

# UEFA



No. 195

DIRECT

UEFA 2024  
OFFICIAL  
OF THE UEFA  
FOOTBALL

**FORZA  
EURO!**





BECAUSE EVERY  
CHILD IS A CHAMPION



UEFA  
**FOUNDATION**<sup>TM</sup>  
*for children*



**Aleksander Čeferin**  
UEFA President

## AN AMBITIOUS MISSION

**F**ootball offers a time-honoured legacy and has created its own rich and cherished history. It is a crucial social force and gives people young and old the opportunity to practise this wonderful game and embrace many values: unity, solidarity, inclusion, teamwork and loyalty.

Everyone with football at heart should strive to foster its overall good health, protect its spirit and values, and create common ground to enable the sport to prosper in the future. Consequently, as this publication was going to print, we launched the Convention on the Future of European Football at our Nyon headquarters – a consultation process uniting European football’s major stakeholders to address issues facing the game, in particular its recovery from the crisis caused by the global pandemic.

Over the coming months, participants will reflect on long-term policy and governance reforms needed to build a sustainable future for football that benefits everyone in a variety of areas.

Our recent experience with major crises has shown how important it is to remain committed to this way of governing and even to improve it. The convention is exactly in keeping with that objective – as well as aiming to promote democracy, transparency and constructive dialogue.

It is our duty to preserve football’s essential values and principles – especially that of sporting merit. To prepare for future challenges, we must also position ourselves to be more proactive. We must establish common strategies and take into account our joint responsibilities to one another when we make decisions at any level – local, national or continental.

If we agree to make tangible and strategic progress within our discussions, we will create a firmer foundation for the European sports model. We will, among other benefits, provide strong long-term financial health, increase competitiveness, develop women’s football and ensure good governance.

Whatever our differences may be, we must stay united, resolute and committed to the spirit of European football. That is what fair play and teamwork are about. With this convention, we have embarked together on an ambitious mission, and our initial session of talks has already been fruitful and rewarding. I am convinced that we will be successful – and that European football will emerge stronger thanks to our joint efforts.

# IN THIS ISSUE

Q3 2021



Official publication of the Union of European Football Associations

**Chief editor:**

Emmanuel Deconche

**Deputy chief editor:**

Dominique Maurer

**Chief writer:**

Mark Chaplin

**Subeditor:**

Susan Angel

**External contributors:**

Julien Hernandez (pages 6-11, 30-33, 34-35 and 38-39)

Ben Gladwell (pages 20-25 and 36-37)

Graham Turner (pages 42-43)

**Translations:**

UEFA Language Services

**Production:**

Touchline

**Printing:**

Artgraphic Cavin, CH-1422 Grandson

**Editorial deadline:**

14 September 2021

**Photos:**

Getty Images unless mentioned



## 06 EURO 2020

Italy returned to glory at the end of a EURO 2020 that had been postponed by a year because of the pandemic.

### EURO 2020

- 12** The referees earned glowing reports for their outstanding overall performance at EURO 2020.
- 14** Strict medical provisions were in place for EURO 2020.
- 15** Denmark’s medical team and Danish national team captain Simon Kjaer received the 2021 UEFA President’s Award for their response to Christian Eriksen’s on-field cardiac arrest.

### THE TECHNICIAN

- 26** The EURO 2020 winning coach, Roberto Mancini, talks to UEFA Direct.
- 28** The stats: how and when the EURO goals were scored, and which players ran the fastest and furthest.

### 36 UEFA Super Cup

Last season’s UEFA Champions League winners, Chelsea, beat the UEFA Europa League titleholders, Villarreal, in Belfast.

### 38 Away goals

More than 50 years after its introduction, the away goals rule is no more.

### 40 Executive Committee



### 50 News from member associations



**30 U21 EURO**

Germany triumph at the U21 EURO, co-hosted by Hungary and Slovenia.



**34 UEFA Nations League**

Italy are hosting the second UEFA Nations League finals and are hoping to follow in the footsteps of Portugal, winners and hosts of the final competition in 2019.



**20 The Technician**

The UEFA EURO 2020 technical report highlights all the key trends and developments observed during the tournament.



**42 Awards**

Jorginho and Alexia Putellas take the UEFA Player of the Year awards.



# ITALY GO ALL IN!

Beating England in dramatic style at Wembley, Italy claimed their second European crown to conclude a EURO 2020 that more than lived up to expectations.



**E**URO 2020 was always going to be an edition like no other. Played in 11 different countries, it was designed to bring the whole continent together in celebration of the competition's 60th anniversary. Clearly, COVID-19, as well as delaying the tournament by a year, had a major impact on the more festive aspects of this unique EURO, making travel difficult for supporters, limiting the size of public gatherings and reducing stadium capacities. Only 8 of the 51 matches were played in front of more than 30,000 spectators.

Despite these limitations, EURO 2020 attracted huge public interest and provided fantastic entertainment on the pitch. A record 142 goals were scored at an average of 2.8 per match, which was also a new high. These figures reflect the attacking approach adopted by many of the competing sides and confirm once again the benefits of the 24-team format introduced in 2016.

The eventual winners, Italy, perfectly embodied EURO 2020, not only because they scored the most goals (13) in this very open edition, but also because three of their matches went to extra time and two to penalties in a tournament that proved – if proof were still needed – how competitive and evenly balanced European national team football has become. Here we reflect on the performances of each of the 24 participating teams, oscillating between success, regret, satisfaction and disappointment.

## **Invincible Italy**

Before EURO 2020, only three countries had won the competition more than once: Germany (3), Spain (3) and France (2). Italy, winners in 1968, have now extended this list of European greats and they certainly cannot be accused of taking an easy route into the history books.

Roberto Mancini's men adapted their game as the tournament progressed in order to meet all the challenges put in their way. After sweeping aside Turkey (3-0), Switzerland (3-0) and Wales (1-0) in their three group matches on home soil in Rome, the Italians found the knockout stages a more difficult nut to crack. However, even when under pressure, they stayed true to their offensive style of play, with goal threats from every direction (five Italian players scored two goals each). →

While Austria (2-1 aet) and then Belgium (2-1) were tricky opponents, victory over Spain (1-1, 4-2 on penalties) was the real highlight of the Italian campaign. Although Spain dominated possession, Ciro Immobile and his team-mates came through what has become a true EURO classic – the fourth consecutive knockout meeting between the two countries since 2008 – thanks in particular to the exploits of Gianluigi Donnarumma. Named the best player at EURO 2020, the Italian goalkeeper was also the hero of the penalty shoot-out in the final against England (1-1, 3-2 on penalties).

Runners-up in 2000 and 2012, Italy weathered a fierce early onslaught from an English side roared on by a partisan Wembley crowd and an entire nation. A goal from Leonardo Bonucci, whose legendary central defensive partnership with Giorgio Chiellini was as solid as ever, brought the Italians back onto level terms. Hardly surprising, since Italy have not lost since September 2018 and are now undefeated in 36 matches. Despite misses by Andrea Belotti and Jorginho, Donnarumma's save from Bukayo Saka's penalty secured the Azzurri's second European crown.

### England so near yet so far

The stage seemed set for England to become the 11th country to win the EURO. Fifty-five years after claiming their only major title, the English team managed to navigate their way to another final at their Wembley home, scene of their 1966 World Cup triumph. Having never previously progressed further than the semi-finals at a EURO (a stage they reached in 1968 and 1996), the Three Lions enjoyed an almost faultless campaign.

After a slightly underwhelming group stage in which they amassed seven points despite only scoring two goals, Gareth Southgate's men plotted a course through the knockout rounds based on two main strengths: a rock-solid defence (five clean sheets in their first five matches) and a pragmatic realism. England efficiently did away with Germany (2-0) then Ukraine (4-0) before also edging Denmark out in the semi-finals (2-1 aet). After a quiet group stage, England's captain, Harry Kane, scored in all three of those matches, and his partnership with Raheem Sterling carried the team through to the final.

When he scored the quickest opener in a EURO final – in under two minutes – Luke Shaw took the English another step

closer to their first European title, but they were unable to capitalise on their blistering start and conceded an equaliser to their more adventurous and enterprising Italian opponents. In the end, in a stadium evoking memories of 1966, England lost on penalties, just as they had in the 1996 EURO semi-finals, also at Wembley. The English remain unbeaten in major tournaments at Wembley (11 wins and 6 draws) – not including penalty shoot-outs.

### Danish enthusiasm and Spain back on centre stage

Denmark undoubtedly produced the greatest story of EURO 2020. And yet it all started so badly... During their opening match against Finland, Danish star Christian Eriksen suffered a cardiac arrest, provoking an outpouring of emotion all over the world. After receiving lifesaving treatment on the pitch, he was taken to hospital, where his condition stabilised and he was soon out of danger. Still in shock, his team-mates lost to a dominant Finland (0-1), and then to Belgium (1-2).

The rest, as they say, is history. Never before had a team lost their first two matches at a EURO and gone on to reach the semi-finals. The Danes put in a run



In the semi-finals, Denmark opened the scoring against England with a delightful free-kick, but in the end it was England that made it into the final.

Copenhagen paid homage to Christian Eriksen after his medical incident, a drama that united the Danish team and the whole country.



of spectacular attacking performances, beating Russia 4-1 to snatch a place in the last 16, then seeing off Wales in similar style (4-0) in their first EURO knockout win since lifting the trophy in 1992. A 2-1 victory over the Czech Republic in the quarter-finals had the Danes dreaming of a repeat of their surprise EURO triumph almost 30 years later. However, despite some outstanding saves in the semi-final, Kasper Schmeichel was ultimately beaten by Kane in extra time (1-2 aet), preventing him from following in the footsteps of his father, who was in goal for Denmark's title-winning side in 1992.

The other semi-finalists, Spain, also came close to following the example of their prestigious predecessors, the only side to win two consecutive EUROS, in 2008 and 2012. Led by captain Sergio Busquets, a member of that golden generation, the Spanish enjoyed their usual domination of the ball (averaging 66.8% possession, more than any other team in the tournament). However, even that was not enough to defeat Sweden (0-0) or Poland (1-1).

The attacking talent of the youthful Spanish side finally burst into life in a 5-0 win over Slovakia, before a classic against Croatia in the round of 16 (5-3 aet): after conceding first, Luis Enrique's men took a 3-1 lead before being pegged back in stoppage time and then going on to secure victory in extra time. Although less spectacular against Switzerland, they also went the distance in the quarter-finals (1-1, 3-1 on penalties).

It was against Italy in the semis that Spain finally confirmed their return to centre stage with a dominant performance against the future European champions, thanks in particular to the classy 18-year-old Pedri, deservedly named the tournament's best young player. This time, however, the Spaniards lost on penalties, putting paid to their dreams of EURO glory.

### Belgium disappoint; Switzerland, Czech Republic and Ukraine impress

Among the four teams knocked out in the quarter-finals, Belgium's performance was undoubtedly the most disappointing. Before losing to Italy, Romelu Lukaku (4 goals) and his team-mates had strung together ten wins in qualifying, three →



In the round of 16, Yannick Carrasco (in action here against Danilo) helped Belgium to ruin Portugal's hopes of retaining their EURO title.

in the group stage and a narrow 1-0 victory over the titleholders, Portugal, in the round of 16. Unable to repeat their impressive 2018 World Cup showing and struck down by injuries to their main playmakers, Eden Hazard and Kevin De Bruyne, Belgium lost 2-1 to Italy in the quarter-finals.

In contrast with the Belgians' disappointment, Switzerland created history by winning in the knockout stages of a major tournament for the first time since the 1938 World Cup. To make the occasion even sweeter, their opponents were neighbours France, who had been strong favourites to lift the trophy, in a match that will live long in the memory (3-3, 5-4 on penalties).

Although the Swiss story would certainly have had a happier ending if they had not gone on to suffer a dramatic late defeat to Spain (1-1, 1-3 on penalties), they held their own against the continent's elite, with Yann Sommer, who pulled off a record 21 saves, and Steven Zuber, the player with the most assists the competition (4), leading the way.

Like Switzerland, Ukraine enjoyed their most successful EURO ever. They may not have been the most eye-catching but Andriy Shevchenko's men made it out of their group with a hard-fought 2-1 win over North Macedonia. In the round of 16, a victory secured in added time at the end of extra time against Sweden (2-1 aet)

was a landmark result for the Ukrainians, who came crashing back to earth in a 4-0 quarter-final defeat at the hands of England.

The Czech Republic, meanwhile, continued their love affair with the EURO by reaching the quarter-finals for the fourth time in seven attempts, despite never making it past the first round in the World Cup. The Czechs' impressive run owed much to Patrik Schick, scorer of five of their six goals. The tournament's joint top scorer, he netted spectacularly against Scotland before striking again in his side's shock 2-0 win over the Netherlands in the round of 16, as well as in their 2-1 quarter-final defeat to Denmark.

#### What of the group of death?

Before the start of the competition, Group F was nicknamed the 'group of death' because it included the last two World Cup winners and the reigning European champions. In the end, all three were eliminated in the round of 16.

Many people's favourites, France were surprisingly knocked out by Switzerland (3-3, 4-5 on penalties) despite winning the group. While the forward line lived up to their billing, especially the returning Karim Benzema (4 goals), the French were far less solid at the back than when they won the 2018 World Cup.

The same can be said of holders Portugal, whose defence was much more

porous than in 2016 (conceding 7 goals in 4 matches). Beaten 1-0 in the round of 16 by Belgium, the Portuguese had scraped through their group thanks once again to the imperious displays of Cristiano Ronaldo, who continues to break records left, right and centre: he was not only the 2020 edition's joint top scorer (5 goals), but also became the leading marksman in EURO history (14 goals) and the first player to score in five separate editions of the competition.

Having reached at least the semi-finals at the last three EUROS, Germany were very inconsistent this time around: following two unconvincing performances against France (0-1) and Hungary (2-2), they pulled off a magnificent 4-2 win over Portugal. Those three points were enough to take the Germans – led by Joachim Löw for the last time – through to a round of 16 blockbuster against England, in which they suffered a 2-0 defeat in a high-quality Wembley showdown.

Croatia were also knocked out at the end of a titanic battle against Spain (3-5 aet) in which the 2018 World Cup runners-up showed once again that they are a tough side to beat. After a slow start, the Croatians qualified from their group courtesy of a 3-1 win over Scotland that included a delightful goal scored with the outside of his foot by 35-year-old captain Luka Modrić, who had a superb tournament.



Spain reached the semi-finals by eliminating Switzerland on penalties.



**Above:** Artem Dovbyk scores in the 120th minute to send Ukraine into the quarter-finals at the expense of Sweden.

**Below:** Switzerland caused one of the biggest shocks of the tournament by knocking out France and, in doing so, reaching the EURO quarter-finals for the first time ever.



Having failed to secure a ticket to EURO 2016 or the 2018 World Cup, the Netherlands created high expectations by waltzing through the group stage (3 wins, 8 goals scored, 2 conceded). However, despite their seemingly unstoppable trio of Frenkie de Jong, Georginio Wijnaldum and Memphis Depay, the Dutch – who had played their three group matches at home in Amsterdam – suffered a disastrous 2-0 defeat to the Czech Republic in Budapest in the round of 16.

Despite a 2-0 win over Turkey, Wales also left the party earlier than they had hoped, having made it all the way to the semi-finals of EURO 2016. They performed well in the group stage, with Gareth Bale and Aaron Ramsey to the fore, but were totally outplayed by Denmark in the round of 16, where they lost 4-0.

Of the teams knocked out in the round of 16, only Austria and Sweden could call their EURO campaign a success. David Alaba and his fellow Austrians began by securing their first victory in the final stages of a major competition since the 1990 World Cup by beating North Macedonia

(3-1), followed by a second win against Ukraine (1-0). They even managed to take Italy all the way in the round of 16 (1-2 aet).

Meanwhile, the Swedes, led by the prolific Emil Forsberg (4 goals in total), topped Group E ahead of Spain by beating Slovakia (1-0) and Poland (3-2). Having been knocked out of the last three EUROs in the first round, Sweden fared better this time, but were pipped at the post by Ukraine (1-2 aet) after having a man sent off.

### **Eight sent home after the group stage, but encouragement for some**

With 16 teams qualifying from the group stage of a 24-team tournament, only eight were out of the running after the first round. The frustration was inevitably high for the bottom two third-placed teams, including Slovakia, who paid the price for a heavy defeat to Spain (0-5) in their third match. A narrower margin would have been enough to put Marek Hamšík and his team-mates through.

Finland were the other unfortunate third-placed finishers, but their first-ever EURO will nevertheless be deemed a success after a 1-0 win over Denmark and solid performances against Russia (0-1) and Belgium (0-2). Teemu Pukki, the Finns' ten-goal hero of the qualifying competition, failed to shine in the finals.

The other EURO newcomers, North Macedonia, may have lost all three of their matches, scoring two and conceding eight along the way, but their results did not reflect the attractive style of football played by a team for which the tireless Goran Pandev became the first player to score in a final tournament and the second-oldest player of any nationality to score at a EURO, at 37 years and 321 days.

At the other end of the age spectrum, Poland's Kacper Kozłowski is now the youngest player to have appeared in a EURO, entering the fray against Spain aged 17 years, 8 months and 3 days. The 1-1 draw produced the only point Poland could muster, despite the efforts of Robert Lewandowski, who finished with three goals.

Scotland also went home with a solitary point to their name. Appearing in a major tournament for the first time since 1996, the Scots held their English neighbours to a goalless draw, but their lack of attacking potency (scoring just one goal) prevented them from going any further than the group stage.

Like Scotland, Turkey only scored once, but their overall record was even less impressive, with three defeats and the worst goal difference of the 24 participants (-7). Despite coming into the tournament with a reputation for defensive solidity, the Turks lost their opening match to Italy (0-3) and never recovered.

