting UEFA’s 2019/20 club competitions against the odds, the European football community did not just achieve an unprecedented feat in world sport. It also put a framework in place for the new season.

The Return to Play framework applies to all competitive UEFA matches, from men’s and women’s senior club and national team competitions to Under-21 matches and senior national team friendlies.
The EURO 2020 draw took place in Bucharest after 20 of the 24 teams had secured qualification. The final will now take place in summer 2021, with play-offs for the remaining four places moved to October and November 2020.

The Women’s EURO in England was rescheduled for 2022, with the opening match at Old Trafford (Manchester) and the final at Wembley (London).

After a four-month hiatus, UEFA reorganised its club competitions as final eight tournaments in August, ensuring a safe conclusion to the men’s and women’s Champions Leagues, the Europa League and the Youth League.

Liverpool’s Virgil van Dijk and Lyon’s Lucy Bronze were crowned as UEFA Players of the Year.

Female referees broke gender barriers by officiating in the Super Cup and Europa League.
MAKING THE IMPOSSIBLE POSSIBLE

The senior national team competitions, including the European Under-21 Championship, remain on track despite significant delays and disruptions to the European football calendar.

While the pandemic led to the postponement of EURO 2020 by one year, the 2019/20 season successfully determined the identity of most of the national teams that will play in the final tournament, as well as when and where.

Completion of the qualifying group stage in autumn 2019 saw 20 teams secure places in the 24-team final tournament. To identify the last four qualifiers, 16 teams, each selected on the basis of their 2018/19 Nations League performances, entered a play-off draw in November 2019 to divide them into four different qualifying paths to the finals. Originally scheduled for March 2020, the play-offs were shifted to October and November 2020. This new qualifying format not only added an extra layer of suspense and drama to matches; it also gave some national teams the chance to reach their first-ever final tournament. For example, in League D, either Georgia or North Macedonia were assured of qualifying for EURO 2020.

The EURO 2020 final draw was staged in Bucharest in November 2019 and placed the 24 competing teams, including the future play-off winners, into six groups. Each group will play its matches in two of the 12 EURO host cities. After careful consideration of the sporting, organisational and business implications and consulting with the host cities (see pages 66–69 and 76–77), UEFA confirmed that the groups and matches drawn in Bucharest would remain unchanged for the postponed competition in 2021.

In parallel to hosting the UEFA Congress in March 2020, Amsterdam was also the venue for the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League draw, the finals of which have since been postponed from June to October 2021.

In this edition, the two best Nations League group winners that fail to qualify directly for the 2022 World Cup or reach the play-offs via the qualifying phase will earn a place in the 12-team play-offs, alongside the ten runners-up from the qualifying groups.

As in the case of EURO 2020, UEFA used the original match schedule to simplify the process of rewriting the 2020/21 Nations League. To cope with the condensed international football calendar, European football’s governing body – together with the clubs, leagues and national associations – agreed on an innovative solution: to turn the October and November 2020 double-headers into triple-headers composed of one EURO 2020 play-off and two Nations League matches. The teams not involved in the play-offs would play a friendly match followed by two Nations League matches.
The pandemic severely disrupted every competition calendar, but none more so than that of the European Under-21 Championship due to conclude in Hungary and Slovenia. Originally planned for June 2021, the tournament had to be shifted to avoid a clash with the postponed EURO 2020 finals. The tournament will now take place in two stages:

- **Group stage:** March 2021
- **Final knockout stage:** 31 May – 6 June 2021

The revised schedule ensures the 2019–21 tournament will finish before the next one begins, avoiding a scenario in which participating associations would need to retain their current Under-21 teams for a further 18 months alongside teams participating in the 2021–23 Under-21 Championship.

To assure the Women’s EURO of centre stage in the international sports calendar, the Executive Committee postponed the final tournament by 12 months. Originally scheduled for 2021, it will now take place from 6 to 31 July 2022, avoiding a direct clash with EURO 2020 and the Summer Olympics. Both of these events were delayed to 2021 because of sport’s temporary halt in 2020.

England will host EURO 2022, and UEFA is determined to capitalise on such a high-profile and historic football venue to double the reach and value of the competition – a key goal of its 2019–24 women’s football strategy Time for Action (see pages 46–49).

In February 2020, UEFA revealed that tournament matches will be played in some of the world’s most iconic stadiums. Old Trafford – Manchester United’s legendary Theatre of Dreams – will stage the tournament’s opening ceremony and match, while the final will take place at Wembley, meaning England’s national stadium will host back-to-back men’s and women’s EURO finals in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

In another sign of the growing status of women’s competitions, UEFA has confirmed that video assistant referees (VAR) will be used throughout the finals. A funded legacy programme is also already in place to ensure EURO 2022 leaves a lasting impact for women’s football off the pitch, both in the host cities and beyond.

However, the new timing reduces the competition’s overall exposure. The group stage will coincide with senior national team matches, while the knockout stage takes place right before the start of EURO 2020.
FOUR WEEKS, FOUR COUNTRIES, FOUR WINNERS

In an extraordinary finale to a season disrupted by the pandemic, FC Bayern München and Sevilla FC restored some sense of normality by claiming their sixth Champions League and sixth Europa League crowns respectively. In the Women’s Champions League final, Olympique Lyonnais confirmed the trend, lifting a fifth successive title. In the Youth League, Real Madrid won for the first time.

It was a club season like no other. The Champions League, Europa League, Women’s Champions League and Youth League all concluded in August – later than ever before – in a series of final tournaments staged in Portugal, Germany, Spain and Switzerland. It was possible to organise international events in each of these countries at such short notice because of the availability of world-class stadiums and high-standard training facilities.

The revised format ensured a safe and timely conclusion to the 2019/20 season, while avoiding delays to preparations for the start of the next. UEFA had temporarily halted all four of its club competitions at their round of 16 phases in March, following the introduction of restrictions on travel and public gatherings across Europe.

After extensive collaboration between UEFA and key stakeholders, including national associations, clubs and leagues, the Executive Committee announced in June that UEFA’s club competitions would return to play with four final eight tournaments in August. The new schedule afforded time for Europe’s domestic leagues to finish their own seasons.

To minimise health risks by limiting travel and maintaining a high level of hygiene at training, matches and accommodation, each tournament was played behind closed doors in one host nation and followed a single-match format rather than the traditional home-and-away ties. It was also agreed that all outstanding round of 16 second-leg matches should take place at their original venues with the exception of two Europa League round of 16 ties, whose first leg could not take place in March. These were decided in single-leg encounters in Germany: FC Internazionale Milano v Getafe (2-0) and Sevilla FC v Roma (2-0).
10–21 August 2020

Winners: Sevilla FC
Host cities: Cologne, Duisburg, Düsseldorf, Gelsenkirchen (Germany)

Sevilla FC extended their enviable record in the competition with a sixth triumph in six final appearances. Los Palanganas defeated FC Internazionale Milano 3–2 in a highly entertaining game in Cologne, with a second-half own goal from Inter’s 2019/20 Europa League player of the year Romelu Lukaku proving crucial.

7–23 August 2020

Winners: FC Bayern München
Host city: Lisbon (Portugal)

Lisbon’s Estádio do Sport Lisboa e Benfica and Estadio José Alvalade provided a fitting backdrop to the Champions League final eight tournament. In the first-ever decider to be played after June, French international Kingsley Coman scored the only goal of the game as FC Bayern München overcame debut finalists Paris Saint-Germain FC.

Victory marked the completion of a statistically perfect Champions League campaign for the German champions. No other club has ever achieved a 100% win record in the competition.

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A PERFECT TRIUMPH FOR BAYERN

100% First-ever champions to win all their matches since the creation of the competition in 1955

Top 3 Champions League goalscorers 2019/20

Robert Lewandowski
Bayern München

Erling Haaland
RB Salzburg/
Borussia Dortmund

Serge Gnabry
Bayern München

3.91 The highest average rate of goals per match – 43 in 11 games – since Real Madrid in the 1960 Champion Clubs’ Cup

Germany’s North Rhine-Westphalia region hosted the Europa League with matches taking place in four cities: Cologne’s Stadion Köln, the Düsseldorf Arena, Arena AufSchalke in Gelsenkirchen and Duisburg’s MSV Arena.

Sevilla FC extended their enviable record in the competition with a sixth triumph in six final appearances. Los Palanganas defeated FC Internazionale Milano 3–2 in a highly entertaining game in Cologne, with a second-half own goal from Inter’s 2019/20 Europa League player of the year Romelu Lukaku proving crucial.


Cologne, Germany, 21 August 2020. Luuk de Jong scores Sevilla’s second goal. The Andalusian club has won the Europa League six times in as many finals.
European women's club football. Underlining the French outfit's dominance of selected for UEFA's squad of the season, eight of Lyon's team were subsequently seventh title overall – both new records. Match. Lyon's 3-1 victory secured their fifth successive rivals for a thrilling final, Olympique tournament brought together two old San Sebastián and Bilbao. The final eight the Women's Champions League reached across Europe. Return to play of women's club football added much needed momentum to the competition. Together, they set a new benchmark for international women's club football. Partnership of at least ten national associations in the group stage. Centralised marketing and television coverage will also increase the visibility and value of the competition. Together, they set a new benchmark for international women's club football. The global audience tuning in to television in world-class stadiums – thrilling knockout matches live on best female players and teams playing in women's football: ten days of the most prestigious club competition. These will see the format more closely aligned to the men's competition, with the current round of 16 due to be replaced by a group stage, and the two preceding qualifying rounds split into a champions' path and a league path. Developed in close collaboration with clubs and the European Club Association (ECA), the changes will ensure more competitive matches, as well as guarantee the participation of at least ten national associations in the group stage. Centralised marketing and television coverage will also increase the visibility and value of the competition. Together, they set a new benchmark for international women's club football. The 2019/20 Champions League and Europa League group draws held in Nyon. The Youth League finals, which have always used the single-match knockout format, switched from April to August, but stuck to their traditional venue of Colovray Stadium in Nyon. This season's tournament schedule started at the quarter-final rather than the semi-final stage and included the two remaining round of 16 matches. Real Madrid CF, who had never previously reached the final, claimed their first-ever Youth League title with a thrilling 3-2 victory over SL Benfica. Having knocked out Juventus, Inter and RB Salzburg along the way, Los Merengues – coached by Real legend Raúl González – held on to victory despite two goals from Benfica's Gonçalo Ramos. The 19-year-old's brace ensured he finished the competition as the joint top goalscorer with eight goals, alongside Atalanta's equally prolific Roberto Piccoli.

**Women's Champions League from 2021/22**

Earlier in the season (December 2019), the Executive Committee underlined its commitment to raising the status of UEFA's women's competitions – a key goal of its 2019–24 women's football strategy Time for Action (see pages 46–49) – by unveiling ambitious plans for the 2021/22 edition of the Women's Champions League. These will see the format more closely aligned to the men's competition, with the current round of 16 due to be replaced by a group stage, and the two preceding qualifying rounds split into a champions' path and a league path. Developed in close collaboration with clubs and the European Club Association (ECA), the changes will ensure more competitive matches, as well as guarantee the participation of at least ten national associations in the group stage. Centralised marketing and television coverage will also increase the visibility and value of the competition. Together, they set a new benchmark for international women's club football.