Even though two of their matches were held in St Petersburg, Russia were unable to reproduce the fine form they showed at the 2018 World Cup, where they reached the quarter-finals. They were soundly beaten by Belgium (0-3) and Denmark (1-4).

Finally, Hungary, touted by many at the start of the tournament as the inevitable victims of Group F, more than matched their supporters' passion by securing draws against France (1-1) and Germany (2-2), but a 3-0 defeat at the hands of Portugal meant they failed to progress to the round of 16. 🔄



## WIDESPREAD PRAISE FOR EURO REFEREES

The EURO 2020 referee team earned glowing reports for the impressive new benchmarks they set at the tournament – and the video assistant referees (VAR) also achieved the highest standards on their EURO debut.

The chairman of UEFA's Referees Committee, Roberto Rosetti, spoke of his pride and pleasure at the outstanding overall performance of Europe's leading match officials at EURO 2020. The referee teams' work on and

off the field earned them constant plaudits and won them renewed respect over an intense month of EURO action.

Speaking at a post-EURO briefing, Rosetti also gave top marks to the VAR teams for their vital contribution in

helping to ensure that correct refereeing decisions were taken at the 51 matches.

Rosetti identified the close bond among the referees at their EURO basecamp in Istanbul as an essential factor. "There was a fantastic

atmosphere among the referees," he said. "The professional work of the fitness team, UEFA's staff and everyone working behind the scenes was also a massive help to them. We had a family feeling, with everyone pulling together to make everything run smoothly. The referee from South America, Fernando Rapallini, was a fine addition to the team with the quality of his refereeing, and he integrated within the referees' group perfectly."

### Praise for players and coaches

Rosetti hailed the players and coaches of the 24 participating teams for their attitude towards the match officials. An important aspect had been the visits made by UEFA's refereeing officers to the teams ahead of the EURO to explain the UEFA refereeing guidelines and instructions, and what was expected of the teams.

### Facts and figures

Rosetti presented key refereeing statistics from the EURO in comparison with EURO 2016 (51 matches):

	2020	2016
 Number of fouls	1,113	1,290
 Yellow cards	152	205
 Red cards	6	3

**Rosetti:** "In particular, there were fewer yellow cards for dissent."

## VAR

UEFA appointed 22 VARs for the EURO, who were based at UEFA's headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland. Two rooms were set up for VAR operations. At each of the 51 EURO matches, the main video assistant referee was accompanied by an assistant video assistant referee (AVAR) and an offside video assistant referee.

The VAR was the leader of the team and the main point of contact with the referee, with the task of focusing on incidents. The AVAR concentrated on following the match, while the offside VAR evaluated all potential offside situations.



**93.5%** of decisions on the pitch correct

**18** VAR corrections (9 offside, 4 foul play, 2 handball, 1 use of elbow, 1 hard tackle, 1 denying goalscoring opportunity)

**10** direct corrections

**8** on-field reviews

**1** correction every 2.83 matches

### Offside situations

Tight offside incidents:

**30** (9 VAR reviews)  
No wrong decisions (100% accuracy)

**Rosetti:** "Offside is no longer an issue. We are using the best technology and following its development."

### More penalties – accurate VAR

Penalties in comparison with EURO 2016

**2020** ▶ **17** 6 came from VAR intervention, all of them were 100% correct

**2016** ▶ **12**

**Rosetti:** "VAR helped provide a more accurate evaluation of incidents in the penalty area."

### Helping referees – and the game

Rosetti underlined that the aim of the VAR system was to help not only the referees, but also football. "Minimum interference for maximum benefit," he explained. "We're working hard every day to improve the system that is in place, because there's always room for improvement. Results show that we're getting faster as far as VAR interventions on a global level are concerned. Communication between referees and VARs is improving. The full picture shows that we're getting better."



# STRICT MEDICAL PROVISIONS

Every four years, UEFA sets out a medical framework for its European Championship final tournament.

This year's EURO 2020 final tournament brought a unique challenge, owing to the format featuring 11 venues across Europe, as well as the ongoing pandemic, which added another dimension to medical logistics.

UEFA published its latest Medical Regulations at the beginning of 2020. The first part of the regulations (Articles 3–8) focuses on the mandatory medical examinations for players, which must be completed by all players registered in all UEFA competitions.

For each EURO tournament, players must undergo the highest level of these examinations, which include special cardiological examinations based on guidelines drawn up by the European Society of Cardiology, as well as neurological baseline screening of brain functions to further improve the assessment of potential head injuries and concussions.

The second part of the regulations (Articles 9–16) centres on minimum medical requirements for players, team officials, the referee team and match officers.

These requirements include the provision of detailed pitchside emergency equipment, the presence of an advanced life support (ALS) ambulance, as well as a pitchside emergency doctor and stretcher crew, who must hold a valid ALS qualification recognised in their country of employment.

## Chief medical officers

For every UEFA final tournament, UEFA requires the host association to appoint a chief medical officer (CMO) to take charge of all medical services and facilities during the tournament.

EURO 2020's specific format meant that 11 CMOs were appointed to take care of each host venue. They were tasked with providing UEFA with a

medical care concept, including all medical provisions to be provided during the tournament.

The 11 concepts included important information about the national health care system, the specificities on importing medicine and the right to practise medicine for participating associating team doctors, as well as all identified medical facilities and services provided for the various UEFA target groups.

## Return to Play Protocol

The pandemic and the postponement of EURO 2020 by a year meant that CMOs also had to factor in the specificities of the UEFA Return to Play Protocol in order to minimise the COVID-19 risk.

In addition to providing each host venue with a specific EURO 2020 medical operational concept, UEFA organised meetings with the competent local authorities in each of the 11 venues to define the various preventive measures. This was an extremely challenging task as different local laws were applicable in each country as regards entry procedures, testing programmes, handling of positive cases, and so on.

UEFA also held briefings with the team doctors of the 24 participating national associations.

## Hygiene officers

Each venue also had to appoint a hygiene officer with detailed functional knowledge of the stadium and its operations, whose sole responsibility was to ensure that all the applicable principles and hygiene measures were correctly implemented at the stadium. The hygiene officer was also responsible for implementing the defined protocol for entering the stadium as well as the surrounding EURO 2020 facilities. 🌱



The team bench gets disinfected before the Austria v North Macedonia match in Bucharest on 13 June.



## Recipients of the 2021 UEFA President's Award:

### On-site medical team

Mogens Kreutzfeldt (chief medical officer)  
 Frederik Flensted (stadium medical manager)  
 Anders Boesen (pitchside emergency doctor)  
 Peder Ersgaard (paramedic)

### UEFA venue medical officers

Jens Kleinfeld  
 Valentin Velikov

### Danish national medical team

Morten Skjoldager (physio accompanying the team doctor)  
 Morten Boesen (team doctor)  
 Simon Kjær (Denmark national team captain)

# COPENHAGEN HEROES RECEIVE UEFA PRESIDENT'S AWARD

The medical team that saved the life of Denmark player Christian Eriksen at EURO 2020, and Danish national team captain Simon Kjær, received the 2021 UEFA President's Award in Istanbul on 26 August.

The accolade is a mark of homage for their vital contributions in coming to Eriksen's aid when the 29-year-old midfielder suffered a cardiac arrest and collapsed on the field during Denmark's EURO 2020 group match against Finland at Parken Stadium in Copenhagen on 12 June.

Thanks to the medical team's rapid response and expert emergency treatment, Eriksen was resuscitated on the pitch, and is now happily on the road to recovery. Simon Kjær shares the honour for his reaction in immediately helping Eriksen, as well as for the exceptional leadership qualities he displayed.

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, described the recipients of the award as "the true heroes of EURO 2020. It is indeed a great honour for me to present them with the UEFA President's Award. This year, the President's Award transcends football. It serves as an important and eternal reminder of just how precious life is

and puts everything in our lives into the clearest perspective."

The medical team responded swiftly, and Eriksen was resuscitated through the deployment of the cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) technique and a defibrillator before he was taken to hospital. "We rushed to the field to help [Christian] and to do our job," said Mogens Kreutzfeldt, chief medical officer for EURO 2020 in Copenhagen. "We did what we should, what we were taught, what we were trained to do. Everybody knew their role, everybody knew what to do. We were not emotional at the

scene. Afterwards, we were, of course, like everybody. We're very happy and proud of the outcome."

### Captain's response

The award also recognises Simon Kjær's admirable response to the situation. The 32-year-old defender was one of the first people to reach Eriksen when he collapsed. He put Eriksen in the recovery position, started the initial CPR procedure, led the Danish players in forming a protective ring around their team-mate while he was being given urgent medical attention, and comforted Eriksen's partner. 🧡

"I would like to thank Morten [Skjoldager], Morten [Boesen] and the medical team who helped in Parken on 12 June. You did a fantastic job and saved my life. Also a big thanks to my friend and captain Simon and my team-mates in the Danish team for your support, both on 12 June and afterwards."

**Christian Eriksen**

# VITAL ROLES OF THE VOLUNTEERS

Thousands of volunteers made a crucial contribution at the various tournament venues across Europe – while enjoying the experience of a lifetime.

**W**hether it was directing supporters to the stadium, creating a festive atmosphere in the fan zones or organising accreditation for media, there were a huge range of opportunities for volunteers to make their mark at EURO 2020 – and indeed the tournament would not have functioned so effectively without them.

When applications closed for positions in autumn 2019, a record 37,000 people had applied for the 12,000 available positions across the 12 scheduled host cities, highlighting the appetite for a Europe-wide event that would reach countries that had not previously hosted such major sporting occasions. Aged from 18 to 86, the diverse team of volunteers and mobility makers represented 113 nations across the globe.

For some, the opportunity to be involved was too good to miss, either to be part of the festival or to experience working in sport, while for others it was simply the next step in a long volunteering journey.

“We are extremely grateful to our team of thousands of volunteers across Europe who have worked with us to make UEFA EURO 2020 a success,” said the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin.

“Throughout our 11 host cities, whether in fan zones or at stadiums, we have seen a spirit of unity and teamwork among our staff and volunteers of which we can be extremely proud. I hope that the tournament has provided each and every one of them with a series of unforgettable memories.”

## Mutual benefit

For UEFA, promoting volunteerism and the volunteer community is an important strategic priority – football could not thrive as it does without them.

“Our volunteers have been very important,” explained UEFA Events SA CEO Martin Kallen, the man responsible for staging the tournament successfully. “To have these extra members of the team has been a huge help and I hope it benefits everybody involved.

“The pandemic has made the situation



UEFA



“Being part of EURO 2020 was a real adventure. I knew from the start that it was going to be a journey to remember. Today I feel proud to have been part of the story.”

**Andrada in Bucharest**

“After a year with COVID, lockdown and working from home, it's been great to finally get back to work together in an arena and to meet new people. In such a short time we have grown together into a good team and it's been a unique atmosphere.”

**Alicia in Munich**

“I have really enjoyed volunteering with the signage team and helping out around the stadium. It made the experience even more memorable with Scotland being there. I have really enjoyed working in the team and meeting new people. I would definitely do it again and recommend it to anyone for future events.”

**Callum in Glasgow**

“Volunteering is one of my favourite things to do. For me, being a volunteer is working side by side with others, being helpful to our community and making it a better place.”

**Narmin in Baku**

for volunteers more complicated because we have had a safety policy where you should not come to the stadium if you could manage to work from home. But where it has been safe and where they could enhance the visitor or fan experience, it has been very beneficial.



But it is important for us to remember that our volunteers have not just been with us to work, but also to enjoy themselves and gain valuable experience.”

# AMSTERDAM HOSTS INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST CENTRE

Located just outside Amsterdam at the Expo Haarlemmermeer in Vijfhuizen, UEFA's international broadcast centre (IBC) covered an area of 25,980 square metres – roughly four football pitches!

**T**he IBC was the hub of all UEFA host broadcast operations, including the distribution of all the live feeds for all 51 EURO 2020 matches coming from the 11 stadiums, and was how the world watched the tournament via official TV and streaming platforms.

## The IBC in numbers

Across the tournament, including support services, the overall IBC population was 1,000 – which included almost 300 UEFA host broadcast staff.

Everyone working at the IBC was required to follow strict COVID-19 restrictions, including following a zoning concept, in order to protect everybody working at the facility. UEFA also moved certain core IBC services – for example its editorial content services, quality control and broadcaster servicing teams – to its London and Nyon hubs, in order to deliver a more remote solution in the wake of the pandemic.

Eighteen feeds per match, including the live stadium feed (LSF) – also known as the 'world feed' – were delivered to the IBC

for distribution to UEFA's broadcast partners, and images were then transmitted to homes across the globe as part of UEFA's state-of-the-art coverage. The IBC was also the temporary home to 32 of UEFA's broadcast partners before and during the tournament.

In total, EURO 2020 matches were shown by 137 global broadcast partners, present in 229 territories around the world, with a total live event audience of 5.2 billion during the tournament. An average of 100 million live television viewers tuned in to each match, with 328 million watching the final live. Throughout the tournament the UEFA host broadcast team was expected to produce a total of 3,500 hours of content, which included both the live feeds from each match as well as content produced by UEFA's 59 electronic news gathering (ENG) crews generating additional programming material from across Europe.

All this required the use of more than 70,000km of cabling, with 150km of this located at the IBC itself. The longest single distance for a pre-existing fibre cable was between the stadium in Baku and the IBC, some 6,500km!

## At the match

At each stadium, a minimum of 36 live match coverage cameras covered the action, with an additional eight cameras used to cover other events surrounding the game, such as team arrivals and fan reactions, ensuring a variety of supplementary content for all feeds.

All stadiums had at least two pitchview studios, with four for the opening match in Rome as well as the semi-finals and final in London. Between 85 and 130 broadcast commentary positions were also available at each stadium, and UEFA's broadcast partners had access to a variety of other facilities at the venue – including stand presentation platforms, pitchside presentation positions, fan arrival platforms and unilateral camera positions amongst others – in order to deliver a truly bespoke production at each match. 🌐



More than 1,000 people were on-site at the IBC in Amsterdam.

# NO ANTI-DOPING RULE VIOLATIONS AT EURO 2020

All the samples collected during the pre-tournament testing programme and final tournament were negative.

**A**nalysis of the testing data stored in the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) database for the 624 players who participated at EURO 2020 showed that UEFA, FIFA and national anti-doping organisations (NADOs) collected a combined total of 1,616 urine and blood samples between 1 January 2021 and the end of the final tournament.

This represents an average of 2.59 samples collected per player within a period of just over six months. UEFA collected 1,025 of these samples, while 591 were collected by FIFA and European NADOs.

## Out-of-competition testing

Some 616 of the samples were collected out-of-competition from players who gathered with their national teams during the international week of 2022 World Cup qualifying matches in March, in the immediate pre-tournament period in May and June, and at training base camps and team hotels between matches during the tournament.

A further 584 of these samples were collected from EURO 2020 players by UEFA, FIFA and NADOs in-competition in a targeted testing programme involving UEFA, FIFA and national league matches.

The final 416 samples were collected by UEFA during tests performed at final tournament matches, representing an average of 8.16 samples per match.

## Laboratory analysis

Given the pan-European format of EURO 2020, a number of different WADA-accredited laboratories were used to analyse samples, with all participating laboratories collaborating with each other to agree a complex analytical menu designed to test for erythropoiesis-stimulating agents, human growth hormones and selective androgen receptor modulators (SARMs) – in addition to the standard WADA analytical menu.



In-competition samples were analysed within 24 hours of receipt by the laboratories, to ensure that the initial results were known before the teams' next games.

The samples were also added to the players' biological passports, which allows monitoring of selected biological variables over time.

## Ten-year storage

UEFA worked closely with their expert, Athlete Passport Management Unit, at the

Swiss Laboratory for Doping Analyses (LAD) in Lausanne, Switzerland, to ensure that prompt monitoring of the passports could guide target testing of players both before and during the tournament.

Under UEFA's long-term sample storage programme, all samples from EURO 2020 will be stored for a period of ten years.

This means that UEFA will be in a position to reanalyse any samples when required due to intelligence received or new analytical techniques becoming available in the future. 🌐

# SERBIA WIN eEURO 2021

Serbia emerged triumphant to be crowned winners of UEFA eEURO 2021, overcoming Poland in the final to clinch the second edition of the eEuropean Championship.



## RESULTS

### Quarter-finals (best of three)

France	2-0	Portugal
Greece	1-2	Serbia
Romania	1-2	Poland
Ukraine	0-2	Spain

### Semi-finals (best of three)

France	1-2	Serbia
Poland	2-0	Spain

### Final (best of five)

Serbia	3-1	Poland
--------	-----	--------

Played from 8 to 10 July, the finals began with a group stage, but it was not a group stage in the usual sense whereby all teams play each other. Instead, there were two initial fixtures in each group. The two 'winners' then met, with the victor of that tie advancing as group winners (with a 2-0 win record). The two 'losers' also faced each other, with a second loss bringing elimination. The winner of the 'losers' fixture went into a tie-breaker with the loser from the 'winners' tie, the eventual victors progressing to the quarter-finals as

runners-up (with a 2-1 win record).

From then on it was much simpler, a straight knockout tournament. The four group winners were randomly drawn against a runner-up team from another group. Each match until the final was then a best-of-three series, with the final played as a best of five. Matches were contested 1v1.

Serbia were beaten finalists – by Italy – in 2020 but a team represented by the same two gamers – Stefan 'Kepa\_PFC' Slavković and Marko 'ASR\_ROKSA' Rokić – went one better this time. They were

consistently impressive in the virtual 16-nation final tournament, played on KONAMI's eFootball PES 2021 Season Update on Playstation 4. Beaten just once in qualifying, they dispatched Greece in the quarter-finals and France in the last four to set up their showdown with Poland. Serbia had edged a 3-2 win when the two sides met in the group stage on 8 July and they came out on top again in the final, prevailing three games to one.

A total of €100,000 in cash prizes was split between all the finalists, including €40,000 for the winners. 🏆

## No match-fixing at EURO 2020

UEFA's successful anti-match-fixing strategy for EURO 2020 was based on two main pillars: education and prevention on the one hand, and monitoring and intelligence on the other.

The tournament was the perfect opportunity to further raise awareness of the issue, build capacity among and between all the key stakeholders concerned – from the football community to the law enforcement authorities – and promote transnational cooperation.

The strategy included analysing trends and standards in the sports betting sector and establishing a

comprehensive overview of the regulations and legislation in order to engage the network that UEFA has been working with for over a decade, as well as the competent authorities in each of the host countries.

UEFA's anti-match-fixing unit organised two online workshops for national integrity officers, who then adapted the materials to their national contexts and presented them to their teams. More than 600 players attended these information sessions during their pre-tournament training camps. Tailored briefings were also held for the referees and video assistant referees.

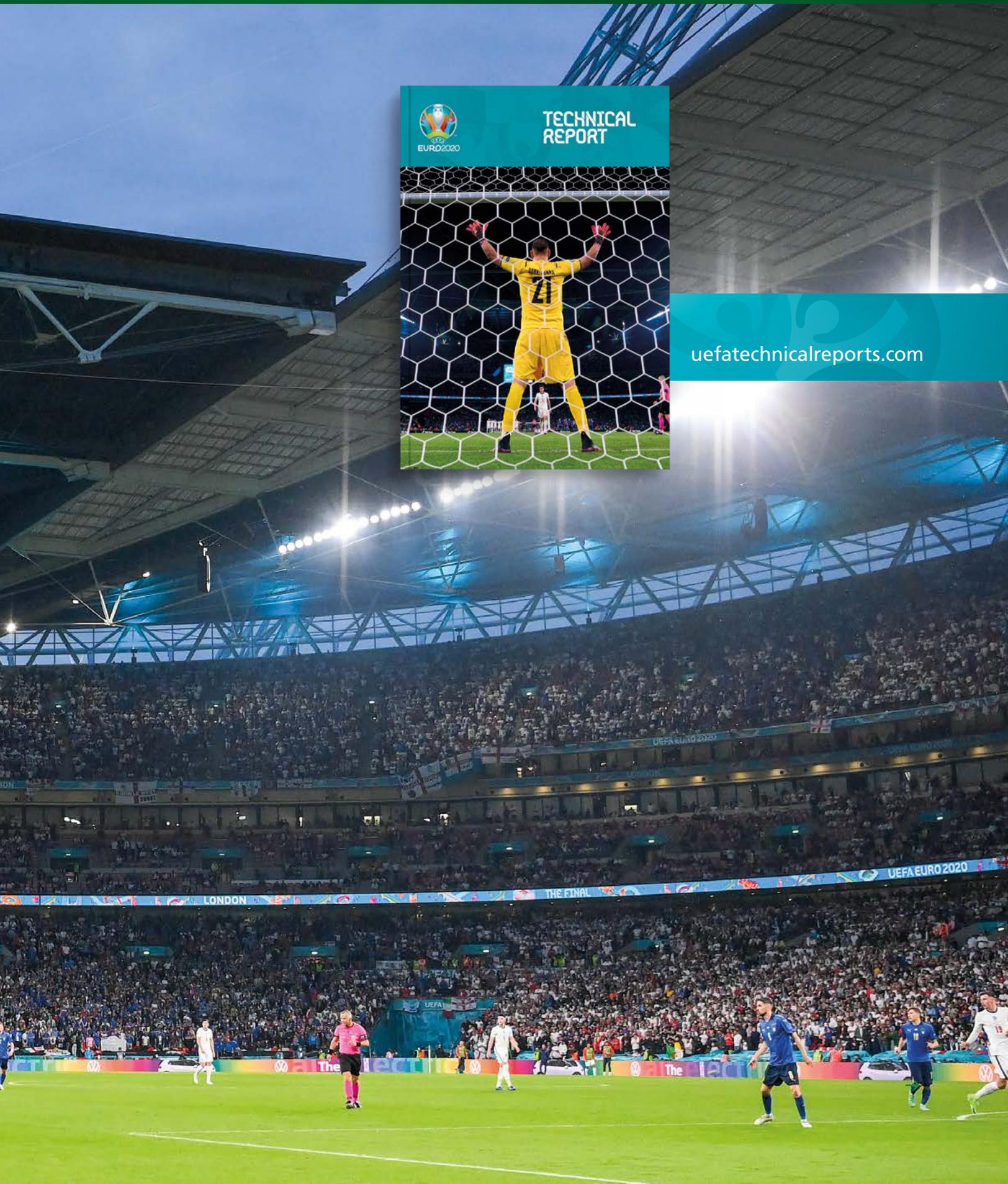
# REFINING THE ART OF SCORING AND SAVING

The UEFA EURO 2020 technical report covers all the key trends and developments observed during another tournament which broke records, beginning with the number of goals...





[ufatechnicalreports.com](http://ufatechnicalreports.com)



**T**he most prolific UEFA EURO on record was the first where a goalkeeper was crowned player of the tournament. Unravelling this apparent paradox was the role of UEFA's team of technical observers, who witnessed sheer excellence at both ends of the field during a tournament which will be remembered as much for its outstanding attacking as it will for the new benchmarks set in goalkeeping, in particular by Italy's Gianluigi Donnarumma, who stood out from all the players who took to the field throughout 51 pulsating matches.

The scorers of the first goal of the tournament also supplied the last. It was a fitting way to close the circle on a triumph which Italy had called in their opening 3-0 victory over Turkey, and they were not bluffing. The Azzurri entered the tournament off the back of a 27-game unbeaten streak, including a ten-out-of-ten-win qualifying campaign. Even head coach Roberto Mancini would have been considered crazy for predicting, when he picked up the pieces following a failed 2018 World Cup qualifying campaign, that he could put them all back together again so perfectly within three years.

### Back lines

Italy were one of the very few teams at EURO 2016 to play with a three-man defence, with Andrea Barzagli, Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini forming the foundations upon which Antonio Conte built a side which were eliminated by Germany in the quarter-finals. With the now retired Barzagli this summer taking on a coaching role within the Italian Football Federation (FIGC), Bonucci and Chiellini remained to hold the defensive fort five years later, though the shift under Mancini to a four-man back line was not born out of necessity. With Leonardo

Spinazzola and Giovanni Di Lorenzo flanking Juventus' experienced duo, it did not matter that Mancini was effectively ensuring Italy would once again go countertrend with a four-man back line, with no fewer than 15 teams at EURO 2020 deploying a back three – or five – at some stage of the tournament. The effective use of full-backs in supporting the attacks was one of the features of the title-winning side, with Spinazzola also named in the team of the tournament. Packie Bonner, after watching Spinazzola in action against Austria, noted how he "always threatened to get to the byeline and we saw him twice in the six-yard box. He linked exceptionally well with Lorenzo Insigne, who took Austria's right-back infield to open space."

This ability to combine with forwards and not necessarily always overlap was also discussed as an enhancement

to the increased attacking identity of a modern full-back. "This is coming more and more into the game," Mixu Paatelainen remarked. "Full-backs like to come inside as, when they do, they take the opposing winger out of his comfort zone. I see this as a symptom that coaches are working on many ways of unsettling their opponents." By forcing opponents out of their comfort zones, full-backs or wing-backs were getting into their own to score 16 goals at EURO 2020, including Luke Shaw's early opener in the final, which justified England manager Gareth Southgate's surprise decision to start out with a back five.

To conclude Bonner's quote on Spinazzola, he added that Marco Verratti "did a good job of covering any counters on that side." This was part of a collective defensive strategy which permitted the full-backs to attack without fear of letting the team down by losing possession.

"I think Italy, when they lost the ball in the attacking part of the pitch, they broke the possibility [for their



////////////////////////////////////

"With Pickford's long clearances it became difficult for the wing-backs to get into attack mode, while Kane was losing the ball in the air instead of being able to drop deep to receive."

**Packie Bonner**  
Technical observer

opponents] to give passes out wide,” said Jean-François Domergue. “They closed the density of the players between 25-40 metres with six or seven players and left Bonucci and Chiellini behind with Jorginho in front. The others do the transitions, and I think Italy are working very well in blocking to keep the ball.”

**Out to (im)press**

This Italian block often occurred in the opposition half, with their high press and counterpress a tactic which also found a prominent place on the technical observers’ notepads. After observing Italy in the group stage, Esteban Cambiasso reported back on what he had stood out in the Azzurri’s game. “If I have to choose one key factor, it’s the pressure on opponents in the attacking third,” he said. “They press with a lot of players and there’s a very short time between them losing the ball and winning it back. It means they don’t give too many chances for the opposition to make quick transitions.” Five of Italy’s regains in the attacking third led to goals.

Faced with this pressure, the deep construction trend observed since the 2019 rule change regarding goal kicks was somewhat tempered, with teams showing

a little more caution when trying to build out from the back. England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, for instance, made 20 long clearances in the semi-final against Denmark and 26 in the final when, as Packie Bonner remarked, “it became difficult for the wing-backs to get into attack mode, while Kane was losing the

ball in the air instead of being able to drop deep to receive.”

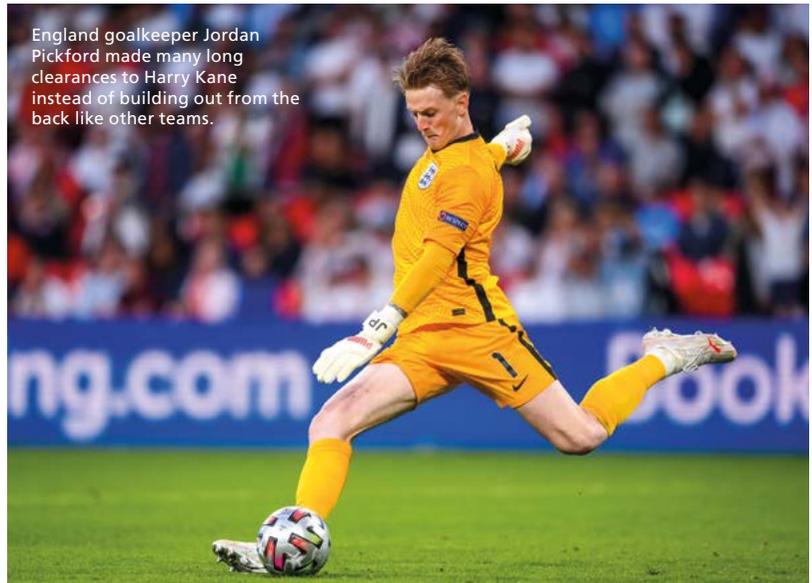
**The centre forward: true or false**

The England captain was not alone in meeting congestion in central areas, with the observers reflecting at length on the trials teams were having in breaking through where three centre-backs were being protected by one or two screening midfielders. This sparked a true or false discussion among the observers on the role of the No9. “Germany played with three attackers rather than a No9,” said Steffen Freund. “The No9 isn’t dead – he just has to be more flexible, rotate and still appear in the right places to score goals.”

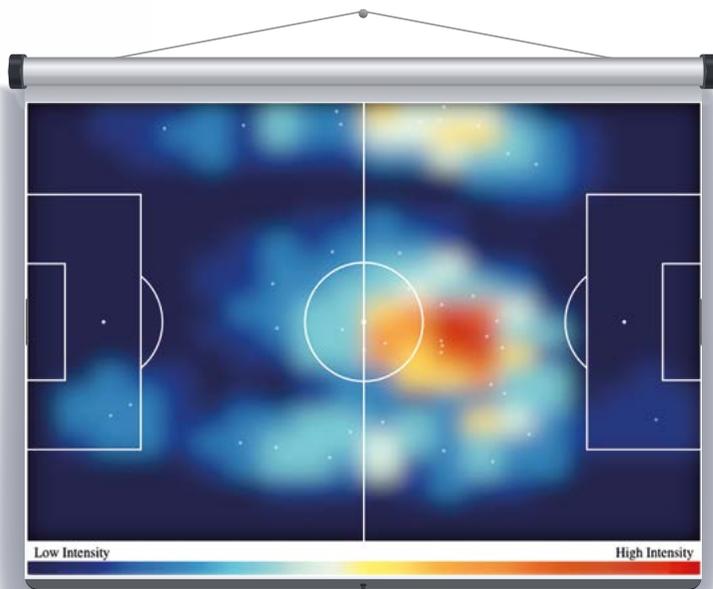
“[Robert] Lewandowski is a classic striker,” Dušan Fitzel added. “And Patrik Schick had an excellent tournament. But look what happened in the final when England started playing the long ball. →

//////  
 “Italy press with a lot of players and there’s a very short time between them losing the ball and winning it back. It means they don’t give too many chances for the opposition to make quick transitions.”

**Esteban Cambiasso**  
 Technical observer



England goalkeeper Jordan Pickford made many long clearances to Harry Kane instead of building out from the back like other teams.



A heat map showing Italy’s counterpressures in their group stage match against Switzerland





The fact that Italy conceded only three goals during EURO 2020 was down largely to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma, who went on to be crowned player of the tournament.

Italy's two stoppers dominated Harry Kane. They won the ball every time. So what we saw was the type of central attacker who moved wide or went deep." This expansion of a forward's competences was noted also in Belgium's 2-1 win over Denmark. "When Belgium had [Romelu] Lukaku in the middle of the pitch in the first half, Simon Kjær handled him well and then the coach changed, moved [Kevin] de Bruyne into the centre and Lukaku destroyed Denmark out there – Bingo!" said Peter Rudbæk. Belgium coach Roberto Martínez had rightly seen that width was where most of the goals were stemming from, with crosses and cut-backs causing havoc in creating 35% of goals and contributing also to a record number of own goals being scored.

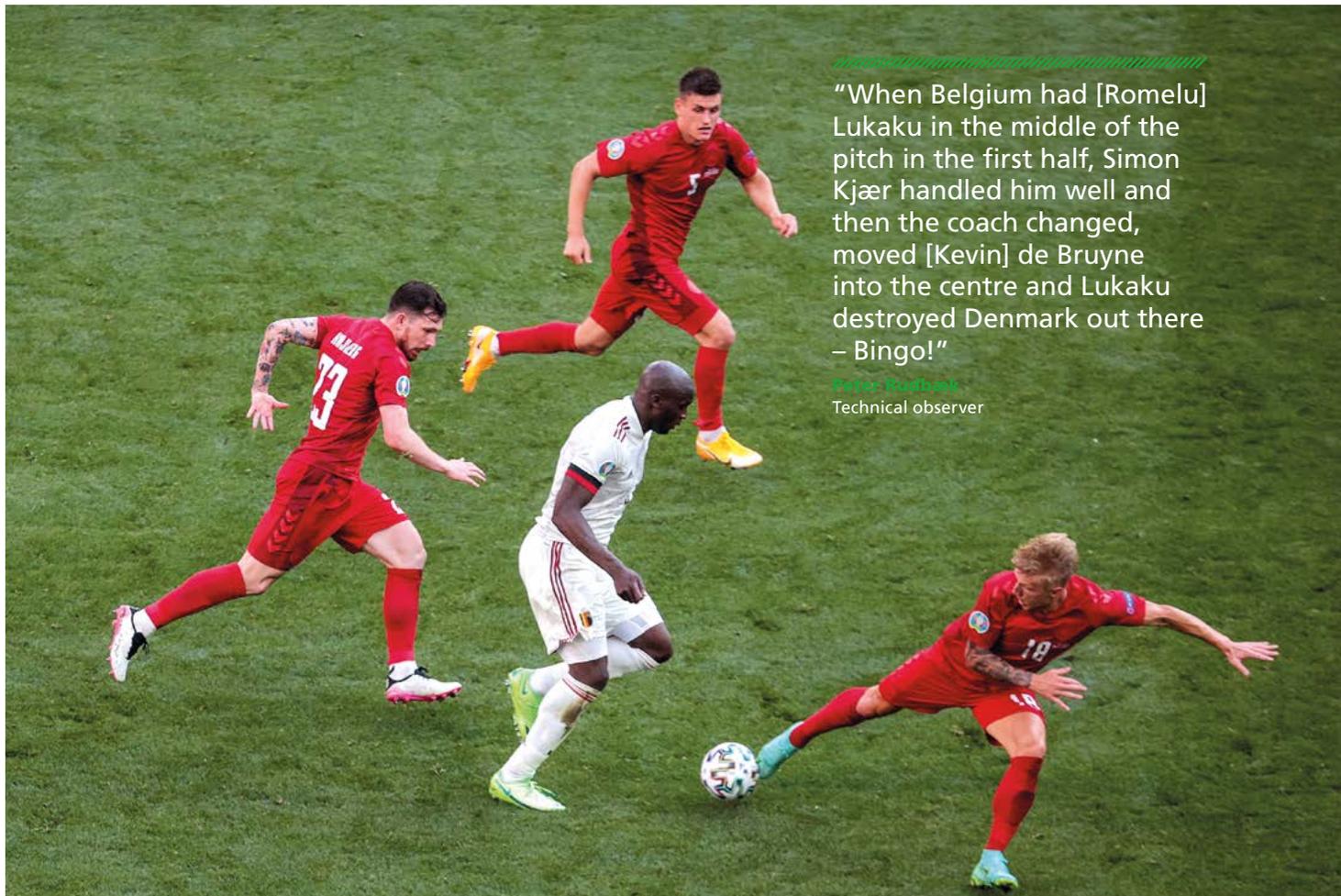
The golden boot at EURO 2020 went to Cristiano Ronaldo, but the name engraved on that particular trophy could easily have read 'own goal' with 11 in total – two

more than in the previous 15 editions combined. With a further 14 goals coming following a rebound, whipping in crosses was a particularly productive route to goal. "When the cross is outside of the goalkeeper's reach, nine times out of ten it is a goal," said technical observer Frans Hoek, himself a former goalkeeper. "At such a high speed, whoever touches that ball, it will go in."