New format for Women's Champions League from 2021/22

The 2019/20 Champions League and Europa League group draws held in Nyon in August 2019 doubled up as an awards ceremony for the best men’s and women’s players of the previous season. Liverpool FC defender Virgil van Dijk was named the UEFA Men’s Player of the Year for 2018/19, having starred in the Champions League final victory against Tottenham Hotspur FC, while teammate Alisson Becker received the Goalkeeper of the Season award for his role in the Reds’ sixth European triumph. The other men’s prizes went to Frankie de Jong of AFC Ajax (Midfielder of the Season) and FC Barcelona’s Lionel Messi (Forward of the Season). Olympique lyonnais and England right-back Lucy Bronze became the first defender to win the UEFA Women’s Player of the Year award, in recognition of her role in helping the French side claim a fourth successive Women’s Champions League title.

Chelsea FC’s Eden Hazard - scorer of two goals in the Blues’ final victory over London rivals Arsenal FC - was voted the 2018/19 Europa League Player of the Season. Former French international and Manchester United FC icon Eric Cantona (pictured left) received the 2019 UEFA President’s Award from Aleksander Ceferin for his outstanding achievements in football.

UEFA awards distributed in Monaco

**14 August 2019**

Winners: Liverpool FC

Host city: Istanbul (Turkey)

In the first all-English Super Cup match, 2019 Champions League winners Liverpool edged Chelsea, regaining Europa League holders, at Beşiktaş Park in Istanbul, Turkey, on 14 August 2019. The title was decided by a penalty shoot-out for only the second time in Super Cup history, with the teams reaching the end of normal time at 1-1 before sharing a goal apiece in extra time. Liverpool goalkeeper Adrian was the Reds’ hero, making a decisive save that secured their team their fourth Super Cup triumph.

In a European football milestone, Stéphanie Frappart of France became the first woman to referee a major UEFA men’s match (see pages 40–41).
Under-19 Championships

In the first-ever UEFA tournament to be hosted by the Football Federation of Armenia (FFA), more than 50,000 fans attended the 2018/19 men’s European Under-19 Championship finals held in July 2019. Spain emerged victorious thanks to a 2-0 win over reigning champions Portugal in the final. The event, which took place across three venues in Yerevan, was a great success for the FFA. The hosts provided high-quality training facilities for teams, recruited 120 staff (many of them volunteers), and ran a popular fan zone in the capital’s city centre to successfully deliver the tournament.

At the same time as the men’s tournament, the Scottish Football Association (SFA) hosted the 2018/19 women’s Under-19 finals, which saw France claim their fifth title by defeating Germany. Both teams – along with losing semi-finalists Spain and the Netherlands – were awarded places in the FFA U-20 Women’s Tournament due to be held in 2021.

As part of UEFA’s tournament legacy programme, the SFA capitalised on the event to inspire a new generation of young footballers in Scotland. A trophy tour visited 30 schools, while 10 football festivals and 13 workshops focused on coaching and refereeing development.

New formats level the playing field

The Executive Committee underlined UEFA’s commitment to ensuring that future editions of both these competitions benefit from tried and tested innovations in the senior men’s and women’s game by announcing new formats.

Men’s Under-19s: the next edition of the men’s European Under-19 Championship, rescheduled from 2020–22 to 2021–23, will adopt the same format as the Nations League – a three-league, three-round qualifying phase incorporating promotion and relegation, with the five League A group winners and two best runners-up after round 3 joining the hosts in the final tournament. The decision was made in September 2019 after a full consultation with member associations and the Youth and Amateur Football Committee.

Women’s Under-17s and Under-19s: from 2021/22, youth teams competing in these competitions will play in two leagues over two rounds, with promotion and relegation directly linked to results.

This change guarantees Europe’s women’s youth teams more opportunities to play elite-level matches, enhancing the competitive balance. The decision-making process involved data analysis, consultation with internal and external experts and the Women’s Football Committee, as well as a workshop with coaches.

How the 2019/20 youth and futsal competition calendar changed

In parallel with other UEFA committees, the Youth and Amateur Football Committee substantially rewrote its competition calendar to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Executive Committee took the difficult decision to cancel several competitions to reduce the pressure on member associations.

Postponed

- All 2020/21 youth championships (women and men): qualifying matches moved to spring 2021
- March–October 2020: all futsal matches postponed
- 2019/20 Futsal Champions League finals: switched from April 2020 in Belarus (Minsk) to Spain (Barcelona) in October 2020
- 2020 FIFA Futsal World Cup: in Lithuania rescheduled to October 2021
- 2020/21 UEFA futsal competitions delayed
- Women’s Futsal EURO 2021: preliminary and final rounds rescheduled to May and October 2021 and final round to May 2022

Cancelled

- Men’s competitions
- 2019/20 Under-17 Championship
- 2019/20 Under-19 Championship
- 2020/21 Regions’ Cup

- Women’s competitions
- 2019/20 Women’s Under-17 Championship
- 2019/20 Women’s Under-19 Championship

*Elite rounds and final tournament
Progress was made throughout the season in implementing new technology to help referees on and off the field, as well as raising the profile and quality of female match officials.

Leveraging modern technology, both to keep pace with changes in the game and to adapt to challenges caused by the pandemic, brought significant benefits to many of UEFA’s refereeing activities in 2019/20.

Expansions of VAR and online collaboration

After its successful introduction in the men’s Champions League knockout phase in the 2018/19 season, UEFA’s video assistant referee (VAR) programme continued to expand. The technology was used for the first time in the play-off and group matches, while a further 20 referees were trained in how to use the technology in readiness for future seasons.

From mid-March, technology and digital tools played a role off the field by helping UEFA overcome national lockdowns to maintain contact with its pan-European network of 1,200 referees, assistant referees, futsal referees and referee observers.

Together with the Referees Committee, UEFA regularly hosted online collaboration sessions for match officials. These included masterclasses on different technical topics, weekly video quizzes and special home and group training designed by Professor Werner Helsen, a sports scientist and referee training expert.

Development of the Perception 4 Perfection online training tool was also accelerated. This draws on video footage of fouls, offside and goal-line situations, as well as feedback from referee observers, to improve decision-making skills on the pitch. The increased reliance on digital platforms led to unexpected and long-term benefits by bringing referees based in 55 different countries closer together.

Community: in the past, Europe’s top 100 referees only came together as a community when they gathered for two pan-European training courses. Now they can regularly exchange ideas and experiences through group chats with the rest of UEFA’s nearly 400 official referees.

Training: while online training videos for match officials were already available, their use accelerated as a result of the pandemic and is now standard practice for many national associations.

Breaking down gender barriers

In a landmark decision, France’s Stéphanie Frappart was selected to referee the 2019 Super Cup match between Liverpool FC and Chelsea FC – the first time a woman has overseen a major UEFA men’s event. Frappart had already broken new ground the previous season by becoming the first female referee to take charge of a men’s Ligue 1 match in her home country.

In a further sign of UEFA’s commitment to removing traditional gender barriers, some of Europe’s leading female assistant referees officiated at 2019/20 Europa League matches, while 38 assistant referees with frontline experience of officiating in the top two men’s divisions of their respective national associations attended a new training course. Staged in Nyon in November 2019 and designed to select the 24 assistant referees who will officiate at Women’s EURO 2022, the sessions focused on a variety of key topics:

- Offside
- Reading the game
- Concentration and awareness
- VAR

All future referee training for the Women’s EURO will now incorporate VAR certification.

“We want to invest in female referees, and the course for the assistant referees is another very good step for the future.”

Roberto Rosetti
UEFA Referees Committee chairman

“Referees appreciate the online group training. It’s a great way to stay in touch. In difficult times, we need to act as a team.”

Werner Helsen
UEFA referee fitness consultant
TEAMWORK AMID A PANDEMIC

Delivering on our mission in such an extraordinary year required exceptional teamwork. In a four-part series, we go behind the scenes to hear first-hand how UEFA teams had to adapt their skills to football’s ‘new normal’.

Organising matches in countries with different lockdown measures

What would a normal season look like for you?
We’re in touch with national associations and clubs to help prepare for their matches. We establish all the operational and organisational procedures to determine what needs to be done in each competition and each match. This is to ensure that they are played in accordance with our regulations and reaches the level of delivery we expect.

What changed because of the pandemic?
The fact that some games were cancelled, while others were played normally or behind closed doors, was a very complicated and dynamic situation we had to deal with.

When everything was shut down, we immediately switched our focus to how we could get the matches back up and running. In response to the situation, we created the Return to Play protocol which set out all of the operational parameters and requirements that would need to be implemented, particularly regarding testing and health and safety. These were then translated into the actual operational procedures needed on site.

One of the other big challenges we faced was that the lockdown and travel policies in each country were changing regularly to adapt to their own, specific situations. That meant we had two key roles to play. First, understanding how the relationships and movement rules worked across UEFA’s 55 member nations. Second, ensuring that everyone involved clearly understood how the different rules would affect them.

What did you learn from the 2019/20 season?
I think we’re still learning many lessons as we go, but what has become clear is how important it is to have a strong network, strong contacts and to build relationships with the national associations and clubs.

It’s only by working together, acting as a team and trying to reach the same objective that European football has managed to overcome the many obstacles it faced in the 2019/20 season. I’ve truly realised that Europe has a strong and united football community.

Developing 1,000 calendar scenarios

What would a normal season look like for you?
We focus on the long term by preparing and planning for how competitions will look in the future. This is based solely on the strategic sphere of organising competitions, which includes overseeing calendars, regulations and access lists, rather than the operational aspects of individual matches.

To give an idea of how far into the future we plan, we started working on the 2021–24 cycle back in the 2017/18 season. At that point, we start looking at optimisation, the number of teams involved, the format and the calendar.

It’s very difficult taking all of these factors into consideration, but we try to find the right balance for our competitions to be successful and, in particular, for the Champions League to remain the greatest club competition in the world.

How did your job change because of the pandemic?
Fundamentally, we had to scrap our calendar and begin again in very testing circumstances. For example, the pandemic situation changed dramatically every single day and we also needed to focus much more on the calendars of all stakeholders since COVID-19 affected each country in a unique manner at different times.

To prepare for the essentially unpredictable, we developed over 1,000 scenarios. These considered every possible outcome, from shortening competitions to calendar optimisation, so that we could adapt to anything and answer theoretical questions very quickly.

The starting point for each scenario was always the same: How can we return to play and maintain the right balance between timing, health and safety and economic value? This was a very tough process, but it needed to be done.

Can you identify a single, key turning point in the 2019/20 season?
Adapting our plan so all teams were available to resume UEFA competitions at the same time. From this perspective, one of the most important decisions we took was to allow clubs to complete their domestic seasons before resuming UEFA competitions. It was also critical to ensure our competitions were able to finish.

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In essence, the crisis helped us switch priorities to focus on a simple question: How can we start playing again?
DEVELOPING THE GAME

2019/20 at a glance

- UEFA’s 2020–24 strategy for developing women’s football progressed against its priority goals. Highlights included: a new format for the 2021/22 Women’s Champions League and a new partnership with Disney to attract more girls to football.

- Despite EURO 2020’s postponement, the HatTrick assistance programme will honour its commitments to channel EURO revenue into football development projects.

- For the first time, the UEFA Academy expanded its football management course to football professionals outside Europe, while the Assist programme’s Bounceback initiative helped non-European associations respond to the pandemic.

- The Football in Schools programme went live, spearheading UEFA’s mission to offer equal opportunities for everyone to play football.