This is where fast, technically gifted players come into their own, as dribbling came back into fashion. "This is the EURO of dribbling," said Fabio Capello. "Finally, we can see young players going one on one, trying to dribble their opponents to get to the goal line and cross dangerously." Italy's Federico Chiesa and Lorenzo Insigne and England's Raheem Sterling showed signs of resuscitating a calibre of player who causes the greatest level of excitement among fans, and strikes the most fear into full-backs. "In Italy,

we are very lucky in this period to have these players," added Capello, who felt Sterling had also "made the difference" for England. "The movement is really important, but so too is that they are taking the risk to dribble," added the former England manager.

These were all among the key take-aways from an event which spanned 11 venues spread across the continent, from Glasgow to Baku and St Petersburg to Sevilla, and are discussed in greater depth in the UEFA EURO 2020 technical report. 🌱



"When Belgium had [Romelu] Lukaku in the middle of the pitch in the first half, Simon Kjær handled him well and then the coach changed, moved [Kevin] de Bruyne into the centre and Lukaku destroyed Denmark out there – Bingo!"

Peter Rudbæk  
Technical observer



**ROBERTO MANCINI**

# SMELLS LIKE TEAM SPIRIT

The EURO 2020 winning coach reveals how Italy made it back to the top after a disappointing few years.

**T**ake a look at your favourite league table and work out how many of the coaches were top-level players. And how many have become successful coaches without an illustrious playing career. One of football's great debating points is whether one background is better than the other. Do great footballers make great coaches? Or, as Arrigo Sacchi famously argued, "You don't have to have been a horse to be a jockey." Italy's coaching guru could be cited alongside the likes of José Mourinho, André Villas-Boas or Maurizio Sarri as examples of a coaching vocation weighing more heavily than playing experience as a top-level pro.

"This is a group that has never lost heart, even in difficult times, supporting each other and putting the interest of the team before the individual. If we are where we are today, it's not only because of an extra penalty scored. It's because we have been transformed by our friendship – one of the most beautiful feelings in life." The words, not spoken by Roberto Mancini but by his captain, Giorgio Chiellini, reflect the team spirit built by a coach who took the baton at a delicate moment in the wake of Italy's historic failure to qualify for the 2018 World Cup.

Victory at EURO 2020 also reaffirmed the notion that 'team spirit' has the same relevance in the team behind the team as among the players themselves. Mancini embarked on his renaissance project with the support of former team-mates such as Alberico Evani, Fausto Salsano, Giulio Nucciari and Angelo Gregucci, with his striking partner in the great Sampdoria team of the '90s, Gianluca Vialli, as head of delegation. Clips of their touchline celebrations bear witness to the passion and commitment that unites them.

#### **How important was team spirit? And what did you do to create it?**

They did well because they formed a good group of guys – great guys first and foremost, which was essential. Plus, the more experienced players helped the younger players to integrate. That was also quite simple, and they deserve a lot of credit for creating a group that really wanted to play good football. It's not that I felt everything would be easy because there are always difficulties, but we made it. We were together for 50 days, which was tough, but I have to say that it all went fast. That's a sign that the guys got on well with each other.

#### **You also implemented a more positive style, focused on attacking. How difficult was it to do this after the disappointment of 2018?**

It was actually quite simple, because I found players who wanted to do something special. They were enthusiastic about the project because it was something different for them. They were curious to see what we Italians could do. Obviously it took some time, but not that much. Whenever we got to see each other, it went well because they got something special out of it.

#### **Italy was able to adapt tactically to different opponents. As you don't work with the players as frequently as you would at club level, how did you manage to prepare different tactical systems?**

It was a group effort. We tried to work on different ways of playing as well as the physical fitness side.

We tried to improve our qualities as individuals and as a team. We succeeded, all together – us, the staff, and the players, because they showed a lot of desire.

#### **How important was it for the group that you could make five or six substitutions?**

I think it was important for everyone because the players had all just come off the end of an exhausting season, so I think it was a very good thing. We'd been working as a group for a long time and the guys who came off the bench knew what to do. Indeed, I have to say that whenever they came on, they gave something more, because when a tired player came off, a fresh player came on with a desire to improve the team – and that's not always the case. I have to say they were excellent, everyone, every time – in each game, those who came on did something special. It's important that the identity of the team remains the same even when we change three or four players. They all know what to do and the end product does not change.

#### **Everybody sets out to win. But at what point did you think you could go all the way?**

I always believed it was possible to win – I believed it from day one. But there are lots of other factors as well. We knew what we were doing, even during the

qualification phase, and we believed it was possible to do something special. The teams who played in the EURO were all very strong and they all wanted to win, so there was a good balance. I think at the moment there are many strong teams in Europe who could have won the EURO and who could win the World Cup. Winning wasn't a simple task.

#### **What were the key moments?**

We really believed in what we had done in the lead-up to the EURO but, of course, the important – crucial – match was the first. In a knockout competition, the first is always the most difficult. But then when you settle into it, it becomes different.

#### **Maybe the performance against Belgium showed your confidence and physical condition?**

I think that was a very important match. The final against England was a great match, too. We suffered a bit more against Spain, because they played probably their best match of the whole tournament and they are a very strong team. I think that, from the round of 16 onwards, they were all great matches. There are some games when you have to suffer. Spain surprised us at the start by deciding to play without a striker. They caused us a lot of trouble and we had a hard time because we didn't have much of the ball.

#### **Is there a lesson that EURO 2020 taught you?**

That you never give up until the end. It's not something we learned at EURO 2020, but it's something that was confirmed there. When you play you should always believe in your abilities and your qualities, because every match starts 0-0, and then you never give up for any reason because in today's football, you can always make a comeback.

#### **Did you see any tactical trends that could be useful in coach education?**

I think every coach played to attack and to win, so this is the trend to follow. Because at a European level, if you follow this trend and have quality players, you can win. You can change the formation or the way you play, but in the end, you have the pitch and 11 players. So it comes down to mentality and desire to win – even if you're giving more opportunities to the opponent by giving them more space. I believe this is the foundation of it all. 🔄



# THE EURO GOAL STATS

Here is how and when the EURO goals were scored, and which players ran the fastest and covered the most ground.

## GOALSCORING

### SET-PLAY GOALS

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GROUP STAGE	KNOCKOUT STAGE	TOTAL
Direct free-kick	Direct from a free-kick		1	1
Corner	Direct from or following a corner	12	5	17
Penalty	Spot kick (or follow-up from a penalty)	9	2	11
Indirect free-kick	Following a free-kick	5	3	8
Throw-in	Following a throw-in	2	1	3
		<b>28</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>40</b>

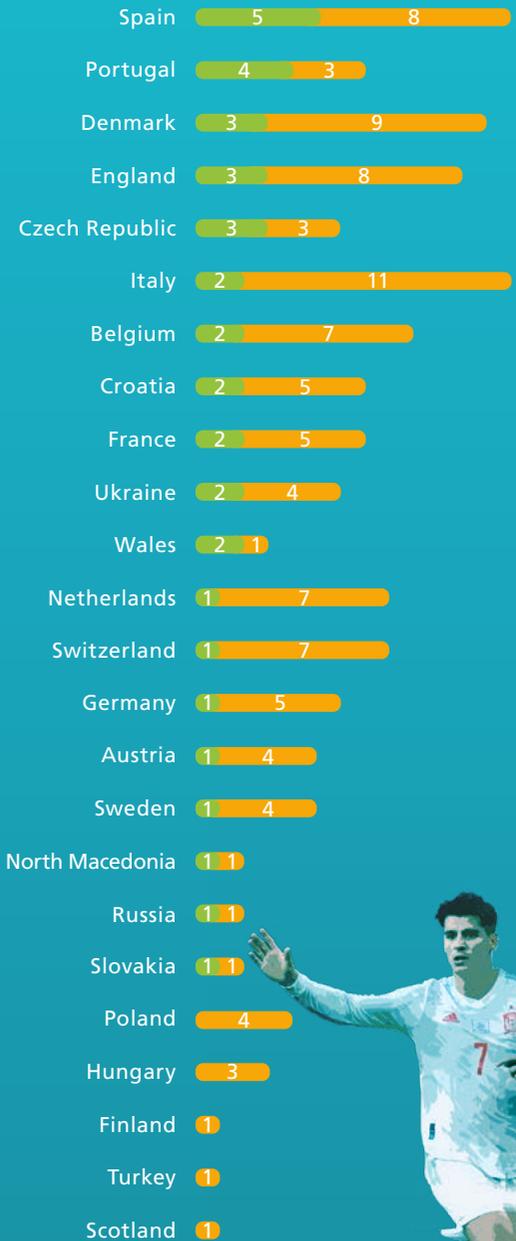
### OPEN-PLAY GOALS

ACTION	GUIDELINES	GROUP STAGE	KNOCKOUT STAGE	TOTAL
Combinations	Build-up with passes and link-up play	39	22	61
Counterattack	Immediate transition from breaking up opponents' attack	7	1	8
Defensive error	Mistake by defender or goalkeeper	8	5	13
Direct attack	Quick attack with few passes, as a transition or from own defence	9	8	17
Other	Belonging to more than one category	3		3
		<b>66</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>102</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>94</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Avg. goals per game</b>		<b>2.61</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>2.79</b>

## GOALS SCORED

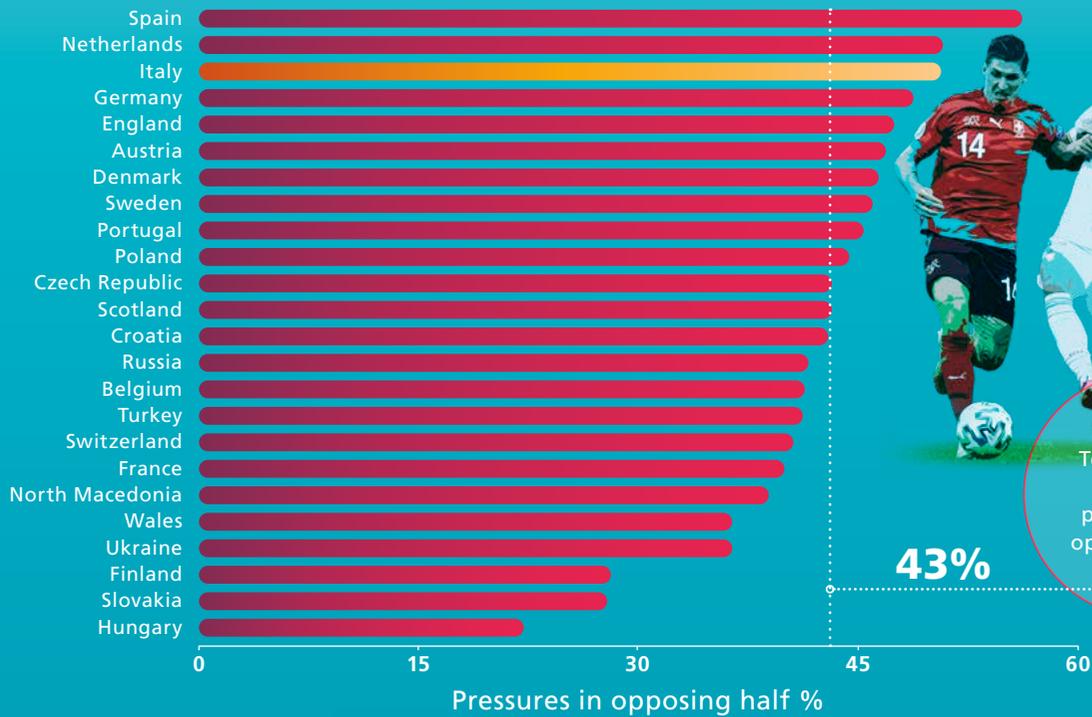
■ Set play ■ Open play



### When the goals were scored



# PRESSING



Tournament average pressures in opposing half  
**43%**

# SPEED

PLAYER	TEAM	TOP SPEED km/hr
Spinazzola	Italy	33.77
Négo	Hungary	33.77
Coman	France	33.66
Gakpo	Netherlands	33.59
James	Wales	33.52
Rashford	England	33.52
Pukki	Finland	33.30
A. Christensen	Denmark	33.30
Llorente	Spain	33.30
Gvardiol	Croatia	33.30

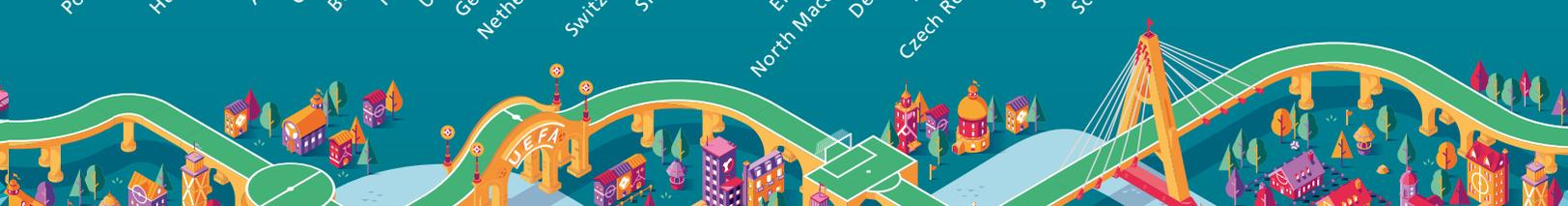


# DISTANCE

PLAYER	TEAM	AVG.PER GAME (km)
Pedri	Spain	12.69
Jorginho	Italy	12.35
Marcel Sabitzer	Austria	12.19
Aleksandr Golovin	Russia	11.99
Kalvin Phillips	England	11.84
Albin Ekdal	Sweden	11.80
Sergio Busquets	Spain	11.70
Ádám Nagy	Hungary	11.59
Tomáš Souček	Czech Republic	11.57
N'Golo Kanté	France	11.55

# GOALKEEPING

% of goal kicks received inside box



# GERMANY TRIUMPHANT AGAIN

Germany won their third European Under-21 Championship after successfully navigating the competition's first 16-team finals.

The format of the 2021 U21 EURO was unprecedented in more ways than one. First the field was increased from 12 to 16; then came COVID-19. As a result of the pandemic, the final tournament was divided in two, with the group stage played at the end of March and the knockout stage (quarter-finals, semi-finals and final) from 31 May to 6 June.

Both halves of the tournament were hosted by Hungary and Slovenia, giving the Slovenians the chance to participate in their first U21 finals. However, both host nations struggled. Neither managed a single victory in a group stage that was otherwise closely contested, with qualification from two of the four groups decided on goal difference. Even Germany, who went on to lift the trophy, relied on goal difference to qualify from Group A, at Romania's expense.

Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Spain – a list that includes five former winners who had amassed 15 of the 22 previous U21 titles between them – emerged from the group stage to form a dream line-up for a knockout stage that lived up to all expectations. Only one of the seven knockout matches was won by more than a single goal, and even that required extra time, with Portugal beating Italy 5-3 in the quarter-finals. In this highly competitive tournament, it was fitting that Germany, who had not been among the favourites at the outset and endured a tricky path to the final, ended up taking the trophy home.

## Germany stand the test of time

Winners in 2017 and runners-up in 2019, Germany continued their recent love affair with the European Under-21 Championship by beating Portugal 1-0 in the 2021 final in Ljubljana. They owed their well-deserved victory to a goal by Lukas Nmecha early in the second half. That goal also made Nmecha the tournament's top scorer, with four goals to his name. Mërgim Berisha did not enjoy

such luck, especially in the semi-final against the Netherlands, when he hit the woodwork three times. Nevertheless, the Germans would have won the final by a greater margin were it not for a fine performance by the Portuguese goalkeeper, Diogo Costa.

Three consecutive final appearances, culminating in victory in 2021, might suggest that a German triumph had always been on the cards. But nothing could be further from the truth. Beaten twice by Belgium in qualifying, Germany only just edged out Romania in the group stage and looked unlikely winners when the knockout stage began.

In the quarter-finals, the Germans were on the brink of elimination at the hands of Denmark (2-2 after extra time, 6-5 on penalties) when Nmecha hit an 88th-minute equaliser following an earlier strike by Denmark's Wahid Faghir. After further twists and turns in extra time, goalkeeper Finn Dahmen saved two Danish penalties to secure Germany's place in the semi-finals.

In the last four, a quick-fire double by Florian Wirtz saw Stefan Kuntz's men overcome the Netherlands 2-1. The Bayer 04 Leverkusen attacking midfielder's first goal after 29 seconds was the fastest in U21 EURO history.

Although they did not exactly breeze through the competition, the Germans proved – if proof were still required – that they are capable of producing teams with the potential to win titles in any age category, generation after generation. Their victory brightened up an otherwise disappointing summer for German football, the men's U23 side failing to make it out of the group stage at the Olympic Games in Tokyo and the senior men's national team getting knocked out of EURO 2020 in the round of 16.

## Portugal nearly break their curse

Despite claiming numerous European men's U19/U18 and U17/U16 titles (four and six →







Portugal reached their second European Under-21 Championship final since 1994 after eliminating Spain in the semi-finals.

respectively), Portugal have never won the European Under-21 Championship. This surprising statistic was nearly overturned by a team led by the scintillating Fábio Vieira, who earned himself the accolade of player of the tournament.

Impeccable in both qualifying and the group stage (3 wins, 6 goals scored, none conceded), the Portuguese then produced an outstanding performance to knock out Italy in the quarter-finals (5-3 aet). In the most

thrilling match of the tournament, Rui Jorge's men raced into a 2-0 lead thanks to Dany Mota's superb brace – a bicycle kick followed by a fierce strike on the turn. After two quick goals took the score from 2-1 to 3-2 around the hour-mark, the Italians drew level at the death. However, with their opponents reduced to ten men, the Portuguese dug deep in extra time to clinch a semi-final place.

Although the other semi-final followed a much more traditional pattern, the young

Portuguese side produced a performance that was no less impressive as they saw off their Spanish neighbours, who had been widely tipped to win the competition. Their 1-0 win was secured thanks to an 80th-minute own goal by unfortunate defender Jorge Cuenca. Portugal held onto their narrow advantage despite being outplayed by a Spanish side thanks to a series of outstanding saves by Costa, who performed superbly throughout the tournament.



The Netherlands earned a surprise win against France in the quarter-finals.

### Spanish favourites, Dutch surprise

Spain were undoubtedly one of the biggest disappointments of the competition. Titleholders and five-time men's European Under-21 champions (a record shared with Italy), they boasted not only an illustrious history but an outstanding recent record. Undefeated in ten qualifiers and three group matches, the Spaniards did not concede a single goal until the quarter-finals.

To everyone's surprise, Croatia's Luka Ivanušec brought this impressive run to an end by equalising from the penalty spot in stoppage time. His goal merely delayed the Spaniards' victory, however, Javi Puado netting the winner in extra time (2-1).

With the likes of Martín Zubimendi, Óscar Mingueza, Brahim Díaz, Bryan Gil and more already making names for themselves at the highest levels of the game, Spain dominated their semi-final against Portugal, including a near miss

by captain Marc Cucurella, who hit the post. And yet it was not to be, Cuenca's own goal denying the Spaniards a third consecutive final appearance against Germany and setting the tone for a summer in which numerous Spanish teams played attractive football and went a long way, only to make a disappointing exit (losing in the EURO 2020 semi-finals and the final of the men's Olympic football tournament).

For the Netherlands, on the other hand, this latest U21 EURO was far from disappointing. They began the knockout stage by pulling off the biggest shock of the quarter-finals with a 2-1 win over France. Making their first finals appearance since 2013, Dani de Wit and his teammates surprised the French with two goals by Myron Boadu, the second finishing off a perfect counterattack in added time. It was a move that truly embodied the potency of a Dutch side that made all

opposing defences suffer, scoring a total of 57 goals in 15 matches (qualifiers and final tournament combined).

Despite their strength in attack, Erwin van de Looi's men never really threatened the Germans in the semi-finals and were unable to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, champions in 2006 and 2007.

### Disappointment for France

France were many people's pre-tournament favourites, second only to Spain. With Ibrahima Konaté, Dayot Upamecano, Houssem Aouar and an attacking trio of Jonathan Ikoné, Odsonne Édouard and Moussa Diaby, the French side had high hopes of making a winning return to a competition in which they had failed to qualify for the previous seven final tournaments.

In their quarter-final, an Upamecano strike gave the enterprising French the lead, but two surprise goals by Boadu, who scored with the Dutch side's only two shots on target, saw them lose 2-1. France were the only side to lose a quarter-final in normal time.

Croatia, meanwhile, took Spain to extra time before succumbing to a 2-1 defeat. After denying England a place in the quarter-finals, the Croatians confirmed their status as party poopers by becoming the first team to score against Spain in qualifying or the final tournament.

Another side defeated in extra time were Italy, who lost 5-3 to Portugal. Five-time European Under-21 champions, the Italians paid the price for their indiscipline, culminating in defender Matteo Lovato's sending off at the start of extra time. Red cards were a recurring theme for the Italians, who had five players sent off during the group stage, finishing every match with a numerical disadvantage.

The Danes may not have suffered the same disciplinary problems as the Italians, but they were no less disappointed to exit at the quarter-final stage. The only team other than Spain to finish the qualifiers and the group stage undefeated, Denmark very nearly knocked out future champions Germany (2-2 after extra time, 5-6 on penalties). Having been pegged back at the end of normal time, the Scandinavians themselves then fell behind and equalised in extra time before losing out in an epic penalty shoot-out. 🍀



Germany's Vitaly Janelt beats Portugal's Daniel Bragança to the ball in the final.



Italy v Spain, as in the EURO 2020 semi-finals, has become something of a knockout stage European classic.

## CAN ANYONE STOP ITALY?

Hot on the heels of EURO 2020, the European champions are preparing to host the UEFA Nations League finals in Milan and Turin from 6 to 10 October 2021. Can Italy – like Portugal in 2019 – make it a double?

**W**ith EURO 2020 having been delayed by a year, there is, of course, much less of a gap between the two competitions this time, but the parallels are obvious. After being crowned European champions in 2016, Portugal confirmed their status as the continent's top team by winning the inaugural Nations League finals they hosted in 2019. Now, Italy are gearing up to host the four-team tournament, a matter of months after succeeding Portugal as European champions. It is hard to see beyond Roberto Mancini's men as favourites to follow in Portugal's footsteps again.

That said, the calibre of the field is extremely high. Italy will be joined in the finals by Spain (semi-finalists at EURO 2020), Belgium (Europe's most consistent performers over the last four years) and France (2018 World Cup winners).

With its simple format of semi-finals, final and match for third place, the tournament will produce a new Nations League champion in the space of five days. Here we preview the semi-final pairings that were drawn in December 2020, shortly after the end of the league phase.

### Italy v Spain Wednesday 6 October, Milan

It has become the European classic of the past 15 years. In July, the Italians beat Spain 4-2 on penalties following a closely contested 1-1 draw in the EURO 2020 semi-finals, but this was just the latest instalment in an ongoing, intense rivalry. The two countries have gone head to head in the knockout stages of the last four EUROS. And on each occasion apart from 2016, the team that came out on top went on to lift the cup: Spain in 2008 and 2012, Italy in 2021.

The Italians' confidence will be sky-high following their triumphant EURO campaign and a whopping 37-match unbeaten run that includes three wins and three draws in their Nations League group.

Since booking their place in the Nations League semi-finals with a 2-0 final-day win in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the legendary Giorgio Chiellini and his team-mates have taken things to another level, with Italy's many strengths clear for all to see in a truly outstanding EURO 2020 performance: superb goalkeeping from 22-year-old Gianluigi Donnarumma, subsequently named player of the tournament; defensive solidity embodied by the partnership

between Chiellini and Leonardo Bonucci; a midfield in which Marco Verratti and Jorginho performed miracles; and a cluster of attacking players, each capable of producing match-winning moments, none more so than Federico Chiesa, who was a revelation for Italy at EURO 2020.

Despite all the talent at their disposal, Italy's path to the final at EURO 2020 was far from smooth, and it was Spain who posed them the greatest challenge, dominating the semi-final in the purest Spanish style. Holding possession throughout the tournament, Luis Enrique's men were able to impose their style and put their opponents on the back foot for lengthy periods.

If their attack remains as potent as it was against Slovakia and Croatia at this summer's EURO, Pedri and his team-mates could pose the Italians some serious problems. They set out their stall against Germany to book their place in the finals, perfectly demonstrating their destructive powers with a 6-0 win and inflicting on the Germans their heaviest ever defeat in an official match.

### Belgium v France Thursday 7 October, Turin

The wound may be older but it is certainly no less deep: while the Spanish already have an opportunity to avenge their EURO 2020 defeat against Italy, Belgium have been waiting more than three years for an opportunity to settle the score with France, who shattered their golden generation's dreams of lifting the World Cup in the 2018 semi-finals.

That narrow 1-0 win for France left the normally flamboyant Belgians licking their wounds, but the Red Devils bounced back in style, breezing through the EURO 2020 qualifiers and their Nations League group (15 points out of a possible 18, 16 goals scored, best attack across all 14 groups).

Nevertheless, despite a strong run of results – three victories in the group stage followed by a round-of-16 win over Portugal – Belgium appeared less dominant at EURO 2020, as illustrated by their 2-1 quarter-final defeat at the hands of Italy.

The competitions – and the years – go by and the Nations League finals represent a wonderful opportunity for Belgium to win a title that would put the seal, once and for all, on a golden era for Kevin De Bruyne and co. However, in order for this to happen, they need to overcome France in what will be the two neighbours' 75th encounter.

Having started EURO 2020 as favourites following their World Cup win, Didier Deschamps' side exited through the back door at the hands of Switzerland (3-3, 4-5 on penalties). Their surprise defeat to the Swiss highlighted a defensive frailty that has dogged the French team of late, even though a solid defence has been a hallmark of all their previous international successes. Nevertheless, France remain a force to be reckoned with, thanks in particular to an outstanding attacking triumvirate of Karim Benzema, Antoine Griezmann and Kylian Mbappé, and a midfield duo comprising Ngolo Kanté and Paul Pogba that was a rare source of satisfaction for France at the EURO. Les

Bleus boasted the best record in the Nations League group stage (five wins and one draw) and have lost only 2 of their last 12 matches against Belgium. Is that enough to make them favourites to reach the final? 🇧🇪



Since the 2018 World Cup, Belgium have been waiting to settle the score with France, who deprived them of their first final.



# SUPER CUP NUMBER TWO FOR CHELSEA

The traditional curtain-raiser to the new European season sparked hope for a return to a better form of normality, both on and off the field.

Seeing a pocket of yellow amidst a sea of blue inside Belfast's National Football Stadium at Windsor Park was a source of both liberation and hope as fans flocked back to celebrate what is hoped will be the return to a new, improved normality for European football – on and off the field. After 17 months of disrupted spectator service, the 2021 UEFA Super Cup provided a welcome return to former times as Chelsea FC prevailed on penalties over Villarreal CF, the UEFA Champions League holders edging out the UEFA Europa League champions after more than two hours of entertainment for those providing colour and atmosphere inside a stadium filled to 70% of capacity, and for the millions of television viewers worldwide, enjoying the game with audio of genuine stadium atmosphere.

Before the teams lined up to contest the first piece of silverware of the 2021/22 season, former England international Rio Ferdinand led 22 youngsters from different racial, cultural and religious backgrounds onto the field to promote the UEFA Foundation for Children, BT Sport and the Rio Ferdinand Foundation's joint initiative

Hope United. Aimed at raising awareness of discrimination and promoting inclusion through football, Hope United clearly set out its agenda on a night where hope formed the prevailing mood. "Football is one language, it brings people together, it makes people smile, and if you can get a worthwhile and meaningful message alongside football, then you're winning," said Ferdinand before withdrawing to his TV punditry to deliver more evocative messages in commentating on a match that set the stage for a new season of European football.

### New season, new faces

It was difficult to gauge who was dwarfing whom as Chelsea's pint-sized captain N'Golo Kanté led out his team with the Champions League trophy held out proudly in front of his chest; Raúl Albiol followed with his sinews stretched carrying the weighty Europa League trophy to its pedestal position as both teams lined up behind their respective prizes flanking the one they were keen on adding to their collection.

A new season also meant new faces, with Trevoh Chalobah making his Chelsea



11 August, Belfast

Chelsea FC – Villarreal CF 1-1 (1-0)  
6-5 pens

Sportsfile

Chelsea's Marcos Alonso breaks away from Villarreal's Yereemi Pino during the Super Cup match in Belfast.

debut after a successful loan spell at FC Lorient in Ligue 1, while another man plying his trade in France last term with Stade Reims, Boulaye Dia, lined up for his first competitive appearance – and he almost made an immediate impact when he picked up Gerard Moreno's pass, but failed to spot Yereemi Pino in space. Pino was soon back at the other end of the field providing defensive cover as Chelsea kept Villarreal's full-backs firmly on the back foot, nullifying one of the most productive outlets of Unai Emery's team on their route to glory in Gdańsk in May.

### Kepa does it again

With Callum Hudson-Odoi and Marcos Alonso able to press down their respective wings, Chelsea conversely demonstrated superiority on the flanks and Alonso's searching ball down the left fed Kai



Havertz to cut the ball back for Hakim Ziyech to stroke the Blues in front. It was a deserved lead for Thomas Tuchel's men, and one the majority blue-clad fans appreciated as the volume rose a notch.

Villarreal had to throw caution to the wind and gamble to wrestle back the upper hand in the wide areas, and they almost pulled themselves back onto terms on the stroke of half-time when Gerardo Moreno picked out his namesake Alberto, whose volley crashed back off the underside of the crossbar. Gerardo Moreno scored seven goals and assisted a further three in 12 UEFA Europa League appearances last term, including netting the opener in the final, so it was hardly surprising that it was he who brought the Yellow Submarine back up for air with the equaliser.

After seeing one curling effort turned

onto the post by Edouard Mendy, he exchanged passes with Dia and made sure his next shot was beyond Mendy's reach as it arched into the far corner. The tide was turning, just as it had late in the Europa League final in which Villarreal grew as the game wore on, but as has become a trend in recent years, with six of the last eight UEFA Super Cup matches going to extra time – including the last three – an extra half hour was required.

Chelsea had arguably the best opportunity of extra time with Christian Puljišić stabbing wide, but as the additional drama of penalties loomed large, Tuchel drew the last card from his sleeve, tossing in his joker Kepa.

Villarreal, who edged out Manchester United FC with the odd penalty in 22 to lift the Europa League in Gdańsk in May, had a perfect record of three UEFA penalty

shoot-out wins, while Chelsea were the only club ever to have lost a UEFA Super Cup on penalties, doing so twice. Past performance proved unreliable as an indication of how events would unravel in Belfast, though, even if Havertz's first spot kick was saved by Sergio Asenjo.

After Gerard Moreno and César Azpilicueta converted, Kepa showed why Tuchel had sent him on by denying Aïssa Mandi. After a succession of successful spot kicks which suggested a night to rival Gdańsk, Kepa did it again to deny Albiol and earn Chelsea the title.

After the agony of penalty shoot-out defeats in 2013 and 2019, the Premier League club followed their 1998 success with their second title, the ninth by an English club on a hope-inspiring night, not just for European football. 🏆

# TIME CALLED ON THE AWAY GOALS RULE

As decided by the UEFA Executive Committee ahead of the new season, the away goals rule no longer applies in UEFA club competitions. It has been a feature for over 50 years but looks increasingly out of place in the modern-day game.



Paris Saint-Germain will remain the last club to benefit from the away goals rule, against FC Bayern München in the quarter-finals of the 2020/21 UEFA Champions League.

“The away goals rule has been an intrinsic part of UEFA competitions since it was introduced in 1965. However, the question of its abolition has been debated at various UEFA meetings over the last few years,” said the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin in response to the Executive Committee’s decision to abolish the rule, which was announced on 24 June. “Although there was no unanimity of views, many coaches, fans and other football stakeholders have questioned its fairness and have expressed a preference for the rule to be abolished.”

The away goals rule has been integral to UEFA club competitions since it was first introduced at the start of the 1965/66 season, albeit only in the European Cup Winners’ Cup. It quickly drew unanimous support and was rolled out to all UEFA competitions in 1969/70.

The brainchild of Hans Bangerter, UEFA general secretary from 1960 to 1988, the rule was brought in to address the defensive style of play that many away teams adopted at the time. With poor travel conditions the norm, visiting teams often arrived tired, with the primary aim of conceding as few goals as possible. Not the best recipe for entertaining football.

### Home advantage less significant nowadays

More than 50 years after its introduction, the away goals rule still had many supporters, but it had also become increasingly incongruous thanks to the steady decline of home advantage over the years. There are many different factors behind this trend: travel conditions today are incomparable with those of the 1970s, pitch quality has improved, stadium security is much more strictly regulated, referees are less likely to be influenced by the crowd, etc., etc.

The statistics bear it out: in the 1970s, 61% of matches ended in victory for the home team and only 19% for the visitors; nowadays 47% of matches are won at home and 30% away. The gap between the number of goals scored by home teams (down from 2.02 to 1.58) and away teams (up from 0.95 to 1.15) has also closed considerably over the last 50 years.

“It is fair to say that home advantage is nowadays no longer as significant as it once was,” said the UEFA president. “Taking into consideration the consistency across Europe in terms of styles of play, and many different factors which have led to a decline in home advantage, the UEFA Executive Committee has taken the correct decision in adopting the view that it is no longer appropriate for an away goal to carry more weight than one scored at home.”

### Paris Saint-Germain the final beneficiaries

The history books will show that the Hungarians of Budapest Honvéd FC were the first to benefit from the away goals rule, at the expense of Czech side FK Dukla Praha in the 1965/66 Cup Winners’ Cup round of 16, and that Paris Saint-Germain were the last, against FC Bayern München in a 2020/21 UEFA Champions League quarter-final (3-3 on aggregate, with Paris winning 3-2 in Munich before losing the second leg at home 1-0). Proof, if proof were needed, that home advantage is not what it used to be, with the away team victorious in both legs of that last tie.

Ironically, whereas the rule’s introduction led to a dramatic change in the approach taken by away teams, in recent times it has tended to curb the attacking freedom of certain home sides, as the UEFA president pointed out: “The impact of the rule now runs counter to its original purpose as, in fact, it now dissuades home teams – especially in first legs – from attacking, because they fear conceding a goal that would give their opponents a crucial advantage. There is also criticism of the unfairness, especially in extra time, of obliging the home team to score twice when the away team has scored.”

Another of the reasons for introducing the away goals rule was to remove the need for play-off matches between teams who finished the two legs on equal terms. Its abolition inevitably means that more second leg matches will require extra time, which should result in more twists and turns, and even greater excitement to come! 🌟

# CLUB FINAL VENUES AND AWAY GOALS

The UEFA Executive Committee has taken several important decisions recently, including confirming the hosts for upcoming club competition finals and abolishing the away goals rule in all UEFA club competitions.