- The fourth UEFA Coaching Convention was published, setting technical standards for the next generation of European coaches.
WOMEN ON TRACK TO MEET TARGET

One year since launching its four-year strategy for women’s football – Time For Action – UEFA has made impressive progress. Key steps include a new format for the Women’s Champions League, a guide to help national associations develop women’s football strategies and the launch of the Playmakers programme in partnership with Disney.

The 2019/20 season marked the first year of implementing Time For Action – UEFA’s four-year strategy to secure the long-term future of women’s football. Despite the inevitable impact of the pandemic on all competitions and development projects – the subject of an ongoing evaluation – the strategy remains on track to meet its 2024 targets. Critically, UEFA has already secured all the funding needed to implement Time For Action – equivalent to a 50% increase on the previous budget for developing women’s football.

**Strategic priority: Driving participation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of women and girls playing football</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2024</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.25m</td>
<td>2.5m</td>
<td>2.5m</td>
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By 2024, the strategy aims to double the number of girls and women playing football, from 1.25 million in 2019 to 2.5 million. According to the results of a UEFA national associations’ GRASS survey, published during the 2019/20 season, an additional 300,000 more women and girls were playing the game in 2020 compared with 2019.

The improved profile of elite women’s football has certainly played a role in driving this trend (see page 36), but UEFA also expects long-term rewards from a promising new grassroots initiative. Launched in 2020 with Disney, Playmakers helps young girls, aged 5–8, discover the fun in exercising regularly and playing football.

Such innovative approaches are driven by the Together #WePlayStrong campaign, which was set up in 2017 to increase participation levels among 13–17-year-old girls by shifting the overall perception of women’s football. By the end of the 2019/20 season, the campaign had attracted a global audience of more than one billion, helped in part by two related initiatives: ‘Strong is...’ and ‘Together #WePlayStrong #TrainAtHome’, created in collaboration with UEFA women’s football sponsor Visa. #TrainAtHome helped keep amateur and grassroots players involved with football during lockdown, and featured Team Visa athletes such as Nikita Parris, Vivianne Miedema and Beth Mead running daily training routines, skills challenges and home workout drills.

Women’s Champions League.
at the round of 16 stage of the elimination Manchester City her team’s second leg win Femenino takes a selfie after Elena Linari of Atlético Madrid Madrid, Spain, 30 October 2019.

Europe have received training on topics more than 900 association staff across dedicated strategies, while, in the past year, To date, 31 associations have introduced own national strategies to guide investment. This funding will support specific projects of dedicated partners increased to five with PepsiCo joining Visa, Esprit, Hublot and Nike. By the end of the season, two new developments had put the Women’s Champions League and Women’s EURO on track to double their overall value and reach – both key building blocks in securing a sustainable and professional future for the women’s game:

1. Introduction of centralised marketing and media rights for the Women’s Champions League (see page 36).
2. Announcement that media rights’ sales for Women’s EURO 2022 are likely to exceed the equivalent EURO 2017 figures.

The development of women’s football and its foundations are fundamental to the success of football as a whole.”
Anne Reil, chairwoman of the UEFA Women’s Football Committee and general secretary of the Estonian Football Association.

To ensure these strategies align with its own pan-European goals, UEFA has worked with associations, FIFA, industry experts, and football leaders to provide a user-friendly guide – Developing a National Women’s and Girls’ Football Strategy. Distributed to all member associations, this identifies eight critical steps to building women’s football strategies. UEFA has also driven development by opening new pathways for promising young female coaches and players, such as its coach development programme for women. In the past season, 238 women have won scholarships to study for UEFA coaching licences. Another nine up-and-coming coaches are following a coach mentoring scheme. National team competition regulations have also been adjusted to oblige all participating clubs to appoint a female head coach or assistant coach by the 2020/21 season. UEFA has also worked with the national associations of Slovakia, Hungary and the Czech Republic at regional level to ensure talented female Under-14 players have the opportunity to develop both their skills and their football careers.

Playmakers programme: Disney partnership breaks new ground

By teaming up with Disney to launch the Playmakers programme in early 2020, UEFA broke new ground in its pan-European efforts to increase girls’ participation in sport. Inspired by research at Leeds Beckett University in England, as well as work already conducted by the English FA, this highly innovative programme combines storytelling with exercise to nurture far more than football skills.

When the pandemic forced seven national associations – Austria, Belgium, Norway, Poland, Romania, Scotland and Serbia – to postpone their pilot projects, Playmakers moved online.

Play at Home with Playmakers allowed girls to experience the key benefits of the programme while staying at home during national lockdowns.

Time For Action’s budget includes annual €22m €33m 2020-2024

UEFA’s Women’s Football Development Programme

Funding available for national associations through UEFA’s Women’s Football Development Programme

Strategic priority 2

Developing the game

Funding available for national associations through UEFA’s Women’s Football Development Programme

Strategic priority 3

Transforming competitions

Are girls and women that play football ‘losing’?

2017 2020

1%, 7%

Systematically raising the status of all its competitions is central to transforming public perception of women’s football across Europe. One year into the strategic period, there are already signs of progress, with increased recognition of the game’s role in increasing self-confidence. An estimated 77% of the general population now describe girls and women that play football as ‘strong’ (source: market research by Future Thinking 10). In 2019/20, UEFA

Strategic priority 4

Enhancing governance structures

Female representation on UEFA bodies

+58% since 2017

While there is still room for improvement, the past season has seen steady progress in efforts to create more opportunities for women to occupy key decision-making positions within European football. Three scholarships were awarded to women enrolling on the UEFA Academy’s Executive Master for International Players (EMP), while the Women in Football Leadership Programme was created in close cooperation with FIFA. Female representation on all UEFA’s governing bodies also increased – a key priority goal.

Decoupling women’s football rights from the men’s game has been a game changer in UEFA’s commercial development of its women’s competitions. In 2019/20, the number of dedicated partners increased to five with PepsiCo joining Visa, Esprit, Hublot and Nike.

By the end of the season, two new developments had put the Women’s Champions League and Women’s EURO on track to double their overall value and reach – both key building blocks in securing a sustainable and professional future for the women’s game:

1. Introduction of centralised marketing and media rights for the Women’s Champions League (see page 36).
2. Announcement that media rights’ sales for Women’s EURO 2022 are likely to exceed the equivalent EURO 2017 figures.

In February 2020, the Executive Committee decided that the 2022 and 2023 Women’s Champions League finals will be played at the Juventus Stadium in Turin and the Philips Stadium in Eindhoven respectively. In the same month, UEFA also confirmed that the opening match of Women’s EURO 2022, hosted by England, will take place at Manchester United’s Old Trafford stadium, with the final set for Wembley in London (see page 30).

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Since its creation in 2004 to channel EURO profits back into the game, UEFA’s HatTrick assistance programme has almost tripled its funding. By the end of its fifth four-year cycle in 2024, HatTrick will have channelled €2.6 billion into football development projects across the continent.

The HatTrick programme is one of the largest solidarity initiatives in sport, accounting for a significant proportion of the revenue from UEFA’s European Championships, which is reinvested to develop the game. Each year, the programme distributes more than €190 million to UEFA’s 55 member associations to support a hat-trick of goals: 1. increased investment funding 2. improved education 3. wider knowledge sharing

National associations across Europe rely on HatTrick incentive payments to implement many of the activities described in this report: anti-match-fixing and integrity initiatives, the club loaning system, elite youth player development, good governance, grassroots football, women’s football, national coaching courses, referee training, social responsibility projects, travel expenses for national teams, and UEFA youth, women’s, futsal and amateur competitions.

HatTrick’s contribution to the welfare of European football was never clearer than in March/April of this reporting period, when the pandemic brought the game to a temporary halt. Despite the postponement of EURO 2020, UEFA quickly reassured associations that it would honour the next four-year commitment (equivalent to €775.5 million from 2020 to 2024).

The 2019/20 season bridged the fourth and fifth HatTrick cycles. This section looks at three national associations, representing different sizes and locations, to show how they are investing HatTrick funds to protect and develop their national game.

**HatTrick case study**

**Football Association of Iceland (KSI)**

**Objective:** build on financial support from the second, third and fourth HatTrick cycles to ensure club facilities meet minimum standards.  
**Project:** creation of a construction fund, available to all KSI members each year, to support projects that will upgrade club facilities and infrastructure, including stadiums, mini-pitches and supporter areas.  
**Result:** the KSI hopes to support 8–10 projects every year throughout the fifth HatTrick cycle (2020–24).

**COVID-19 – solidarity fund impact**  
The KSI covered registration fees and travel expenses of all clubs participating in the Icelandic championships in 2020.
DEVELOPING THE GAME

HatTrick case study

Football Association of Montenegro (FSCG)

FK Berane – reconstruction of stadium’s main stand

Objective: improve the standard of football facilities across the country.

Project: drawing on HatTrick funds, the FSCG will reconstruct both the main stand and the roof of FK Berane’s stadium in northern Montenegro, allowing the ground to host international matches.

Result: FK Berane will still own the renovated stadium but the FSCG will have the right to use the stadium to host friendly and official matches involving its youth national teams.

FK Sutjeska Mibice and FK Arsenal Tivat – new artificial pitches

Objective: build two artificial pitches in collaboration with FK Sutjeska and FK Arsenal Tivat.

Result: each of the clubs’ municipalities has provided land free of charge for 20 years on which to construct the pitches, with the right to extend the privilege by an additional 20 years. The two clubs and the FSCG will take joint responsibility for maintaining the pitches, with the national association allowed to use the playing surfaces for all its youth national teams.

The renovated main stand at FK Berane’s stadium in Montenegro.

HatTrick programme – the score so far

From 2020 to 2024, total HatTrick funding will amount to €775.5 million – an increase of €165 million compared with the €610.5 million distributed over the previous cycle (2016–20). This will bring cumulative EURO revenue invested in football development since HatTrick’s launch in 2004 to €2.6 billion by 2024 – with benefits for the entire European game.

SOLIDARITY

SOLIDARITY

Since 2019, the UEFA Academy has overseen two of the HatTrick programme’s three goals: improved education and wider knowledge-sharing. It offers educational programmes specifically tailored for managers, players and specialists developing their football careers. Subjects include administration, communication, corporate and social responsibility, finance, governance and law.

Academy courses were previously limited to participants from UEFA’s 55 member associations as well as football professionals, including former players and managers. However, in 2019/20, the academy opened its 2019/20 Certificate in Football Management course to professionals working in football across the world. The response was impressive, with 27 students selected from 20 countries and five continents.

The academy broke new ground by launching an educational programme for supporter liaison officers, whose role includes ensuring constructive dialogue between fans and clubs and providing spectator feedback to UEFA, clubs and/or national associations. Working in close collaboration with UEFA partner SD Europe – an organisation representing grassroots and national supporters’ organisations – the academy piloted the new programme in Denmark and Russia for full-time and volunteer supporter liaison officers.

The academy also plays an important role in helping elite footballers manage their careers, both as current and former players. The UEFA for Players app, introduced during the 2019/20 season, uses real-life case studies and immersive simulation videos to ensure young professional footballers are better equipped to cope with challenges on and off the pitch.

Topics include how to deal with the media and what to do if approached about match-fixing. More than 300 players participating in the 2019/20 UEFA Youth League completed all the app’s modules.

The academy helps retired players equip themselves to build a second career in football. In October 2019, at UEFA’s headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, 21 former international footballers celebrated their graduation from the second edition of the Executive Master for International Players (MIP). The course is designed to help ex-pros transfer their playing strengths into effective management skills, as well as quickly transition into key decision-making roles. UEFA MIP alumni and participants include Lason Roberts, Emils Hesley, Genemi, Eric Abidal, Florent Malouda, Paul Elliott, Patrick Mboma, Gilberto Silva and Didier Drogba. Some 81 former professional footballers applied to enrol on the third edition of the Executive Masters – compared with 37 in 2018.

By drawing on its experience in creating online educational modules, the academy was able to minimise the impact of the pandemic on students. While a few programmes were postponed, nearly all of them took place online as live virtual training sessions.

In 2019/20, the UEFA Academy not only expanded the number of educational programmes on offer to professionals working in football, but also received more applications than ever.

LIFELONG LEARNING

More than 2,000 graduates from over 120 nationalities

The academy also provides a UEFA Core Coaching Licence for clubs,Animation Academy for the media, the Executive Masters – for International Players.

UEFA ANNUAL REPORT | 2019/20

UEFA ANNUAL REPORT | 2019/20
Since 2017, UEFA’s Assist programme has shared the know-how and experience of European football with countries around the world. In the 2019/20 reporting period, Assist delivered results in all four of its main areas of focus:

1. Building capacity
   Although additional leadership retreats to help associations create operational plans, implementation of Assist’s player pathway development programme in Tanzania laid the foundation for establishing a national talent academy. With Assist support, Jamaica developed a legacy programme to capitalise on the first-ever appearance of its national team at the Women’s World Cup in France.

2. Developing youth football
   Before the pandemic restricted travel, Assist had supported the organisation of 11 youth football tournaments outside of Europe. With 13 UEFA member associations also participating, these events allowed young footballers to widen their experience of playing styles and cultures, and to grow both on and off the field.

3. Strengthening infrastructure
   Of the 200-plus football development projects that Assist has supported in almost 60 countries in the past three years, many are small-scale projects designed to make an instant impact. In 2019/20, one such initiative allowed Uganda’s national association to conduct a turf management course and in-depth pitch inspections. This resulted in the purchase of maintenance equipment for 17 stadiums across the country.

4. Supporting member associations
   Some 17 UEFA member associations helped their counterparts in other confederations during 2019/20. In one example of football’s power to connect continents, the Slovak Football Association invited the Botswana women’s national team to attend a training camp. The Football Association of Ireland sent development officers to the British Virgin Islands to boost youth football.

A helping hand

With football around the world struggling to cope with the impact of COVID-19, Assist launched three new projects to support non-European national associations:

- **Bounceback**: helped associations adapt their existing business models to deal with ongoing challenges as effectively as possible.
- **Home and Away**: invited UEFA member associations to donate surplus clothing and equipment for distribution to non-European associations worst affected by the pandemic and/or other emergencies.
- **Online Football Forum**: a private LinkedIn group, shared training materials, best practices and updates on Assist projects. More than 200 football stakeholders signed up during the reporting period.

For the past five years, UEFA’s Grow programme has offered a range of business development services to support national associations in their management of the game: from rebranding and marketing to identifying new revenue opportunities and increasing rates of participation.

In October 2019 at a conference in Madrid, Grow launched Football Federations of the Future to support associations in designing a strategic roadmap for developing the game in their respective countries.

By drawing on the first-hand experiences of 25 associations, participants created a single strategic planning framework. When travel restrictions forced the cancellation of a follow-up conference – originally scheduled for October 2020 – Grow ran a series of webinars to maintain close ties with the national association community.

**Measurable difference**

During the reporting period, Grow guidance made a measurable difference across two key areas of football development:

- **Evaluation of commercial revenue strategies for 34 associations** (including provision of post-evaluation guidance) helped the Royal Belgian Football Association to increase its commercial revenue by 50%.
- **Cooperation with 42 associations** on increasing female player participation delivered an average 15% growth in participation rates across these countries compared with the previous year.

**Social return on investment numbers add value for Poland**

To help national associations make the case for increased public and private sector investment, in 2019 Grow provided access to data demonstrating the economic and social benefits of mass participation in football. This allowed several associations to secure additional funding, including the Polish Football Association, which secured a new sponsor for the national team and received €7.8 million in government funding for its Licensing Grassroots Clubs programme.
MOMENTUM BUILDS IN SCHOOLS

Football programme emphasises the frontline role of Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia, the festival involving children from Austria, Slovenia in September 2019, with a football launched in Ljubljana’s Republic Square in the most significant step forward.

Football in Schools programme represented areas during the season, the start of UEFA’s while progress was made in each of these areas.

The benefits of grassroots football stretch far beyond the pitch. Whatever its level or format – school and youth football, winter football, disability football, football for veterans, walking football – playing the beautiful game brings benefits to all of society. It teaches positive values, promotes a healthy lifestyle, connects communities and creates a level playing field, regardless of age, ability, ethnicity or gender.

UEFA’s commitment to ensuring that everyone, everywhere in Europe has an equal opportunity to play football in a safe and quality-controlled environment is enshrined in its Grassroots Football Charter. UEFA’s commitment to ensuring that everyone, everywhere in Europe has an equal opportunity to play football in a safe and quality-controlled environment is enshrined in its Grassroots Football Charter.

In Scotland, Aberdeen FC’s won recognition in UEFA’s annual Grassroots Awards.

1. Football in schools

While progress was made in each of these areas during the season, the start of UEFA’s Football in Schools programme represented the most significant step forward. Launched in Lithuania’s Republic Square in Slovenia in September 2019, with a football festival involving children from Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Italy and Slovenia, the programme emphasises the frontline role of schools in ensuring that a child’s first experience of playing football is positive.

Over the next four years, UEFA will invest €44 million from its HatTrick assistance programme (see pages 50–52) for national associations to invest in grassroots football development. Of this, €15 million is earmarked for improving school football. At the start of the season, a series of workshops and webinars provided a forum for all 55 associations to share their own best practice and knowledge of school football and learn about the grant application process. This provided the basis for building a robust project plan setting out clear objectives and requirements. Three seminars were subsequently staged in Italy, Northern Ireland and Romania.

The closure of schools to protect local communities from the pandemic, coupled with travel restrictions, inevitably affected the roll-out of the Football in Schools programme across Europe, forcing the postponement of additional seminars. Plans to highlight the initiative by staging a school football competition in Rome shortly before EURO 2020 were cancelled. The event, involving teams representing all 12 host countries, will now take place in 2021 during the build-up to the rescheduled tournament.

Despite these setbacks, UEFA restored momentum by switching on-site events in Malta, Norway and Russia to webinars. The change in format brought an unexpected benefit: meeting online rather than traveling for face-to-face meetings afforded participants more time to draft their national Football in Schools strategies. Building on this success, UEFA also initiated a weekly forum, with member associations invited to present case studies on how they plan to deliver Football in Schools. By creating a network of engaged grassroots experts, the forum has quickly become a valued information resource for associations wishing to exchange new thinking and best practice about all aspects of grassroots football development.

2. Grassroots coach education

Following the approval of its fourth Coaching Convention (see pages 58–59), UEFA conducted a detailed review of its grassroots coaching qualification. This focused on implementing the new competency-based approach as well as identifying the basic skills that coaches need to demonstrate to attain the new UEFA C diploma.

Based on lessons learned from the Football in Schools webinar series and efforts to support associations’ coaching programmes throughout national lockdowns, the next cycle of grassroots coach education will incorporate a mixed online and face-to-face approach.

3. Club development

In addition to progress made in the first two focus areas of UEFA’s grassroots football programme, a group of experts is designing a framework for grassroots club development. Due to delivery in spring 2021, this will establish best practice guidelines, while leaving scope for associations to adapt their national plans to local circumstances.

As with Football in Schools, the framework’s roll-out will include a comprehensive support programme, with the creation of an online community to share lessons learned.
ON COURSE FOR SUCCESS

UEFA made progress across its entire range of coach education programmes, with the approval of a new Coaching Convention especially important in keeping European coaching at the forefront of the game.

Approval of revised Coaching Convention

The Executive Committee’s approval of the fourth edition of UEFA’s Coaching Convention in March 2020 represented a landmark achievement – for the 2019/20 season and beyond. By setting legal minimum standards for coach education and qualifications, the convention is a cornerstone of UEFA’s efforts to continually raise the bar on technical excellence across European football.

The convention provides a legal framework for UEFA’s coach education programme, which supports all 55 member associations through conferences, workshops, projects and, as needed, assistance tailored to specific country needs. This latest revision is based on proposals from the Development and Technical Assistance Committee and the Jíra Panel. Named after Václav Jiří – the respected Czech player, coach and administrator – the panel brings together recognised experts in the art of coaching and educating coaches. Together, they discuss how national associations can leverage modern educational methodologies to nurture a future class of coaches who are equipped to develop the game.

The new convention, available in multiple European languages, sets a series of core objectives for the UEFA coach education programmes: 1. improving the standard of coach education courses; 2. linking education to employment by practising coaching skills in realistic situations; 3. ensuring UEFA offers a clear educational pathway for European football coaches; 4. reiterating the importance of developing a pool of skilled coach educators.

UEFA’s annual coach education conference, staged in Nicosia, Cyprus, in November 2019, provided national associations with the first chance to familiarise themselves with the convention and several new features. These include the first-ever inclusion of criteria for C, Youth B and Goalkeeper B UEFA diplomas, alongside existing guidelines for Pro, A, B, Elite Youth A, Goalkeeping A and Futsal B qualifications. Conference participants provided feedback and also used mastery-based learning methods to test how the convention can be implemented most effectively. The conference also explored alternative ways of improving coach education.

Keeping Europe’s coaching community connected

Travel restrictions introduced to slow the spread of COVID-19 forced the cancellation of the season’s two remaining Pro licence student exchange events, as well as a series of coach-educator development seminars. Recognising the importance of keeping football’s coaching community connected to share knowledge and best practice on adapting to exceptional circumstances, UEFA’s football education services made two important changes to their way of working:

- Replacement of on-site meetings with online seminars: this approach proved so successful that even when travel restrictions are eventually lifted, future coaching events will incorporate a mix of online education sessions with offline face-to-face meetings.
- Development of new education materials: ‘curriculum builder’ and ‘the fitness competence framework’ were quickly set up to help national associations continue delivering their coach education programmes.

Curriculum builder helps associations design UEFA diploma courses that lead to a coherent and integrated set of qualifications.

Fitness framework sets out the physical preparation competences that coaches need to have at each of UEFA’s C, B, A and Pro licence levels.

Digitalisation of match and performance analysis

UEFA’s match and performance analysis of its club and national team competitions plays a key role in adapting coach education programmes to reflect new trends at the game’s highest level, from tactics to player preparation.

This information is usually released in a series of printed reports, published at the end of each season. Since the start of the 2019/20 season, however, any coach or player – amateur or professional – can access UEFA’s match-by-match analysis through a dedicated website: uefatechnicalreports.com. In addition to team performance data and tactical talking points, the platform also uses data visualisation tools to illustrate individual teams’ tactical and technical performance.

The digitalisation of UEFA match reports is also transforming the work of technical observers, whose observations from the sidelines form the basis of all performance analysis. The introduction of an online reporting tool allows these observers to upload match data in real time to a series of dashboards, ready for analysis. They are also able to create short video clips using mobile apps to graphically illustrate match reports.