## 24 June

The Executive Committee decided to remove the long-standing away goals rule from all UEFA club competitions (men's, women's and youth) as of the 2021/22 qualifying phases (see pages 38 and 39).

Ties in which teams score the same number of goals over two legs will no longer be decided on the number of goals scored away from home. Instead, two 15-minute periods of extra time will be played at the end of the second leg. If the teams score the same number of goals or no goals during extra time, a penalty shoot-out will determine the winning team.

## 11 July

The Executive Committee, meeting in London, agreed to increase UEFA's investment in the fight against match-fixing. An independent feasibility study demonstrated that intelligence,

investigation and prevention were the main sectors requiring reinforcement.

An action plan focuses, among other objectives, on strengthening cooperation with relevant international and local authorities, and increasing expertise and support for key persons fighting match-fixing at national and international levels.

The committee also ruled that from the 2022/23 season, UEFA member associations must appoint a dedicated football social responsibility (FSR) officer and develop a comprehensive FSR strategy as of the following season.

## 16 July

Following the relocation of the 2021 UEFA Champions League final from Istanbul to Porto, the Executive Committee awarded the 2023 UEFA Champions League final to the Atatürk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul.

The 2023 UEFA Champions League final originally to be played in Munich will now

be played there in 2025, while Wembley Stadium in London remains the venue for the 2024 UEFA Champions League final.

The Executive Committee also decided that the UEFA club competition season kick-off event, including the draws for the men's club competition group stages, would take place in Istanbul at the end of August both this year and in 2022.

Following the withdrawal of hosting rights for EURO 2020 from two of the original host cities, the Executive Committee approved a settlement agreement that includes the staging of future club competition finals, recognising the efforts and financial investment made by the two cities in preparing for the tournament.

Consequently, Dublin will host the UEFA Europa League final in 2024, while Bilbao will host the UEFA Women's Champions League final in 2024 and the UEFA Europa League final in 2025. 🌐

The 2023 UEFA Champions League final will be played at the Atatürk Olympic Stadium in Istanbul.





# A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

Attendees representing the entire football community gathered in Nyon on 9 and 10 September for the first Convention on the Future of European Football.

**T**he two-day gathering marked the start of a landmark consultation process to unite European football and strengthen the future of the game for the benefit of all. First announced in May 2021, the convention will directly address issues facing football, particularly its recovery from the crisis caused by the global pandemic, but also to find solutions to the sport's longstanding challenges.

Over the coming months, participants will reflect on long-term policy and governance reforms needed to build a mutually sustainable future for football – and how working together can help create an environment for that evolution to take place.

The convention brings together representatives of the entire football community: national football associations, leagues, clubs, players, coaches, fans, agents, commercial partners and policymakers. The plenary format ensures a fair and proportionate representation of all the major stakeholders in European football. Both the European Union and the Council of Europe are supporting the convention, with high-level representatives participating as formal observers.

The participants exchanged views on four core areas fundamental to the foundations of European football, with working groups on each topic moderated by independent experts:

- How to optimise financial sustainability and responsibility within European football and identify measures to promote cost control mechanisms and sensible financial management.
- How to strengthen competitiveness, solidarity distributions and player development to maintain a competitive balance at all levels.
- What measures can be taken to safeguard the European sports model and pyramid structure.
- How to accelerate the professionalisation and sustainability of women's football.

For each topic, the working groups will identify collaborative and comprehensive actions that support both the short- and long-term positive development of the entire European football pyramid.

September's first gathering featured opening speeches by UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin, European Club

Association chairman Nasser Al-Khelaifi and European Leagues management board member Javier Tebas. In their remarks, vice-president of the European Commission Margaritis Schinas and Council of Europe director general for democracy Snežana Samardžić-Marković underlined their institutions' close partnerships with UEFA and their firm resolve to preserve the European sports model and protect its values and principles, especially solidarity.

The convention will reconvene in November for another round of consultations consisting of a final plenary session and further working group meetings. ⚽

“With this convention process, we will talk to each other, listen to each other, and find solutions together.”

**Aleksander Čeferin**  
UEFA President

# JORGINHO AND PUTELLAS TAKE THE UEFA PLAYER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

Alongside the UEFA club competition draws held in Istanbul on 26 and 27 August for the new season, UEFA announced the winners of its player of the year awards for last season.

**M**idfielders, both. But cast from different footballing moulds. Whereas forwards had taken centre stage in 2020, at the draw for the group stage of the 2021/22 UEFA Champions League in Istanbul, Jorginho and Alexia Putellas were hailed as winners of the men's and women's UEFA Player of the Year awards.

The award for Jorginho was akin to singing the praises of the archetypal unsung hero. After all, during Italy's run to the EURO 2020 title, he gave a passable

impression of the Invisible Man. He did not score a goal; did not provide any assists; and never stepped up to receive a Star of the Match award. But he was highly visible. Fabio Capello, captain of UEFA's team of technical observers at the event, had no qualms about saying after the final: "Italy won because Jorginho was the boss, the leader, everything". And, on the back of Chelsea's UEFA Champions League victory over Manchester City in Porto, lifting the EURO trophy at Wembley allowed Jorginho to become only the tenth

player ever to be champion of Europe with both club and country in the same year.

Acting as the controlling midfielder in front of the back four in Roberto Mancini's line-up, Jorginho covered just under 87km, successfully delivered 474 passes to team-mates and accounted for 48 of the 114 ball recoveries accumulated along with Marco Verratti and Nicolò Barella – his habitual accomplices in Italy's potent midfield trio. At Chelsea, he played variations on the same theme, performing the anchor role allowing N'Golo Kanté, his partner in the European champions' pivotal midfield positions, to shine as a modern box-to-box player.

Kanté, it has to be said, took third place (only 15 points behind Jorginho's winning total of 175) in the voting by an electorate comprising the 24 national team coaches from EURO 2020, 80 coaches from the clubs that played the group stages of the 2020/21 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League, and 55 journalists – one from each member association – selected by the ESM Group. Kevin De Bruyne separated the two Chelsea players, allowing midfielders to monopolise the podium ahead of prolific scorers Lionel Messi and Robert Lewandowski, winner in the previous season. An enormous gap of 91 points separated that quintet from the rest of the field.



Alexia Putellas captains Barcelona, the first Spanish club to win the UEFA Women's Champions League.



## The 2021 UEFA Awards

**UEFA Men's Player of the Year**  
Jorge Luiz Frello Filho 'Jorginho'

**UEFA Champions League  
Goalkeeper of the Season**  
Edouard Mendy

**UEFA Champions League  
Defender of the Season**  
Rúben Dias

**UEFA Champions League  
Midfielder of the Season**  
N'Golo Kanté

**UEFA Champions League  
Forward of the Season**  
Erling Haaland

**UEFA Women's  
Player of the Year**  
Alexia Putellas

**UEFA Women's Champions  
League Goalkeeper of the  
Season**  
Sandra Paños

**UEFA Women's Champions  
League Defender of the Season**  
Irene Paredes

**UEFA Women's Champions  
League Midfielder of the Season**  
Alexia Putellas

**UEFA Women's Champions  
League Forward of the Season**  
Jennifer Hermoso

**UEFA Europa League  
Player of the Season**  
Gerard Moreno

**UEFA Men's Coach of the Year**  
Chelsea FC head coach  
Thomas Tuchel

**UEFA Women's Coach  
of the Year**  
FC Barcelona head coach  
Lluís Cortés

**UEFA President's Award**  
Denmark's medical team and  
national team captain Simon Kjær



It was a bumper year for Jorginho, winning the Champions League with Chelsea and the EURO with Italy.

### Barça sweep the board

"Talent, quality, elegance, tactical sense and goals". That seven-word citation sums up the merits of Barcelona midfielder and captain Alexia Putellas, the first Spanish player to win the Women's Player of the Year award. Having first joined Barcelona as a 12-year-old, she returned at 18 to begin a senior career which has taken her to the highest levels of club and national team football in a left-side role that, if we compare with the midfield trio that stepped on to the men's podium, bears a close resemblance to De Bruyne's middle-to-front play. Putellas contributed 25 goals to Barça's league, cup and UEFA Champions League treble, including the penalty that put her team 2-0 up in the final of the latter competition and the assist to Aitana Bonmatí for the third of the four goals that defeated Chelsea and earned a historic first European crown for a Spanish club.

In the voting conducted by the coaches of the top 16 clubs in the UEFA Women's Champions League and 20 journalists specialising in women's football, Barça players took five of the top six places. Putellas was joined on the podium by two of her closest teammates, deep-lying striker Jenni Hermoso and Lieke Martens, her companion wider on the left. As the roll of honour shows, Barça completed a memorable season with a clean sweep of the positional honours in the women's category, along with the UEFA Women's Coach of the Year award for Lluís Cortés who, exploiting the lessons learned from Barça's 4-1 defeat in the 2019 final by Olympique Lyonnais shortly after taking over the Barça bench, traced development objectives – and successfully implemented them.

It was only the second time that UEFA had presented awards in the coaching category and it was significant in terms of standards of coach education that Germany has dominated both editions, with Thomas Tuchel taking the baton from Hansi Flick, winner with FC Bayern München in 2020. The Chelsea FC manager was given a close run by Roberto Mancini, widely supported for his work in lifting Italy from the historic disappointment of failing to qualify for the 2018 FIFA World Cup with an attack-minded playing philosophy which earned success at EURO 2020.

### Human and professional qualities

While Italy were winning the trophy, Denmark were winning our hearts. And not just for reaching the semi-finals with some exhilarating football. The whole of Planet Football shared the anguish of the Danish team and their fans after the traumatic collapse of Christian Eriksen during the match against Finland. And then, breathing an immense sigh of relief, celebrated his recovery after being brought back to life by the medical team who rushed to his rescue on the pitch and who, as a tribute to their collective response and expertise, have now received the UEFA President's Award from Aleksander Čeferin, along with the Denmark team captain Simon Kjær, in recognition of the players' dignified response. "We did what we could to help our friend," the centre-back humbly commented (see page 15). 🌟

# NEW FORMATS ADOPTED

The Executive Committee has approved a new format for UEFA's women's youth championships to support the development of elite youth players.

**A** league-style qualifying competition has been introduced for the European Women's Under-19 and Under-17 Championships (the 2019/20 and 2020/21 editions of which were cancelled because of the pandemic), based on the following key principles:

## Two leagues

For the first season, the teams entering each competition will be divided into two leagues (A and B) on the basis of their coefficient rankings. Each league comprises two rounds.

## Round 1

In each league, groups of four teams play mini-tournaments.

The winners of each mini-tournament in League B are promoted for round 2, while the teams that finish bottom of their groups in League A are relegated. Depending on the number of participating teams, additional teams may be promoted or relegated.

## Round 2

The League A group winners in round 2 qualify for the final tournament.

The League B group winners are promoted for round 1 of the next edition of the competition, and the team that finishes last in each League A group is relegated.

## Final tournament hosts

The final tournament hosts enter the qualifying competition on the basis of their coefficient and compete in rounds 1 and 2 just like all the other teams. Their place in the final tournament is, however, guaranteed, irrespective of their results in this preliminary stage.

The new format will ensure more competitive balance because all teams will play against similarly ranked opponents, while still giving every team the opportunity to qualify for each final tournament. It also guarantees every team a minimum of five or six competitive matches per season – all within the existing competition windows. Including the host teams in rounds 1 and 2 means they too benefit from competitive matches ahead of the final tournament.

This new format applies immediately, i.e. already in 2021/22.



## Women's U19

Round 1 of the new European Women's Under-19 Championship will take place during one of the international windows, either from 15 to 21 September or 19 to 25 October. A record 52 teams have entered, including debutants Andorra.

Round 1 will decide which teams are promoted and relegated ahead of round 2 in spring 2022. The six group winners and best runner-up in League B will move to League A, while the team that finishes last in each of the seven groups in League A will be relegated to League B.

The round 2 draw will be held in December 2021. The seven League A group winners in that round will join the hosts, Czech Republic, at the final tournament, from 27 June to 9 July 2022.

Teams will also be promoted and relegated between Leagues A and B for round 1 of next season's competition.



## Women's U17

Round 1 of the 2021/22 European Women's Under-17 Championship kicks off on 23 September, with a record 49 teams involved, including Luxembourg and Kosovo for the first time. The competition format is the same as for the Under-19 championship and involves the same number of promotions and relegations.

The round 2 draw will also be held in December 2021, with seven places up for grabs in the final tournament from 3 to 15 May 2022. The eighth place goes to hosts Bosnia and Herzegovina, who will compete in rounds 1 and 2 but qualify automatically, irrespective of their results.

The 2022 finals will also serve as the qualifying competition for the U-17 Women's World Cup in India from 11 to 30 October 2022.



Akin to the UEFA Nations League format, the women's youth competitions will now feature a league-style qualifying competition with promotion and relegation.

# POSTPONED COMPETITIONS RESUME

Whereas the 2020/21 UEFA Futsal Champions League was able to be completed in Croatia in early May, all the other futsal competitions had to be put on hold for a while.



Back in May, Belgium eliminated Gibraltar on penalties in the preliminary round of Women's Futsal EURO 2022.

## Futsal EURO

Serbia and Belarus, the two runners-up left seeking a ticket to the finals, go head to head in November for the remaining place. Fourteen teams have already qualified for the tournament alongside the Netherlands, who will be hosting the event from 19 January to 6 February 2022.

The qualifiers kicked off on 29 January 2020 with a change of format now that the finals have gone from a 12-team event held every two years to a 16-team tournament every four years.

### Qualified so far

**Hosts:** Netherlands

**Group winners:** Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Italy, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Russia, Spain

**Six best runners-up:** Finland, Georgia, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine

## Women's Futsal EURO

There were 24 teams in the starting blocks for the second Women's Futsal EURO, including debutants Gibraltar and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The matches were postponed from 2020/21 to 2021/22 as a result of the pandemic.

The three preliminary round group winners, Belgium, the Netherlands and Slovakia, advance to the main round, where they join the 13 teams given byes. The four group winners in the main round, which is scheduled for 20 to 24 October, will qualify for the knockout finals, organised by one of the semi-finalists or at a neutral venue on 24/25 and 26/27 March next year.

## U19 Futsal EURO

Spain will host the second European Under-19 Futsal Championship final tournament in September 2022, as decided by the UEFA Executive Committee in April. The proposed venue is the 6,500-capacity Olivo Arena in the Andalusian city of Jaén. Originally scheduled for 2021, the eight-team event had to be postponed because of the pandemic.

The draw for the qualifying competition was held in Nyon on 30 August (results on UEFA.com). The preliminary round is scheduled to take place from 2 to 7 November, the main round from 15 to 20 March and the final tournament from 4 to 10 September 2022.

## Futsal Champions League

The UEFA Futsal Champions League returns to its regular format in 2021/22. The season kicked off at the end of August with the preliminary round, for which 32 teams were divided into eight groups of four for single-venue mini-tournaments. The winners and the best runner-up qualified for the main round, where they join the 23 teams that received byes.

### Match calendar

**Main round:** 26–31 October 2021

**Elite round draw:** 3 November

**Elite round:** 30 November – 5 December

**Finals:** 28/29 April and 30 April – 1 May 2022 (venue to be confirmed)

## Futsal World Cup

Hosts Lithuania will be joined by six other European teams (Czech Republic, Kazakhstan, Portugal, Football Union of Russia\*, Serbia and Spain) at the ninth Futsal World Cup, postponed in 2020 and now scheduled to take place from 12 September to 3 October 2021. Matches will be played at Kaunas Arena, Vilnius Arena and Klaipėda Arena.

*\* In accordance with the World Anti-Doping Code and a December 2020 decision by the Court of Arbitration for Sport, the team will participate as neutral athletes of their national sports federation.*

### Groups

**Group A:** Lithuania, Venezuela, Kazakhstan, Costa Rica

**Group B:** Uzbekistan, Guatemala, Football Union of Russia, Egypt

**Group C:** Thailand, Portugal, Morocco, Solomon Islands

**Group D:** Panama, Czech Republic, Vietnam, Brazil

**Group E:** Angola, Japan, Paraguay, Spain

**Group F:** Argentina, USA, Serbia, Iran

The top two in each group and the four best third-place teams will advance to the knockout stage.

### Match calendar

**Group stage:** 12–20 September

**Round of 16:** 22–24 September

**Quarter-finals:** 26/27 September

**Semi-finals:** 29/30 September

**Final and third-place match:** 3 October



# PILOT NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FINANCIAL BENCHMARKING REPORT

The pandemic has had a significant impact on key revenue streams for national football associations. The UEFA Grow programme has responded by expanding the financial management services offered to UEFA's member associations. One of those new resources is a pilot national association financial benchmarking report, sent to all the associations in June 2021.

The European National Association Footballing Landscape examines the evolution of national association finances over ten years (2010–19), before the COVID-19 pandemic struck. The pandemic has had serious ramifications for all aspects of the football ecosystem, including the national associations. As the pandemic is still with us, its impact on UEFA's member associations will be analysed in future reports.

The national association financial benchmarking report is aimed at enhancing transparency among national associations, while respecting limits and commercial sensitivities. The UEFA club

licensing benchmarking report has been hugely successful since its inception in 2005 and it is hoped that the national association version will encounter the same level of success.

The major growth in European football (club football and national associations) during the decade under review is plain to see from the report.

The report covers a period marked by many changes, including the centralisation of broadcasting rights for UEFA men's senior national team matches (EURO and World Cup qualifiers, UEFA Nations League and friendlies). This has had a tremendously positive impact on

broadcasting revenue for many associations in terms of quantum and predictability, which has helped many of them to plan their activities in a more structured fashion.

During the same period, we also saw the expansion of the European Championship final round from 16 to 24 teams and the introduction of the UEFA Nations League, both of which have been very successful.

The benchmarking report will be followed by access to interactive dashboards that will enable finance directors to analyse in more detail UEFA's financial database and its relevance to their own associations.



**€2.6bn**  
Cumulative national association revenue in 2019



**56%**  
National association revenue growth since 2010



**178%**  
Increased investment in women's football between 2010 and 2019



“I would like to thank you for this report. It is yet another good reference for national associations, and in particular the peer group analysis, which enables benchmarking in the right perspective.”

**Angelo Chetcuti**  
General secretary of the Malta Football Association

**Peer groups**

Many national associations have very different business models, differing levels of reliance on UEFA and FIFA income sources, differing structures in terms of the operation of their national leagues and differing levels of reinvestment in the game. Taking this into account, UEFA has set up peer groups to help similar-sized associations to benchmark against each other and encourage enhanced financial knowledge sharing and collaboration.

**Focus on financial management**

In addition to the pilot national association benchmarking report, the UEFA Grow

team has continued to develop the programme’s financial management pillar with the aim of raising standards and enabling increased investment and growth in European football.

The first round of regional finance director meetings for all 55 member associations has been completed, with the second round of meetings scheduled to take place between August and December 2021. The second round of meetings will focus on specific areas of financial management and enable finance directors to share their experiences in areas such as procurement, risk management and ERP systems.

Following on from the success of the finance essentials course held in September 2020, a five-day financial management compact course was held in April 2021 for general secretaries and board members who wished to gain a deeper understanding of financial management. The course focused on key areas of the financial management cycle, including governance, liquidity planning, KPIs and managing reserves. There were several expert keynote speakers, including Paul Cooke, vice-president of the Football Association of Ireland; Josef Koller, UEFA’s finance director; and Jeremy Cottino from AS Monaco. The course was very successful and a further course is planned in November 2021.

The UEFA Grow team is also working on developing a financial management model that will show the key areas of the financial management cycle and be central to knowledge sharing and best practice in financial management. This will be supplemented by academic presentations, national association case studies and practical tools and resources to help associations to implement changes in their financial management. 🌐

“The national association financial benchmarking report is valuable for enabling national associations of all sizes to benchmark in peer groups against each other. Many national associations have different business models in terms of income sources, league structures, revenue streams and costs. All this information is helpful for the German Football Association to improve on all levels and to think about new opportunities.”

**Markus Holzherr**, finance director at the German Football Association

# REFEREES URGED TO MAINTAIN 'FEEL-GOOD FACTOR'

In August, Europe's top referees gathered for their pre-season course in Vienna, with UEFA Referees Committee chairman Roberto Rosetti encouraging them to set even higher benchmarks in 2021/22.

**R**oberto Rosetti called on UEFA's match officials to help sustain the positive feeling currently surrounding European refereeing (see pages 12 and 13) as the new season gets under way. "We start from zero again," he emphasised to almost 100 officials. "The hard work begins here."

With the profile of women's football also set to reach new heights this season thanks to the new-style UEFA Women's Champions League and next year's Women's EURO in England, the Vienna course served to set in motion a crucial campaign for female officials as they look to continue their splendid development in tandem with the constant evolution of the women's game.

## Protecting the players – and the game

Along with fitness tests, the two-day course in Vienna focused on UEFA's refereeing guidelines, and the referees were given a detailed briefing by the deputy chairman of the Referees Committee, Hugh Dallas, and UEFA refereeing officers Vlado Sajin and Dagmar Damková on what is expected of them this season in the overall drive to achieve uniform and consistent decision-making.

Key topics included penalty-area incidents, the handball laws that are now in force for the new campaign after being applied at EURO 2020, and the need for referees to take strong action against reckless challenges and serious foul play which could endanger a player's safety. "We're continuing to put priority on protecting not only the players, but also the image of the game," Rosetti explained.

Almost 100 match officials gathered in Vienna at the beginning of August for their pre-season course.

Referees also received important instructions on how to act in cases of on-field concussion. In addition, the calm reaction of English referee Anthony Taylor when Denmark's midfielder Christian Eriksen required emergency medical treatment after collapsing on the field in the EURO match against Finland was highlighted as an example to follow if such critical situations arose.

## VAR in focus

The coming season will see UEFA fine-tuning and expanding its video assistant referee (VAR) activities. Rosetti said: "We are also introducing VAR in the European Qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup, as well as in the UEFA Europa League group stage, which demonstrates the major impetus that

UEFA is giving to the system." Priority attention will also be given to VAR for the female referees, given that the system will be deployed at the coming Women's EURO.

## Keeping the respect

Rosetti expressed the hope that the spirit of respect that characterised relations between referees, players and coaches at EURO 2020 will carry over into the new season. "We're working together with former players, in priority with [UEFA chief of football development and ex-Barcelona, Paris Saint-Germain, Ajax and Inter Milan player] Maxwell Sherrer, to develop a strategy in this respect – there's definitely a spirit that we'd like to keep." ⚽





UEFA  
**FOUNDATION**  
*for children*

# FOOTBALL UNITED AGAINST ONLINE HATE

UEFA

**T**he UEFA Foundation for Children used the opening ceremony at this year's UEFA Super Cup match between Chelsea and Villarreal to raise awareness about online hate in sport and among young people with the help of Hope United, a campaign launched by BT, broadcasters of the UEFA Super Cup. Hope United brought together a diverse team of footballers from England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland with the aim of driving change and giving digital skills to people on how to protect themselves and others online.

During the pre-match ceremony, children presented the Unite Against Hate

banner and read a message of hope promoting respect and solidarity online. BT Sport hosted a match involving children aged between 14 and 17 from community projects across Northern Ireland that are helping to bridge the sectarian divide and care for refugees who have settled there.

Footballing legends Glenn Hoddle and Joe Cole acted as coaches for the two Hope United sides for the match, which was organised by the Irish FA and treated like a professional match in that it was filmed by six cameras and presented by Rio Ferdinand, Eni Aluko and Jake Humphrey, with Darren Fletcher and Steve McManaman in the commentary booth. 📺



## UEFA foundation awards

Nineteen organisations have been rewarded for the daily support they provide to vulnerable children. This year, €1m has been shared equally among the awardees. Each therefore receives €52,630.

A full list of the 2021 UEFA Foundation for Children award winners is available on the foundation's website ([uefafoundation.org](http://uefafoundation.org)).



## Le Sommer named new foundation ambassador

The UEFA Foundation for Children has appointed Eugénie Le Sommer as its first female ambassador. The French international and captain of the Olympique Lyonnais women's team is looking forward to shining a spotlight on the foundation's initiatives, in particular its promotion of gender equality in sport and the empowerment of women. She follows in the footsteps of other international footballers such as Croatian midfielder Ivan Rakitić, who also recently became an ambassador to help promote the foundation's work around the world.



FAI president Gerry McAnaney, FAI CEO Jonathan Hill and chairperson Roy Barrett.

# FAI PRESENTS OUTLINE STRATEGY FOR 2022–25

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) commenced the consultation process around a draft strategic plan for 2022–25 with members of the newly constituted general assembly at a virtual annual general meeting.

BY GARETH MAHER

**T**he association's CEO, Jonathan Hill, outlined the key elements that will enable the FAI to map out the future of the country's biggest participation sport across all levels of the game. He said that the association's vision for the future was to utilise football to inspire and unite the nation, grow participants and deliver the best footballing experience for everyone.

Core objectives of the draft strategy document are:

- Driving grassroots football as the heart of the game

- Creating football pathways for all
- Developing the full potential of football for women and girls
- Inspiring a new future for the League of Ireland
- Building for international success
- Transforming football facilities and infrastructure

The CEO also explained how the FAI will deliver on this draft strategy by:

- Building a best-in-class, fit-for-purpose organisation
- Embracing digital opportunity

- Building a trusted and respected brand
- Driving investment to achieve the FAI's strategic goals
- Developing a collaborative and inclusive culture

"The new draft strategy document for 2022–25 will lay out the road map for a vibrant and transformed FAI that will deliver the very best foundations for the success of our game at all levels, from tournament qualification for our national teams to consistent European results for our men's and women's League of Ireland clubs and real growth in participation for our grassroots adult amateur and underage leagues," said Jonathan Hill.

"All of this will enhance the enjoyment of our players, fans, coaches, officials and volunteers, without whom we have no game. Central to the development of that strategy is communication across all strands of the game in Ireland and we will consult widely in the next four months to understand our members' perspectives and seek their agreement on the key issues to be addressed over the next four years to shape our strategy. Our communication is now honest, open and collaborative with all stakeholders and this will be reflected in all discussions around the strategy, which will become their strategy over the next four months."

The association also confirmed the appointment of the chairs of key committees.

Sally Horrox, a consultant with UEFA, will chair the new Women's Football Strategic Committee, while former minister for foreign affairs Dermot Ahern will chair the National Leagues Committee. Packie Bonner will chair the International and High Performance Committee, with John Finnegan (Amateur & Youth) and Tom Browne (Underage) appointed as chairs of the other football committees.

Newly elected FAI board member Gary Twohig will chair the Commercial Committee, with Liz Joyce (Executive Performance & Remuneration), Catherine Guy (Governance), Gerry McAnaney (Nominations) and Robert Watt (Audit, Risk, Compliance & Finance) also confirmed as chairs of business committees. 🌐

## AMPUTEE NATIONAL TEAM CREATED

ANDI VERCANI



The football movement in Albania continues to grow and expand in new areas. One of those is amputee football, for which a national team has just been started.

The Red&Black SuperNational team, as they are known, made their international debut a few months ago with two friendly matches that were played in Greece against the Hellenic amputee team.

Amputee football is relatively unknown in Albania, but recognising the players of the national team serves to give them added strength and motivation, qualities that they already display in the best possible way every day.

The team's captain, Julian Çela, cannot hide his emotions when talking about the creation of the amputee national team:



"Sport is really important, especially when you see how life can change at any moment, as happened to each of us.

would still follow their passion, but they love the game so passionately and give their best."

These boys have gathered the strength to stand and follow their passion. When you see them play football, you can understand that football can change your life. They fly on the pitch, they are not amputees any more, they have wings. As an initiator of this team, I was dubious at first whether these boys

## STARTING 11 PROJECT

ALEKSANDR ALEINIK



In June, the Belarus Football Federation (ABFF) launched another promising project with the support of the UEFA HatTrick programme. The Starting 11 project entails 11 new artificial pitches in different regions of the country – eight full-size and three smaller artificial pitches, all of FIFA Quality Pro standard.

New full-size pitches have already been installed in Grodno (SCS Neman), Kalinkovichi (Youth Football School No. 2), Svetlogorsk (Bumazhnik Stadium), Gomel (Lokomotiv Stadium), Rechitsa (Central Stadium) and Minsk (RGUOR Stadium) and are in full use by teams from the second and third divisions of the Belarusian championship as well as reserve and youth teams.

The remaining two full-size pitches – in Orsha (Youth Football School No. 2) and Borisov (Youth Football School No. 2) and two of the smaller artificial pitches – in Soligorsk and Grodno – are due to be opened by the end of this year.

The project has been made possible thanks to the support of the local authorities, which have borne the costs of preparing the grounds and improving the adjacent territories.

This initiative is of great importance in the context of the ABFF's plans to develop

football infrastructure in Belarus. As stressed repeatedly by the leadership of the football federation, the development and improvement of the material and technical base is one of the key components of the further development of football in Belarus.



## MARIJAN KUSTIĆ SUCCEEDS DAVOR ŠUKER AS PRESIDENT

NIKA BAHTIJAREVIĆ

 At the Croatian Football Federation (HNS) general assembly held in late July, Marijan Kustić was unanimously elected as the federation's new president, while Tomislav Svetina was named as the HNS's new executive director. Marijan Kustić previously served as a member of the HNS executive committee, before taking on the role of director of infrastructure and competitions at the federation in 2018. He was named executive director of the HNS in early 2019 and he will now succeed Davor Šuker as its president.

"This is a big, emotional moment for me, especially because this is the first time in our history that a candidate has received the unanimous support of all of the county football federations. I've been a part of the Croatian Football Federation for eight years as a member, and all those years have been spent continuously

working on the growth of Croatian football. I would like to thank Davor Šuker for his work – I'm happy that he chose me as the executive director, and

we had an excellent working relationship. I'm sure that the HNS will continue improving under its new leadership," said Kustić upon his election.

Another new recruit is former Croatia international Stipe Pletikosa, who will take on the role of technical director for the men's senior and Under-21 national teams – just in time for an extremely busy autumn, which promises to treat fans of Croatian football to many a thrilling match.



## A SPECIAL CEREMONY

ANDY WALKER

 England's EURO 2020 squad celebrated their unique place in the national team's history during a special ceremony at St. George's Park in June.

All 26 players were the first internationals to be presented with their own commemorative legacy cap to mark their special place in the lineage of the Three Lions.

To honour England men's 1,000th game in November 2019, The FA adopted the tradition of legacy numbers.

From Robert Barker, England's goalkeeper in football's first international match in 1872, onwards, every individual to have represented the nation at men's senior level has his own unique number, with the digits having pride of place inside the collar of every matchday shirt.



From September 2021, all senior debutants will receive a special red velvet cap with their newly established legacy number embroidered on the front.

To formally launch the initiative, Gareth Southgate brought his squad together on the first day of their EURO 2020 tournament base camp at St. George's Park to present each of them with their own legacy caps.

From the current squad's longest-serving international, Jordan Henderson (1170), to recent debutant Sam Johnstone (1262), all were able to collectively acknowledge their part in England's history.

As fellow Three Lions, manager Southgate (1071) and coach Chris Powell (1103) were also handed their own legacy caps.

FINLAND

www.palloliitto.fi

## SPORT HIJABS FOR EVERY WILLING PLAYER

HINNI HIRVONEN



Sport has an important role in society when it comes to equality and discrimination. Therefore, the premier division of women's football in Finland, is donating a Nike Pro sport hijab to every player in the country who wants one.

The act is not only about providing everyone with functional sports equipment but also about building equity in sport.

"Finland is known for being a country of equal opportunities. However, we know that there is still a lot to be done as Finland is becoming an ever more diverse society. By donating hijabs, we want to show our dedication to making football accessible to everyone," said Heidi Pihlaja, head of women's football development at the Football Association of Finland.

The FA of Finland promotes equality that accepts everyone as they are regardless of their religious beliefs, the colour of their skin or other attributes and identities. Last year, it challenged existing



FA of Finland

attitudes in sport by removing the word 'woman' from the name of the national league. Changing the name to National League (Finnish: Kansallinen Liiga) sparked discussion around the world. In 2019, the association announced equal pay for female and male national team players.

"Many view sport as an impartial party when it comes to societal issues. However, we think that we have the power to make a difference by actively taking part in discussions that change attitudes," said Ari Lahti, president of the Football Association of Finland.

GEORGIA

www.gff.ge

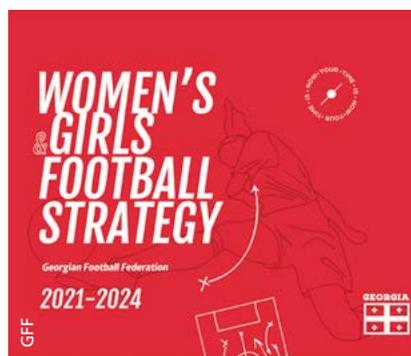
## WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STRATEGY – YOUR TIME IS NOW

TATA BURDULI



The Georgian Football Federation (GFF), in cooperation with UEFA experts, has devised a four-year strategy for the development of women's football, titled Your Time Is Now.

"One of the GFF's main priorities is the development of women's football. We have been working towards this goal since 2016. We have established a regular domestic league championship and implemented projects that serve to develop girls' football across the whole country. As a result of our targeted activities and projects, we now have more than 1,600 female players. In 2016, the figure was no more than 120.



"This is only the beginning. We still have a long way to go to achieve the full potential of women's football in Georgia.

"Devising the strategy is a historic development for the women's game here, and is fully in line with the objectives which we have set for ourselves," said the GFF president, Levan Kobiashvili.

"The main objective of the strategy is to create a strong support structure in our communities and clubs, allowing our coaches, referees and volunteers to develop and grow. To ensure long-term success, we must work with our partners to establish a positive and inspirational perception of women's football and create safe, sustainable and welcoming environments for all girls and women who wish to play the game."

GERMANY

www.dfb.de

## NEW VIDEO SERIES ON FOOTBALL-RELATED ISSUES

THOMAS HACKBARTH



The German Football Association (DFB) is exploring new ways of sharing ideas with Germany's 25,000 amateur football clubs. 'Jimmy Unterwegs' ('Jimmy goes out and about') is a new series being aired on DFB-TV to raise awareness of issues such as voluntary work, fair play and environmental protection.

Jimmy Hartwig, 66-year-old three-time German title-winner with Hamburger SV, travels around the country, visiting clubs and investigating important football-related themes where they matter most.

Entertaining, innovative and hugely watchable, each episode covers a different topic, such as fair play, volunteering, hostility towards referees,



prevention of sexual abuse and environmental protection.

The focus is always on small clubs doing great things: beacons of the game providing new ideas for the future of football.

The first two episodes were released in German in August at [www.fussball.de](http://www.fussball.de) and [www.dfb.de](http://www.dfb.de).

GIBRALTAR

www.gibraltarf.com

## GIBRALTAR FOOTBALL ACADEMY LAUNCHED

STEVEN GONZALEZ



The Gibraltar FA is delighted to announce a new initiative aimed at the development of its young footballers. For the first time, all new youth football intakes (under-5 and under-6 categories) will now register with the Gibraltar Football Academy instead of with the association's member clubs.