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Helping national associations access urgent financial assistance

What would a normal season look like for you?
I oversee the implementation of UEFA’s HatTrick programme. This reinvests a large proportion of EURO profits into football development projects run by UEFA’s 55 member associations.

Tasks include evaluating applications for funding from the national associations, presenting project proposals to UEFA’s HatTrick Committee for approval and establishing agreements with each grantee. Our team then monitors the implementation of every HatTrick project, working in close coordination with UEFA colleagues across a range of specialist topics, from women’s football and club licensing to amateur competitions and social responsibility activities.

In addition to managing HatTrick payments, we are also responsible for maintaining close ties with national associations, facilitating requests for information or support.

How did your job change because of the pandemic?
Our immediate priority was amending the HatTrick regulations to ensure national associations could access urgent financial assistance.

Then, in June, we turned our attention to helping colleagues responsible for UEFA’s Return to Play project. We drew on our close connections with national associations and their respective governments to help organise club and national team matches as well as address last-minute issues. These ranged from dealing with a positive COVID-19 test and securing exemptions for players to organising team travel or arranging matches at neutral venues.

How did you maintain contact with the 55 national associations during the pandemic?
In the past, we only needed to interact directly with presidents and general secretaries on an occasional basis. That changed after a UEFA videoconference on 1 April 2020, when we invited all 55 general secretaries to describe the pandemic’s impact on football in their country.

From that point on, we were in touch with national associations every day – either to discuss UEFA decisions or provide assistance. Everyone in my team worked tirelessly to ensure each association was up to speed on what we were doing and what we planned to do next. This not only facilitated the return to play of our club and national team competitions in August; it also strengthened collaboration between UEFA and the national associations – something I am confident will continue into the future.

“The pandemic strengthened collaboration between UEFA and national associations – something I am confident will continue into the future.”

Assessing the pandemic’s impact on women’s football
What would a normal season look like for you?
The rapid growth of the women’s game, together with our own efforts to proactively capitalise on every opportunity, means that we haven’t had one season that looks like the last. That said, there are a few constants to my team’s work – above all, the need to drive forward the UEFA women’s football strategy – both within the organisation and externally.

We also work closely with UEFA’s main stakeholders to design far-reaching strategies, conduct research and develop groundbreaking projects. This involves many ongoing joint initiatives with our national associations (see Playmakers, page 49). On top of this, each year we assess national association proposals to use funding from the HatTrick assistance programme to support women’s football projects.

How did your job change because of the pandemic?
The main task was to ensure that my team was available for a range of different work tasks: from supporting colleagues involved in the return to play of UEFA’s women’s competitions to taking on administrative tasks.

Both my colleagues and I managed our time more flexibly. With national associations heavily focused on delivering their domestic competitions, many of the development activities that I usually lead temporarily halted. Instead, we supported associations by helping them to assess the immediate impact of the pandemic and to identify ways of mitigating the main challenges.

In preparation for better times ahead, we amended project timelines and revisited plans for implementing our overall women’s football strategy.

How can the women’s game recover from the impact of football’s temporary shutdown?
While we continue to face significant challenges, there are encouraging signs that women’s football is bouncing back. Over 40 national leagues have resumed, while reports from stakeholders suggest fewer girls are dropping out of grassroots football than boys. It will take time to have a full picture of the pandemic’s true impact.

That said, the next two seasons will bring some fantastic, high-profile moments for women’s football. A new Women’s Champions League format is coming into play, followed by our biggest ever Women’s EURO in 2022. We need greater visibility and both these competitions, along with the 2020 Olympic Games and the Women’s World Cup in 2023, will provide exactly that – in a very short space of time. Overall, I’m quietly confident that 2020’s temporary halt will prove to be just a pause in the long-term development of women’s football.

“There are encouraging signs that women’s football is bouncing back.”
2019/20 at a glance

- With preparations almost complete before EURO 2020's postponement, UEFA 'hibernated' the tournament – ready to pick up where it left off in 2021. All 12 host cities signed up again to stage the competition on the same terms as before.

- Former EURO winners attended a commemorative event in Amsterdam marking 60 years of the UEFA European Football Championship.

- Media rights for the Women’s Champions League will be centralised from 2021 to increase visibility and raise value.

- During football’s pause, UEFA.tv attracted half a million online viewers by streaming historic European matches, while 15 million fans watched Italy win the inaugural UEFA eEURO virtual tournament.
EURO 2020: A SEASON OF TWO HALVES

UEFA’s game management in a season split between ‘preparation’ and ‘hibernation’ laid strong foundations for a positive final result: the successful staging of EURO 2020 in 2021.

By early March 2020, EURO 2020 was firmly on track to kick off in June. Thanks to close collaboration between national associations, local authorities and UEFA, preparations were nearing completion in each of the 12 cities due to host the competition’s 60th anniversary edition.

The sudden outbreak of a pandemic left European football’s governing body with no choice but to postpone the entire tournament until 2021. While a difficult decision, it was the only way to ensure the safety of everyone involved, avoid burdening public services unnecessarily and provide sufficient time for domestic leagues to complete their seasons.

As a result, the EURO 2020 season resembled a match of two halves: ‘preparation’ versus ‘hibernation’.
First half: preparations for June 2020 enter final stages

The build-up to the EURO 2020 finals gathered momentum in November 2019 with the staging of the final draw in Bucharest, one of the tournament’s 12 host cities.

Broadcast worldwide to millions of viewers from Romexpo, an exhibition centre in the Romanian capital, the draw placed the 24 competing teams, including four future play-off winners, into six groups. UEFA also announced that Dutch DJ and record producer Martin Garrix, who performed live at the final draw, would compose the official song for EURO 2020.

At this stage, the legal framework for the tournament was already in place. European football’s governing body had signed agreements with the hosts, the EURO 2020 commercial partners – broadcasters, sponsors and licensees – as well as key suppliers such as television production services, and technical and operational service providers.

In addition to a rights protection strategy for the event, UEFA had also drawn up a booklet providing legal guidance for associations and other stakeholders preparing to travel to any of the 12 host cities. The document set out country-by-country requirements for entry visas and work permits, together with tax, customs and driving regulations.

By the start of 2020, the complex logistical exercise of organising an event bridging 12 different nations had also reached an advanced stage. Following UEFA’s decision to delegate the delivery of 18 EURO projects to the hosts, each association had almost finalised the recruitment of 50–60 local staff members.

Second half: hibernation preserves groundwork for June 2021

From the moment that the Executive Committee communicated its decision to postpone EURO 2020 by 12 months, UEFA focused on putting the competition into hibernation until November 2020. This was essential to minimise costs, preserve well-laid foundations and ensure preparations could pick up where they left off later in the year. As a priority, UEFA addressed the biggest question facing all of the national associations,
cities and stadiums due to host the original finals given the uncertain evolution of the pandemic, could they still stage the rescheduled 2021 event?

Finding an answer meant negotiating significant legal, operational and logistical obstacles, such as adapting more than 250 supplier contracts and securing the continued commitment of associations to deliver EURO projects.

Thanks to excellent collaboration, by June 2020, all 12 EURO hosts, including city and national governments, stadium and airport authorities, had signed up to stage the 2021 tournament on the same terms as before.

To help bring EURO preparations out of hibernation quickly and smoothly, UEFA scheduled an online workshop for October to brief host associations on key priorities.

These included identifying milestones along the revised road map to June 2021 and understanding the potential impact of the pandemic on staging matches and events.

Drawing on its experience of organising four club competition final tournaments in August and strong collaboration with host nations, UEFA will base preparations for the rescheduled EURO 2020 on a range of health and travel scenarios to ensure a safe and successful tournament.

Refunds offered to fans and clients

At the time of the EURO 2020 postponement, UEFA had sold most available tickets for the tournament’s 51 matches, while demand for hospitality packages, such as private suites and business lounges, had entered its peak phase.

UEFA offered EURO fans and hospitality clients two opportunities – first in May, then in June – to either request a full refund or keep their booking for the 2021 tournament. In total, the general public and national associations returned 242,420 tickets – just over 13% of total sales. UEFA refunded 40% of hospitality sales, which were expected to resume for the rescheduled event by the end of 2020.

Cooperation agreement: complements the staging agreement and serves as the basis for the set-up of EURO 2024 GmbH as a joint venture between UEFA and the German FA (DFB) based in Frankfurt.

Stadium long-form agreements: set out the terms and conditions of agreements with each of the ten stadiums selected to stage EURO 2024 matches.

Training grounds and team hotels legal frameworks: governs management of facilities for national teams during the tournament.

Preparation for the legal framework for EURO 2024

In parallel to resetting commercial and operational agreements to facilitate the smooth switch of EURO 2020 to its revised 2021 schedule, UEFA started preparing legal documentation for EURO 2024 – the 17th edition of the European Football Championship.

By the end of the reporting period, various legal agreements and other documents critical to ensuring the commercial and operational success of EURO 2024 were already at an advanced stage:

In August and strong collaboration with host nations, UEFA will base preparations for the rescheduled EURO 2020 on a range of health and travel scenarios to ensure a safe and successful tournament.
REACHING NEW FRONTIERS

Close collaboration with official media rights and commercial partners throughout the season was reinforced by increased exposure on a growing number of UEFA digital platforms and mobile applications.

New media rights deals


To help increase both the visibility and value of women’s elite club football, in 2019, UEFA also announced its intention to centralise marketing and television coverage for the 2021–25 Women’s Champions League cycle (see page 36).

Companies were invited to bid for the media rights to this competition in the fourth quarter of 2020.

Digital strategy

The digital reach of UEFA’s competitions continued to grow during the reporting period, with the Champions League ranked as the most followed foreign football competition on social media platforms in China. Two tactics lay behind this landmark achievement:

1. the strategic use of web analytics to target new audiences according to geographical location and interests;
2. the development of new commercial partnerships with online companies such as Alipay, Booking.com, Expedia and Takeaway.

Even when the pandemic brought a temporary pause to live football action, UEFA’s decision to stream classic European matches from the past succeeded in drawing half a million new online viewers (see page 72).
Helping commercial and broadcast partners adapt

When EURO 2020 was postponed to 2021 and all other competitions were placed on hold, UEFA quickly informed its commercial partners through CAA11 and Team Marketing. These two sports marketing agencies are responsible for managing rights for UEFA’s men’s national team and club competitions respectively.

Close collaboration allowed UEFA to find solutions for several issues facing broadcasting, sponsorship and licensing partners for the Champions League and Europa League: for example, compensation and payment deferral requests. In total, more than 200 agreements were amended.

UEFA also helped partners address the impact of revised competition formats and schedules on branding. The decision to keep the official EURO 2020 name, despite the tournament’s postponement to 2021, was partly driven by the need to avoid wasting materials.

UEFA also recognised the predicament that broadcasters and sponsors faced during football’s temporary halt, offering alternative video and digital content to help fill television schedules and support the build-up to the return to play of UEFA’s competitions.

The governing body also worked closely with broadcasters to maximise the prime-time exposure of the final eight tournaments in Germany, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland, scheduling four weeks of almost nightly live football.

UEFA tv: (RE)Live classic matches

UEFA.tv played a critical role in UEFA’s efforts to maintain engagement with European football’s global fanbase throughout the temporary suspension of sport in 2020. As a free-to-view registration-based service for live and on-demand video coverage of UEFA competitions, the platform drew from the extensive UEFA digital archive to stream 63 classic club and national team matches over a 12-week period from March to June.

Mirroring a weekly schedule similar to UEFA’s live football competitions, UEFA.tv’s success in entertaining football fans during lockdowns won a 2020 Leaders Sports Award for Best On-Screen Experience.

Launched in June 2019, UEFA.tv leads the way in delivering Europe’s elite tournaments to new audiences around the world. During the reporting period, the platform complemented official broadcast partner coverage by streaming 380 live events across 11 official competitions to multiple markets in Europe and beyond, generating seven million live and on-demand views. UEFA.tv also live-streamed selected EURO 2020 qualifiers and Nations League matches in available markets, with on-demand highlights published for all matches.

UEFA.tv also helps raise the profiles of UEFA’s youth, women’s and futsal competitions. During the return to play of European club football in August 2020, the platform streamed the final eight tournaments of the Women’s Champions League and the Youth League to an estimated 200 markets worldwide.

Following a first smart-TV deployment with national team football partner Hisense in June 2020, UEFA.tv is now available on seven different platforms, including, most recently, PlayStation.
“eEURO 2020 was an opportunity for UEFA to engage with new audiences and provide additional content for existing fans of our competitions.”

Florence Hardouin
UEFA Marketing Advisory Committee chairwoman

The inaugural eEURO competition proved a sporting and marketing success story that augurs well for future UEFA esports events.

With the real-life EURO postponed until 2021, no fewer than 15 million sports-starved fans watched the debut edition of the eEURO. Some 10,000 gamers played the virtual tournament on UEFA partner Konami’s efootball Pro Evolution Soccer 2020 video game.

The eEURO 2020 qualifiers kicked-off in March and attracted efootball teams representing all 55 of Europe’s member associations. The 16-team final tournament, originally planned as a physical event coinciding with the climax of EURO 2020, was brought forward to May to provide fans with much needed online entertainment during lockdowns. By the time Italy’s efootball team had overcome their Serbian counterparts to claim the inaugural eEURO title, as well as a €40,000 share of the total €100,000 prize money, the event had delivered more than 2,000 virtual goals.

In addition to its impressive participation and viewing figures, eEURO 2020 provided valuable content for EURO 2020 commercial partners to replace cancelled live matches. A total of 25 EURO official broadcasters covered the matches, while UEFA offered sponsors exclusive digital rights and advertising space; for example: Skill of the Day by Hisense, Match Stats delivered by FedEx and Goal of the Day by Socar.
Renegotiating 200 media rights agreements

What would a normal season look like for you?
For UEFA club competitions, we sell commercial and media rights over a period of three years. For each cycle, the first year focuses on the competition’s format, the commercial concept and preparation of the actual sales. This leaves us another two years to sell media rights around the world for the Champions League, Europa League and the new Europa Conference League. We launch tenders on a territory-by-territory basis, adapting packaging and timing for each specific region or market. In addition to selling rights for the upcoming competition cycle, we must also look after our existing rights holders. This involves account management and servicing broadcasters.

How did your job change because of the pandemic?
Media rights revenues are vitally important for the financial health of European football, from national associations and leagues to clubs at all levels of the game. Keeping rights holders informed about how we planned to restart our club competitions was essential from the moment the pandemic brought football to a halt.

Once UEFA decided to conclude club competitions using a condensed format of four final eight tournaments, it was our job to maximise broadcast slots – both to deliver the best product for our media rights partners and give fans a feast of football.

This meant working hand in hand with colleagues responsible for managing club competitions to develop a matchday schedule that would work for everyone involved without compromising safety.

How did you successfully negotiate with media rights partners following the suspension or postponement of UEFA club competitions?
The secrets to successful negotiating are two-fold: basing commercial relationships on respect and transparency and establishing a strong legal framework.

From the start, we adopted a fair and open approach with all our broadcast partners globally. This not only helped us to find solutions to the unprecedented challenges of the 2019/20 season, but it means that when we go back to the market for the next three-year cycle, broadcasters will trust that UEFA can deliver – whatever the circumstances.

Clearly, close cooperation with our colleagues in the legal division was also important. The pandemic underlined the need to reassess UEFA’s liability when matches/competitions are postponed because of events beyond our control. Thanks to this approach, we were able to find the right balance between protecting European football’s best interests and offering solutions that made commercial sense to broadcasters.

“Keeping rights holders informed about how we planned to restart our club competitions was essential.”

Securing the recommittal of 12 host cities to EURO 2020

What would a normal season look like for you?
We are focused on the delivery of EURO 2020, so are less subject to the club football calendar. Rather than delivering on a season-by-season basis, ours is a four- or five-year project based around the national team calendar, in particular the qualification – or not – of EURO 2020 host teams for the tournament finals. Any host city whose national team qualifies for the tournament finals automatically plays a minimum of two group stage matches at home. That makes a big difference to the make-up of fans going to the stadium as well as the buy-in from local authorities. All of this gives a completely different dynamic to our work.

How did your job change because of the pandemic?
Like everybody else, the biggest initial impact was having to work from home. I was cut off from my team. The work we do involves a lot of face-to-face, direct interaction, so that was a huge aspect of my role that I could no longer do.

We were only three months away from delivering EURO 2020, when the decision was made to postpone the competition by 12 months. Suddenly, risk management became an important part of our remit. We had to focus less on the delivery of EURO 2020, more on the environment in which UEFA will deliver the competition in 2021. This is a very different thing to do. Working closely with public health authorities and national governments became a primary concern – a big shift for us.

How did you successfully secure the commitment of the original 12 cities to host EURO 2020 one year later than planned?
The EURO is one of the world’s biggest sports events. It is so complex to organise that you cannot force it on anyone, certainly not on city mayors or municipal authorities. We approached host cities as partners, asking if they still wished to stage the competition. Offering hosts a choice made negotiations much easier.

Recommitting to host the EURO came with a condition for each city: to replicate the same level of public health authorities and national governments became a primary concern – a big shift for us.

“We were only three months away from delivering EURO 2020, when the decision was made to postpone the competition.”
GOVERNING THE GAME

2019/20 at a glance

- UEFA’s social responsibility programme strengthened efforts to help associations implement child safeguarding measures. The UEFA Foundation for Children celebrated five years of using football to improve over one million young lives around the world.

- The Return to Play protocol paved the way for the safe resumption of UEFA competitions in August by setting medical and operational standards.

- From 2020/21, UEFA will apply its club licensing system to the Women’s Champions League.

- Financial fair play regulations were adapted to allow for the pandemic’s economic hit on clubs.

- UEFA maintained business continuity thanks to the roll-out of a new collaboration platform in late 2019 and extensive safety measures which allowed some staff to return to its Nyon campus after lockdown measures eased.
FOOTBALL’S POWER FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

From diversity and inclusion to safeguarding children, UEFA’s social responsibility goals are integrated into every aspect of its activities. Football’s popularity with millions of fans around the globe brings an added responsibility that UEFA has long recognised. Each season, its football social responsibility (FSR) programme works with European national associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), both to promote best economic, social and environmental practices and to drive positive change, off and on the pitch.

In April 2020, UEFA took a significant stride towards its goal of ensuring millions of children across Europe can play football in a safe environment. In collaboration with expert partner Terre des Hommes – a child-relief NGO – football’s governing body released a series of resources to help associations strengthen their safeguarding efforts through the use of effective, sustainable child protection measures. The material included:

UEFA’s child safeguarding policy, ‘Keeping children safe in European football’, developed in cooperation with member associations and Terre des Hommes and based on five goals:
1. laying the foundations for safeguarding;
2. ensuring organisational preparedness and prevention;
3. raising awareness;
4. working with others and reporting concerns;
5. monitoring impact.

Toolkit for member associations listing practical steps and best practice approaches for implementing effective safeguarding measures.

Dedicated website (www.uefa-safeguarding.eu) providing a one-stop information resource for anyone working with children in football. Users can also follow four interactive educational courses, available in English, French, German and Russian.

In addition to making these resources available to the wider European football community, UEFA organised training sessions for child safeguarding focal points at national associations. It made sure that core safeguarding principles were integrated into all related programmes and activities.

Helping associations develop football and social responsibility strategies

In February, two regional workshops in Vienna and Moscow rolled out new resources designed to help associations develop their own football social responsibility strategies. Associations can draw on UEFA’s HatTrick programme, which channelled revenue from the EURID back into the game’s development (see pages 50–52), to support implementation of these strategies.

Following the introduction of travel restrictions to slow the pandemic, UEFA replaced the third and final regional workshop (originally scheduled to take place in Frankfurt in March) with two webinars. National associations could also request one-to-one tutoring and receive feedback through online presentations.

To build on these interactive sessions, UEFA created a dedicated football social responsibility community on LinkedIn. This provides a forum for national associations and expert partners to continue exchanging best practice in a secure online space.

Long-term commitment

Ensuring football social responsibility strategies are in place is critical to implementing national associations’ long-term objectives, particularly in the wake of the pandemic’s financial impact on European football. In 2020, UEFA exceptionally allowed national associations greater freedom in determining how to invest HatTrick funds. UEFA will work closely with associations to help find ways of keeping social responsibility programmes earmarked for HatTrick support on track to achieve their strategic goals.

Shift in focus to climate change

The football social responsibility programme has always adapted to reflect critical issues facing contemporary society. With the help of longstanding partner and international NGO the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), in 2019/20, UEFA shifted focus to climate change.

European football’s governing body is already a signatory to the Sports for Climate Action Framework led by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change – an international environmental treaty supported by over 150 nations. To help develop a longer-term strategy, it has started working with experts on quantifying football’s impact on the global climate, identifying how the game can most effectively reduce its carbon footprint and researching climate change’s impact on European football.

“UEFA has always recognised its responsibility both to address racial bias within European football and to fight the sickening use of racist language against players. Together with the rest of European football, we need to lift our game and find a qualitatively different approach to eliminate systemic racism from our sport.”

Aleksander Čeferin, UEFA president
HELPING CHILDREN THROUGH FOOTBALL

In 2019/20, the UEFA Foundation for Children marked five years of using football as a vehicle to help children through its numerous campaigns and projects.

"In the midst of this crisis, football has the chance to realise its full potential in playing a leading role in shaping the world. We are delighted to have the trust and support of the UEFA Foundation for Children.”

Jürgen Griesbeck
Common Goal CEO

In 2019/20, the UEFA Foundation for Children marked five years of using football as a vehicle to help children through its numerous campaigns and projects.

“In the midst of this crisis, football has the chance to realise its full potential in playing a leading role in shaping the world. We are delighted to have the trust and support of the UEFA Foundation for Children.”

Jürgen Griesbeck
Common Goal CEO

245 projects organised/funded
6 focus areas
Access to sport
Personal development
Refugees
Health and disability
Material support for sport and education
Employability

109 countries reached globally
1,180,000 children receiving help

Champions Teachers e-learning initiative

In April, to give families a break from teaching and studying in isolation, the foundation launched Champions Teachers – an e-learning series in which some of European football’s top players and coaches dictated a short excerpt from their favourite children’s book or poem. Stars like Juventus legend Gianluigi Buffon, Bayern München goalkeeper Laura Benkarth and former French international Christian Karembeu all contributed. In May, the #DreamingFootball campaign invited fans to share an image on social media illustrating their biggest football dream for a future, pandemic-free world.

Fundraising

The foundation also provided funding contributions to help the world’s most vulnerable communities cope with the pandemic’s impact. In April, the foundation became the first sports institution to support the COVID-19 Response Fund created by Common Goal – a group of 150 football players, managers and leaders who have pledged a percentage of their annual earnings to children’s charities. Additionally, the foundation partnered with clothing retailer H&M to run an online sale of football shirts for children. Profits were channelled to several children’s charities, including Play for Change, based in Italy.

UEFA Super Cup

The 2019/20 season’s curtain-raiser in Istanbul showed once again how football can help raise awareness of children in need. At the opening ceremony at Beşiktaş Park stadium, amputee children from Turkey’s Sports Federation for the Physically Disabled sang a moving rendition of Bob Marley’s Three Little Birds, accompanied by a Turkish national radio and television children’s choir.

Each of the children had the chance to talk and play with members of the two Super Cup teams, Liverpool FC and Chelsea FC, while Ali Turganbekov, a disabled Kazakh boy, handed the Super Cup trophy to victorious Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson.

Children living in conflict zones

Many of the children benefiting from this support are refugees of war. In January 2020, the foundation teamed up with the non-governmental organisation (NGO) Libraries Without Borders to stage the inaugural Refugees eSports Cup at a Syrian refugee camp at Zaatar in Jordan. With the help of UEFA sponsors Facebook, PlayStation and Amstaff, the tournament gave 200 children (aged 10-18), including some with disabilities, the chance to play football. It represented a key step in helping them recover from the trauma of conflict and reintegrate into the community.

To mark the annual United Nations World Refugee Day (20 June), the foundation invited EURO 2004 champion Dimitris Papadopoulos, himself a former child refugee in Uzbekistan, to share his experiences with young refugees via a webinar. This virtual conversation, linking five NGOs based in three different continents, was one example of how the foundation used digital channels in 2020 to help children and their parents during lockdowns.
GUARANTEENING PLAYER SAFETY

The season brought extraordinary medical challenges for UEFA, including the need to ensure its competitions could be played with minimal risk. Nevertheless, progress was made on other fronts, in particular football’s fight against doping and in the management of head injuries.

Return to Play protocol

The pandemic had an inevitable impact on UEFA’s medical regulatory framework, introduced to protect the health of players, teams, officials, referee teams, match officials and fans.

In preparation for the resumption of club competitions, on 9 July, the Executive Committee approved the Return to Play protocol, a framework of health and hygiene-related procedures.

This stipulated medical and operational requirements for everyone taking part in and/or organising UEFA matches involving senior teams, and earing UEFA’s hygiene measures and protocols.

UEFA’s Medical Committee, led by its chairman, Professor Tim Meyer, with Dr Zoran Balinjac and Dr Charlotte Cowie, drew up the protocol, in consultation with an expert group composed of Dr Edwin Goedhart and European Club Association (ECA) representatives Dr Niko Mrinic and Dr Piotr Zmijewski.

For a more detailed explanation of how the protocol managed to find appropriate solutions to restart UEFA matches across European venues, each subject to their own national jurisdictions and emergency health measures, see pages 22–25.

As part of the same process, UEFA also revised its doping control procedure to safeguard players, club staff, doping control officers and official chaperones – responsible for notifying and escorting players to the doping control centre. This ensured in- and out-of-competition tests could be conducted as soon as UEFA competitions restarted.

In addition to adapting its regulations to the on- and off-field health challenges of a pandemic, UEFA also had to adjust its medical preparations for EURO 2020. Changes included rescheduling anti-doping tests in the run-up to the tournament and postponing the creation of medical plans for each of the 12 host cities. Preparations were in their final stages when the tournament was delayed by 12 months.

Anti-doping

In 2019/20, UEFA created a new app to facilitate out-of-competition doping tests. Since 2013, the governing body’s whereabouts programme has required all teams participating in its competitions to submit training and absence whereabouts information for players, so they can be located for doping controls without notice.

The season also saw UEFA start preparations for implementing the 2021 World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Code, which will replace the 2016 version.

From 2020, national associations have been able to apply for annual grants to fund their own anti-doping education activities as well as implement the UEFA Football Doctor Education Programme. The funding is available through the 2020–24 Hat-trick programme.

"The Return to Play protocol has made professional football one of sport’s safest environments during the pandemic. Safely completing four competitions in one month demonstrated that UEFA’s hygiene measures and testing protocols are effective in lowering the risk of contagion."

Tim Meyer, chairman of the UEFA Medical Committee

After analysing several high-level cases of concussion, UEFA launched a public awareness campaign in September 2019. This encouraged players, coaches and officials to respect team doctors’ diagnoses of head injuries during matches and reiterated the recommended three-step response:

Recognise. Report. Remove

They must REPORT the injury to the referee, who may not have seen it. The referee can then stop the game and call for the team doctor.

The team doctor will make an on-pitch assessment and decide whether the player is fit to play. If the doctor has any doubts about impaired consciousness or other signs of concussion, they should REMOVE the player from the field.

The team doctor is the only person who can take the decision for the player to stay on the pitch or be substituted. Their decision should always be respected.

The campaign followed the Medical Committee’s conclusion that existing concussion procedures may not provide sufficient protection for players. Doctors have only three minutes to assess if a player with a head injury is fit to continue playing.

With such a short period to make a diagnosis, doctors can be subjected to excessive pressure from teams to let a player resume.

As an immediate step, and in coordination with the International Federation of Professional Footballers (FIFPRO), UEFA produced a video in which animated characters follow the three Rs in responding to a concussion incident. Stadium screens played the video on three consecutive UEFA matchdays, while posters, displayed inside all dressing, medical and referees’ rooms, spelled out the same, potentially life-saving message.

In addition, UEFA introduced a medical video review system for use in the finals of the men’s and women’s Champions Leagues, the Europa League, Super Cup and Nations League. This gave doctors the option of watching live match footage from different camera angles to assess the dynamics of potential concussion incidents.

As a more permanent solution, the Executive Committee asked both FIFA and football’s lawmakers, the International Football Association Board (IFAB), to consider new measures, including the use of additional substitutes to reduce pressure on medical staff and ensure no concussed player returns to the field of play.

Heading guidelines for young footballers

In June 2020, UEFA issued heading guidelines for national associations, coaches and parents to safeguard young footballers. Drawn up by the Medical Committee, in consultation with external specialists, these are based on research by Germany’s University of Saarland and the Hampden Sports Clinic and Clyde Heart Health Board in Scotland.

The guidelines aim to minimise the number of headers in youth football – both in training sessions and match play. They include specific instructions setting the size and pressure of footballs, neck-strengthening exercises and detecting concussion symptoms. European football associations can issue their own guidelines, but are expected to adhere to UEFA’s recommendations.
STAYING BALANCED IN TURBULENT TIMES

Despite seeing its primary source of revenue temporarily halted, UEFA struck the right balance between maintaining business continuity and providing support to European football in its time of need.

Together, the pandemic and economic lockdown posed significant financial challenges in the second half of the 2019/20 reporting period. These included urgently assessing the impact on UEFA’s short-term liquidity and long-term reserves of:

- postponing/cancelling UEFA competitions, such as EURO 2020;
- reductions in revenue from broadcasters and commercial partners;
- honouring funding commitments to clubs and associations.

In response, the Finance Committee worked tirelessly to achieve an equitable balance between ensuring the availability of sufficient cash to pay both clubs and suppliers, and providing advance payments to national associations to safeguard the future of European football (see pages 18–19).

All cost optimisation measures, such as cancelling some youth and futsal competitions, replacing all committee meetings with videoconferences and switching on-site workshops to webinars, brought short-term cash-flow benefits. However, there was inevitably an in-kind price to pay for UEFA’s core mission of football development, for example, lost opportunities for young players, match officials and national association staff to take part in competitions, to attend training courses in person or to spend time with their peers.

More efficient procurement process

To help in optimising operating costs, in April 2020, UEFA fast-tracked the introduction of an efficient, centralised procurement process.

Based on an internal assessment of the purchasing of goods and services, the Finance Committee recommended setting up a single, dedicated procurement unit, under the leadership of the finance division, with three time-critical tasks:

- improve efficiencies in UEFA procurement;
- implement a modern purchase-to-pay process, including the digitalisation of processes and invoice handling;
- optimise UEFA’s cost structure to the benefit of European football.

RAISING THE BAR FOR FOOTBALL GOVERNANCE

UEFA broke new ground by publishing an overview of the European club licensing landscape and applying its licensing system to women’s football. Financial fair play regulations were adapted to allow for the pandemic’s economic impact on clubs.

Club Licensing Overview report
By ensuring that clubs participating in its competitions comply with minimum standards, UEFA’s club licensing system plays a critical role in promoting good governance across European football. In July 2020, the publication of the Club Licensing Overview report provided a comprehensive overview of how UEFA’s club licensing system has helped raise the bar for governance and regulatory structures across the continent.

Since 2004, all clubs that qualify on sporting merit for UEFA club competitions must be granted a licence before they can actually take part. The relevant association or league acts as the licensor, assessing each applicant according to five criteria: sporting, infrastructure, personnel and administrative, legal, and financial. The Club Licensing Overview documents how all 55 member associations have applied the system, setting out the types of regulations and requirements in place country by country. Available on UEFA.com, the report also includes a valuable comparison of licensors and their regulations, as well as an analysis of domestic club licensing and club monitoring systems.

As part of UEFA’s drive to support the continued development of the women’s game, a club licensing system was used for the first time during the admission process for the 2020/21 Women’s Champions League. It is expected that setting minimum standards at both European and national levels will have the same impact on the governance of women’s club football as across the men’s game. For example: enhancing management structures, youth development and the competition’s overall quality.

Pandemic’s impact on club finances
The temporary suspension of almost all European football competitions in 2020 and the sporting, legal and financial consequences inevitably brought significant disruption to UEFA’s club licensing process:

• Licensors – member associations and leagues – required a higher level of support from UEFA.
• A few associations enforced a temporary suspension of their club licensing processes.
• Some clubs experienced difficulties in auditing their accounts after financial auditors limited services during national lockdowns.

To help guide the football community’s response, particularly after national shutdowns, UEFA’s intelligence centre used expert modelling to simulate the pandemic’s likely impact on European clubs’ finances, in particular, cash flows, financial losses and equity shortage. The projections were updated to reflect football’s return to play and the constantly changing coronavirus scenarios.

Recognising the challenges facing clubs in managing their budgets or making financial projections, the Executive Committee extended the deadline for outstanding payments by one month – from 31 March to 30 April 2020. Financial fair play provisions and deadlines were also adjusted (see pages 18–19).

INTELLIGENCE CENTRE
Centre of reference
UEFA’s intelligence centre was set up in 2017 to support strategic planning and policymaking, both for European football’s governing body and its stakeholders, by providing a range of technical, scientific, financial and commercial analysis and data.

During the reporting period, the centre continued to make progress towards its goal of developing European football’s most comprehensive collection of strategic data.

By the end of the season, it had created and connected databases storing information about club and national association finances, club ownership and league formats, transfer activity and playing careers, sporting results, media and commercial rights, stadiums and head coaches.

The centre also published an online catalogue assessing football’s strategic data landscape, and assisted national associations in building up their own capacity for conducting strategic research and analysis.

During the season, the intelligence centre also produced two new reports:

1. a fully interactive review of clubs participating in UEFA club competitions in 2019/20;
2. the first-ever visually interactive report on youth investments and training facility infrastructure. By documenting more than 900 training facilities at over 600 clubs, classifying projects as ‘recently completed’ or ‘in progress’ and benchmarking each association, the report fills a hitherto significant gap in European football knowledge. It will also complement UEFA’s best practice guide to training facilities, due for publication in 2021.
Thanks to the 2019 roll-out of a digital communication platform, regular staff communication and extensive safety measures on its campus, UEFA found the right balance between guaranteeing business continuity and ensuring the protection of its workforce.

One UEFA

In these early days of the pandemic, UEFA placed great emphasis on its core value of One UEFA, recognising that working remotely risked isolating staff members from their teams and the wider organisation. Internal communications became a critical point of focus: a dedicated COVID-19 section was launched on the corporate intranet, offering up-to-date information to staff on government health regulations, tips on how to manage teams remotely and access to professional medical advice. The human resources unit initiated its own regular email updates, explaining key corporate decisions related to the crisis.

Return to the office

In early June, as infection rates in Switzerland and Europe started to drop, allowing the Swiss Federal Council to ease its national lockdown, UEFA announced a phased reopening of its offices.

Initially, to lower the risk of infection, no more than 30% of the total workforce were permitted on campus at any one time – with managers required to agree a staffing schedule with team members and no obligation on employees to return if they felt safer working from home. Guided by recommendations from both the Swiss canton of Vaud and the municipality of Nyon, as well as the World Health Organization, the return to work plan included extensive on-site health and safety precautions:

• distribution of individual protection kits containing face masks and disinfectant wipes;
• thermal imaging cameras placed at all entrances to check body temperatures;
• containers of hand sanitiser gel at entrances, in meeting rooms and along corridors;
• posters reminding people to keep a safe social distance and wash their hands properly;
• and, plastic screens in canteens and at reception desks.

UEFA also insisted that anyone returning to HQ completed an e-learning course, underlining individuals’ duty of care towards fellow staff members.

Campus ‘bubble’

By early June, the campus ‘bubble’ was tried and tested, paving the way for UEFA to raise the proportion of staff on site to 50-75% when the pandemic’s first wave receded over the summer.

As the interviews in this report highlight, staging four final eight club competition tournaments in August was a Herculean task. The ability to allow selected team members to come into the office at key moments at minimum personal risk proved essential.

As the reporting period closed, it seemed very likely that UEFA would once again have to reduce the number of staff allowed on campus. Based on its response to the pandemic’s first wave, UEFA prepared for the second secure in the knowledge it could adapt to the twin challenges facing all organisations in the ‘new normal’, delivering on its mission at the same time as safeguarding staff.

How the pandemic fast-tracked UEFA’s digital transition

For most UEFA staff, the switch from working on campus to working online took place, quickly and unexpectedly, within a few days in March. In reality, the pandemic merely accelerated a change in working culture that UEFA had already foreseen.

The foundations for a digital workplace had been laid almost a year before the pandemic. As early as summer 2019, UEFA trialled MS Teams and SharePoint – the two cornerstones of its online business collaboration platform – with selected staff on campus, before running a successful pilot project at the 2019 Super Cup in Istanbul.

From December 2019 to January 2020, the transition to the new technology was already under way. By the time that UEFA required staff to work from home in March, trainers had held introductory sessions with most teams, as well as run webinars and individual face-to-face meetings.

Suddenly, training situations became real-life scenarios. Online support services geared up to help staff master the new tools.

Within a matter of weeks, MS Teams had become a key driver of UEFA’s new normal, replacing long-established office practices, for example, face-to-face meetings and using email to send short messages. Without the pandemic, such a dramatic shift in daily habits may have taken considerably longer.

UEFA ANNUAL REPORT | 2019/20
Safeguarding staff health while continuing to deliver

What would a normal season look like for you?

In any season leading up to a massive event like the UEFA EURO finals, my team oversees a lot of staff recruitments. For EURO 2020, this meant ensuring terms and conditions for employees working on-site across the 12 EURO host countries respected national regulations, drafting human resources (HR) policies (for example, UEFA’s international assignment policy) to cover staff participating in the event, and ensuring everybody was equipped to fulfil their specific role during the event.

Outside of the EURO, business as normal would have meant running UEFA’s internal staff appraisal process, managing promotions and working with high-level management on key HR topics.

How did your job change because of the pandemic?

My job changed in many ways. First and foremost, the rescheduling of EURO 2020 brought an immediate halt to UEFA recruitment. We also had to find solutions that would allow us to honour the contracts of most of the employees hired to work on the tournament – despite its postponement.

I was appointed to UEFA’s COVID-19 task force, which was charged with finding the right balance between protecting staff health and continuing to deliver on our core business. This completely shifted the focus of my day-to-day work. To help guide UEFA policy on protecting our staff and lay the groundwork for a safe return to the workplace, once conditions permitted, the HR team had to monitor the constantly evolving situation across Europe, evaluate responses of other large, international organisations as well as consult regularly with local and national authorities on health measures in Switzerland.

Given the enormous impact of the pandemic on employees, communication became critical from March, we started a regular email update explaining UEFA’s decisions and their impact on our community.

How did you successfully organise staff’s safe return to office after restrictions were lifted?

When the time came to partially reopen the UEFA campus, we created an e-learning platform. Without this commitment and ensuring delivery of our competitions by allowing staff to work safely on UEFA’s campus

Niki Papadimitriou
UEFA medical coordinator

Role: Coordinating medical projects (in and out of competitions)

Biggest challenge during pandemic: Implementing the UEFA Return to Play protocol by coordinating input from high-level management and medical experts

Michaela Clicoue
UEFA legal counsel

Role: Overseeing UEFA’s regulatory framework

Biggest challenge during pandemic: Providing legal guidance to UEFA stakeholders about the Return to Play protocol

Creating the Return to Play medical protocol

What would a normal season look like for you?

Niki: My team usually oversees two meetings of the UEFA Medical Committee. The first focuses on the start of the new season, while the second reviews the previous one. As part of our education programme for football doctors, in 2019/20, we had planned a series of workshops both for team doctors as well as the chief medical officers based in each of the 12 EURO 2020 host cities. In addition to these activities, I am responsible for collecting data and analysing trends in football-related injuries.

Michaela: At the start of each season, it is the role of UEFA’s integrity and regulatory team to assess whether clubs which have qualified for our competitions through their domestic leagues fully meet the requirements of our rules and regulations, in particular, the competition regulations. We also contribute to UEFA’s overall governance of football. Our duties range from overseeing UEFA elections or revising the UEFA Statutes to preparing legal documents for Executive Committee meetings. We also provide counsel to UEFA’s Legal Committee as well as its Players’ Status, Transfer and Agents and Match Agents Committee.

How did you successfully organise and oversee the Return to Play protocol during the pandemic?

Niki: Michaela and I were both appointed to a special COVID-19 task force, set up in June to guide UEFA’s response to the pandemic, on and off the field. Together, we were tasked with drawing up the Return to Play protocol that would establish medical and operational obligations for all parties taking part in and/or organising UEFA matches during the pandemic. It meant collecting and coordinating input from a wide range of key parties: UEFA’s high-level management, medical experts and other European football stakeholders.

Michaela: Despite never having collaborated together before, we formed a strong working relationship from day one. It was especially interesting to learn first-hand from Michaela about the legal side of UEFA’s work – knowledge which will definitely help me in the future.

Michaela: Like Niki, I suddenly had to switch focus from my normal tasks to concentrate on delivery of the Return to Play protocol. The workload, especially the pressure of having to deal with urgent issues 24/7, was intense. For me, the biggest change was the opportunity to work so closely, and on a daily basis, with high-level management and colleagues across the organisation. It was a real eye-opener to the range of skills and experience within UEFA.

How did you successfully organise and oversee the Return to Play protocol during the pandemic?

Niki: The creation of a protocol advisory panel, made up of virologists, microbiologists and sports doctors, was key to our success. Its members’ expertise lay behind UEFA’s implementation of an effective testing regime, which minimised the risk of infection through playing and organising football matches. The panel also shaped our response to other COVID-19 challenges, such as how to manage players, coaches or officials previously infected with the virus.

Michaela: The legal perspective was also important, especially in monitoring and evaluating constantly changing health regulations imposed throughout Europe.

Michaela: Strong teamwork across UEFA units and divisions, from the first to the last minute, was the secret to our success. We could also rely on round-the-clock support from medical experts. Without this commitment and cooperation, we would never have managed to implement the Return to Play protocol and safely conclude our 2019/20 club competitions.

“Strong teamwork across UEFA, from the first to the last minute, was the secret to our success.”
National Associations Committee

Chairman: Sergey Ryadin (Russia)
Deputy chairman: Tiago Cravo (Portugal)

1st vice-chairman: Horia Hasea (Romania)
2nd vice-chairman: Anil Ben (Greece)
3rd vice-chairman: Zdeněk Zeman (Czech Republic)

Youth and Amateur Football Committee

Chairman: Zsoltvo Borske (Poland)
Deputy chairman: Davor Saker (Croatia)

1st vice-chairman: Tomáš Holous (Czech Republic)
2nd vice-chairman: David Martin (Northern Ireland)
3rd vice-chairman: Ian Maxwell (Scotland)
4th vice-chairman: David Ibell (Georgia)

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Chairman: David Gill (England)
Deputy chairman: Michael van Praag (Netherlands)

1st vice-chairman: Ali Khattab (KSA, Lebanon)
2nd vice-chairman: Danijel Moro (Croatia)
3rd vice-chairman: Josip Asjic-Batic (Croatia)

Club Competitions Committee

Chairman: David Gill (England)
Deputy chairman: Michael van Praag (Netherlands)

1st vice-chairman: Akil Khattab (KSA, Lebanon)
2nd vice-chairman: Danijel Moro (Croatia)
3rd vice-chairman: Josip Asjic-Batic (Croatia)

Referees Committee

Chairman: Roberto Rosetti
Deputy chairman: Herbert Hülse (Germany)

Finance Committee

Chairman: Hervé Fournier (France)
Deputy chairman: Michael van Praag (Netherlands)

1st vice-chairman: Ali Khattab (KSA, Lebanon)
2nd vice-chairman: Danijel Moro (Croatia)
3rd vice-chairman: Josip Asjic-Batic (Croatia)

Executive Committee

Chairman: David Gill (England)
Deputy chairman: Michael van Praag (Netherlands)

1st vice-chairman: Ali Khattab (KSA, Lebanon)
2nd vice-chairman: Danijel Moro (Croatia)
3rd vice-chairman: Josip Asjic-Batic (Croatia)

Women’s Football Committee

Chairman: Anne Wilkes (England)
Deputy chairman: Michele Uva (Italy)

1st vice-chairwoman: Katrina Taitz (Germany)
2nd vice-chairwoman: Larissa Boulus (Switzerland)
3rd vice-chairwoman: Laura McAllister (Wales)

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COMPOSITION OF THE UEFA COMMITTEES AS ON 30 JUNE 2020

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Futsal and Beach Soccer Committee
Chairman

Deputy chairman
1st vice-chairman
2nd vice-chairman
3rd vice-chairman
Members

Club Licensing Committee
Chairman

Deputy chairman
1st vice-chairwoman
2nd vice-chairwoman
3rd vice-chairman
4th vice-chairman
Members

Media Committee
Chairman

Deputy chairman
1st vice-chairman
2nd vice-chairman
3rd vice-chairman
4th vice-chairman
Members

Marketing Advisory Committee
Chairman

Deputy chairman
1st vice-chairman
2nd vice-chairman
3rd vice-chairman
Members

Meetings:

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