The Gibraltar FA, and its member clubs believe that every child should have the right to participate without pressure, as well as the opportunity to fulfil their footballing potential, and this will now become a reality with the Gibraltar Football Academy, which will provide young footballers with a fun, safe and inclusive environment in which to learn the basics of the game.

A solid and detailed recruitment process has been overseen by the Gibraltar FA's technical department to ensure all the new academy coaches will be trained in basic first aid and safeguarding, and have passed all the relevant local authority vetting procedures, over and above their standard coaching badges and qualifications.

The academy will run throughout the year in line with school holidays and the academic year and will be open for all children entering reception or starting school, with the first sessions scheduled for the last week of September.



The academy has been created as part of the Gibraltar FA's commitment to youth and as part of its concept of the game as a fun and educational experience for children. It is the product of a year-long collaborative process between the association, Gibraltar's football clubs and other stakeholders within the football community.

Ivan Robba, Gibraltar FA general secretary, said: "The establishment of the academy is a hugely important step forward for youth football in Gibraltar. It marks a shift in focus to one of learning

and enjoyment, something all of us involved in Gibraltarian football have been striving to achieve for many years. I am particularly pleased that the academy is the outcome of the work carried out over the past year in close cooperation with our clubs, which have always been instrumental in youth football. This shows everyone that the football community, as one, is pulling in the same direction to ensure our children and our children's children can continue to learn and enjoy the game we love in a safe, comfortable environment."

GREECE

www.epo.gr

## 'FOOTBALL THROUGH THE EYES OF CHILDREN'

MICHAEL ZOLOTAS



In collaboration with teachers and parents, the stadium where the Greek Cup Final took place was filled with beautiful children's drawings.

The public may have been excluded from activities such as football because of the pandemic, but the Hellenic Football Federation's campaign ensured that the Olympic Stadium was filled instead with children's drawings depicting, among other ideas, the universality of football and the football team as a family.

This initiative of the Hellenic Football Federation (HFF) aimed to give a taste of the way in which the eyes and, especially, the souls of children perceive football and to see what could be learned from their perception of the game.

The president of the HFF, Theodoros Zagorakis, said: "The



message we've sent to society is clear and enthusiastic, just like children's eyes in front of a brand-new ball. Through this action we communicated

the fundamental values of football and a reminder that it will never cease to be, first and foremost, a game – a game that entertains and teaches, that is good for everyone and not a privilege for a few."

The activity has been added to the HFF's grassroots programme, which

has been awarded the highest status (gold) in UEFA's Grassroots Charter for all its educational, social and developmental activities.

HUNGARY

www.en.mlsz.hu

## VAR SUCCESSFULLY LAUNCHED IN HUNGARY

MÁRTON DINNYÉS



The Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) started to implement video assistant referees (VAR) in 2019 and now it has been confirmed that every top-flight stadium has been made technically fit to facilitate VAR, with the training of those referees selected to be involved in the project also having been completed – thanks to support from UEFA and FIFA.

Three experts sit in the buses in which VAR is administered: the video assistant referee, the video assistant referee's own assistant and the replay operator. At the same time as the introduction of VAR, the use of additional assistant referees behind each goal will cease in the top division.

The training of the referees consisted of nine overlapping stages, starting with theory training and ending with practical sessions. By successfully passing the online tests, the MLSZ has met all the FIFA requirements, so VAR has been a



feature of Hungarian men's premier league matches from the first round of fixtures this season. Communication and informing the supporters is also a key element of the project.

"I'm confident that the system will serve the referees well in premier league matches," said Attila Hanacsek, vice-chairman of the MLSZ refereeing committee. "Although the introduction of the system was delayed by the pandemic and the sad passing away of Sándor Puhl [former international referee and vice-chairman of the MLSZ refereeing committee until the time of his death], the Hungarian Football Federation and the referees have made significant efforts to ensure VAR is in place for top-tier matches from the start of this season."

The MLSZ expects the introduction of VAR and virtual offside line (VOL) technology to lead to more accurate decisions, but this does not mean, of course, that decisions which elicit disputes and emotional reactions will be eliminated immediately or entirely from football.

ICELAND

www.ksi.is

## REFEREES START DOING POST-MATCH INTERVIEWS

ÓMAR SMÁRASON

**KSI** Referees doing post-match interviews. Now there is an interesting thought. It not a new idea in European football, though, as it is something that has already been implemented in several countries on the continent in various formats. However, it is something new in Iceland. The concept has actually been discussed in detail several times at the Icelandic FA over the last decade or so, and has just been introduced. This is an ambitious step for Icelandic football, fully supported by the football association and referees themselves. The top referee group

attended a media training session organised by the FA's communications department with the participation of the local TV rights holder, with whom the FA is working closely.

Referees in matches played in the men's top division can now expect to receive a post-match interview request from the local host broadcaster, giving the ref an opportunity to explain key decisions in the match and give valuable insight into the challenging role of the referee within the game of football. The first few interviews



have already taken place with positive results, and, overall, the project, which will hopefully continue for the foreseeable future, has been well received by TV/ media and fans alike.

ISRAEL

www.football.org.il

## THE STORY OF SAPIR BERMAN

EITAN DOTAN

**ISRAEL** In an exciting and historic moment for Israeli football, referee Sapir Berman came out as a transgender woman at a press conference held at the Israel Football Association on 27 April, standing alongside the chairman and the CEO of the football referees association, Ronit Tirosh and Yariv Tepper.

Since the press conference, Berman has refereed Israeli premier league games as a woman.

Berman said at the press conference: "I am Sapir. I am 26 years old, I always saw myself as a woman and at a young age I did not know how to give it a name, but there was always an attraction to the female side, a kind of envy. And I lived with it, alongside a very masculine character – as a man, I was successful, as a referee, in my studies and with girls. In my family, they saw a man, but when I was alone I was a woman.

I divided these worlds because I realised that society would not accept me – and I continued like this; I continued for

26 years. Finally, I decided to come out, to show who I am. First of all for myself, for my soul. Also for my relatives, so that they will not see me suffer, because lately, before coming out, I was less than my real self.

"But here I am, sure of myself, I know I am doing the right thing. I know that the support is very broad, both in the



association, in my family and also with my friends. I hope society will become better and more inclusive for everyone, all sectors and all genders. We are here to change.

"The reaction has been very sympathetic, very warm. I am in a very masculine world, and I delayed coming out. I did not know how they would take it and if they would accept it. But in the end, I decided that I could not hide it anymore.

"In terms of my refereeing, nothing has changed – my abilities are the same as before."

Yariv Teper, CEO of the referees association, said: "Gender identity does not matter to us; what counts is the ability on the field, the performance. We judge only according to professional criteria, fitness tests, audit scores and daily conduct. She is a lovely girl who has always acted in accordance with procedures. We are happy that she is with us. We have referees who are gay and lesbian, and we do not consider it anything wrong."

LATVIA

www.lff.lv

## 100 YEARS MARKED WITH SPECIAL MATCH OF LEGENDS

TOMS ĀRMANIS



This year, the Latvian Football Federation is marking its centenary. Many football-related events have been taking place to honour this special anniversary, one of which stood out in particular – the match of legends between a world all-stars team and former players of the Latvian national team, held on the evening of 21 August at Skonto Stadium in Riga.

Latvia's team was formed around the squad that represented the country at EURO 2004 in Portugal – the biggest achievement in the history of Latvian football. They faced a very special world all-stars team consisting of former players from 13 different countries, with the likes of Māris Verpakovskis, Igors Stepanovs and Andrejs Rubins facing Luís Figo, Florent Malouda and Giorgos Karagounis.

The participants and spectators were greeted by opening statements from representatives of UEFA, FIFA and local authorities, while a few lucky spectators got the chance to test their skills in a special penalty shoot-out involving the players. The evening concluded with a rousing firework display.

The match itself ended in a 6-1 victory for the world all-stars legends. The goals were scored by Tomas Danilevičius (Lithuania), Nunu Gomes (Portugal), Ruslan Rotan (Ukraine) and Andrejs Rubins.

A separate tournament for young footballers took place in the morning of the legends match, when the youngsters had the chance to take photos with the legends and ask them questions during a Q&A session.



LIECHTENSTEIN

www.lfv.li

## NEW WOMEN'S FOOTBALL STRATEGY

ANTON BANZER



All over the world, women's football has been growing at an incredible pace in recent years. Thanks to the hard work of coaches and officials, Liechtenstein football clubs have had a hand in growing the women's game, resulting in a steady rise in player numbers and performance levels.

In 2015, the Liechtenstein Football Association (LFV) was able to set up national youth teams as well as a senior women's national team.

In its new national football strategy, entitled 'Gemeinsam.2026' (Together.2026), the LFV made it clear that women's football is now ready for the next stage in its development.

The women's game is not only one of the five priorities in this overall strategy; it also has, for the very first time, its own separate strategy entitled 'Frauen am Ball

2026' (Women on the Ball 2026).

The fruit of vision-casting discussions and workshops involving the LFV and the clubs, 'Frauen am Ball 2026' encompasses all existing projects together with new ideas and will play a crucial role in advancing women's football at both club and national association levels.

It comprises four priorities: improving talent identification, increasing participation, developing the clubs and placing a stronger focus on various aspects of elite football.

In the spirit of 'Gemeinsam.2026', the LFV intends to step up its collaboration with clubs and stakeholders to continue the development of women's football during its next strategy period. It will set a good example in accordance with the principle that all partners are hugely important to the strategy's success.

'Frauen am Ball 2026' is an ambitious plan designed to stimulate cooperation and action with the ambition to change people's perceptions of women's football in Liechtenstein, step by step.



## GOOD GOVERNANCE CENTRAL TO REFORMS

KEVIN AZZOPARDI



Landmark decisions have been approved at an extraordinary general meeting of the Malta Football Association (MFA) following a wide consultation process undertaken by the MFA over the past year, culminating in the approval of important amendments to the association's statutes.

Good governance based on rigorous ethical and integrity procedures, on an overhaul of decision-making structures, new dispute resolution procedures and the separation of powers are the focal points of the statute amendments in accordance with the Malta FA strategy launched earlier this year.

The statute amendments are part of the ongoing and overarching reforms that encompass other key areas, such as club licensing and corporate restructuring. This process, led by Malta FA vice-president Matthew Paris, is also aimed at improving transparency and accountability in all sectors of Maltese football.

The amendments, approved unanimously at the extraordinary general meeting on 26 July, include:

- Term limits for the president and vice-presidents of the Malta Football Association, capped at three terms of four years each.
- Strengthening of accountability and transparency with the introduction of a code of ethics and breach of ethics procedure for elected officials of the association.

Furthermore, elected officials must undergo a thorough eligibility check and due diligence exercise.

- In what can be considered a landmark decision in the history of the Malta FA, the bureau, council and executive committee are being abolished and replaced by an executive board comprising 24 elected members to ensure fairer representation. The official bodies representing coaches, players, women's football, Gozo football, futsal and beach soccer, and youth football will form part of the newly created executive board.
- The annual general meeting is making way for three general assemblies each



D. Aquilina

year, tasked with different roles and specific topics. In addition, force majeure matters are to be decided and determined by the general assembly and may be appealed against before the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

- Recognising the crucial contribution of football fans, the SouthEnd Core, the group representing Maltese football fans, has been granted observer status for all general assemblies.

The Malta FA is also stepping up its commitment to increasing the participation of women in all its structures, including the top management bodies.

## MOLDOVA WIN REGULAR STAGE OF EURO BEACH SOCCER LEAGUE

ION BUGA



For the first time, Moldova finished top of Division B in the Euro Beach Soccer League. In the final match of the Division B tournament, played at the beautiful arena in La Izvor Park in Chişinău, the Moldovan national team defeated Estonia 4-1.

Following this remarkable result, Moldova have qualified for the division B final tournament, where the best eight countries in Division B will play for promotion to Division A.



The final tournament takes place in Portugal in September.

Moldova won all four of their matches in Chişinău, scoring 18 goals in

the process. Moldova's top scorers were Andrei Negara and Grigore Cojocari, both with five goals. Negara went on to be named player of the tournament, with Ruslan Istrati named best goalkeeper.

Over five days, the new beach soccer arena in Chişinău hosted 26 matches, in which 151 goals were scored. Eleven teams took part in the tournament: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Moldova, Norway, Romania, Slovakia and Sweden.

NORTHERN IRELAND

www.irishfa.com

## NEW IRISH FA PRESIDENT VOWS TO 'IMPROVE THE GAME FOR EVERYONE'

NIGEL TILSON



The new president of the Irish Football Association has promised to promote the game of football at all levels across Northern Ireland. Conrad Kirkwood, who has succeeded FIFA vice-president David Martin in the role, said he was honoured to have been elected as president of the association for a five-year term.

"The Irish FA has dedicated and experienced staff who support hard-working volunteers from a wide range of football backgrounds to improve the game here for everyone," he said.

The 53-year-old also said he was looking forward to supporting the association to deliver on its soon-to-be published new five-year strategy for football.

The new president has held a number of roles in football and has more than 27 years' experience in football administration. His most notable roles include nine years on the Irish FA board and five years as vice chairman, and latterly as chairman, of the IFA Stadium



Development Company. Mr Kirkwood has been a member of the UEFA Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee for five years, with a particular interest in mental health issues and refugee projects.

He said he was keen to support the further technical development of Northern Ireland's senior, development

and grassroots teams. And he added: "In the coming years, we will look to build on the association's good work by continuing to promote the game of football at all levels across Northern Ireland and to govern the game with integrity when enforcing its rules and regulations."

POLAND

www.pzpn.pl

## ZBIGNIEW BONIEK APPOINTED HONORARY PRESIDENT

PAWEŁ DRAŻBA



During the general meeting of the Polish Football Association held on 18 August in Warsaw, Zbigniew Boniek was appointed honorary president of the association, in recognition of his services during his two terms as president of the association.

Zbigniew Boniek has been involved in the association since 1999. From 1999 to 2002, he served as the vice-president for marketing. On 26 October 2012, he was elected president of the Polish Football Association, succeeding Grzegorz Lato.

Four years later, he was re-elected for his second and last term. During his tenure as president, Poland hosted several international events: the European Under-21 Championship final round in 2017, the U-20 World Cup in 2019 and two UEFA Europa League finals, in 2015 and 2021.

Zbigniew Boniek is also the second Pole to have been elected to the UEFA Executive Committee. In April 2021, he was elected as one of UEFA's vice-presidents.



At the general meeting on 18 August, Cezary Kulesza, previously vice-president for professional football, was elected as the new president of the Polish Football Association.

## PORTUGUESE FOOTBALL FEDERATION TV CHANNEL WINS AWARD

PRESS DEPARTMENT



The Portuguese Football Federation's television channel, Canal 11, has won an award from the Portuguese non-governmental organisation AMI (Assistência Médica Internacional [International Medical Assistance]) for journalism against indifference.

Canal 11 won the award for its trilogy of anti-racism documentaries *The Struggle of Thuram*, *I'm Black, So What?* and *The Gypsy Revolution*.

The annual AMI award recognises journalistic works in the written press, online, television, radio and photographic reports that, owing to their exceptional quality, show that the indifference of the



powers of opinion does not extend to intolerable situations – from a human, social, economic or other regard – anywhere in the world.

## NATIONAL FOOTBALL ACADEMY OPENED

PAUL ZAHARIA



Faithful to one of the crucial pillars of its activity, i.e. education, the Romanian

Football Federation (FRF) has opened its first national football academy and, with it, the e-learning platform *Academia* by FRF, with the main aim of becoming the biggest supplier of sports education programmes in Romania and also to offer an organisational model for the whole of Romanian sport.

At the launch of the academy, the FRF president, Răzvan Burleanu, said: "Education is a key pillar around which we will focus our attention and investments in the years to come. Through the launch of the national football academy, we will contribute to the implementation of our vision for the future of sports education in Romania, and the academy will play a key role in the preparation of all the professionals behind the football clubs."

While they could not be present in person for the launch event, important figures from the world of international

football sent video messages greeting the project and the FRF's efforts to develop football through sports education.

Through the academy and the e-learning platform, the FRF aims to deliver courses designed both for athletes and specialists that work directly with them, and for the professionals that work off the field, involved in sports management, volunteering and other operations.

The academy plans to build capacity through specialised education and thereby to contribute to the professionalisation of sports specialists. In doing so, the academy aims to contribute to the development of sports organisations generally, as well as supporting the sustainable development of football in Romania.

The academy has its own website, <https://anf.frf.ro/>, which offers all the necessary details about the various modules that are and will be available to those who are willing to develop and to

improve their knowledge and skills.

The first modules for sports instructors and fitness coaches have already been completed, with modules for nutritionists, team managers, and the UEFA Grassroots C licence among the other programmes on offer.

In addition, the FRF has taken the initiative to translate into Romanian the child safeguarding online courses developed by UEFA and *Terre des Hommes*. These include four e-learning courses dedicated to safeguarding children in football: awareness-raising module, module for coaches, module for staff members and module on child safeguarding focal points. All these modules are designed for all those who work directly or indirectly with children in football. The courses will help staff and volunteers involved in football to better understand their role in creating a safe environment for children, including how to report situations of concern.

SERBIA

www.fss.rs

## FOOTBALL IS FOR EVERYONE; FOOTBALL IS FOR GIRLS

NEBOJŠA PETROVIĆ



They are not stars and you have probably never heard of them... They are the most important 'side athletes' in the world of football.



And they do not want to be on the sidelines anymore. With this message, the Football Association of Serbia launched a nationwide campaign with the clear intention of popularising women's football.

More than 100 female football players, led by players from Spartak, Crvena Zvezda and other top clubs, passed footballs at Slavija, the biggest roundabout in Belgrade, delivering the clear message that 15 minutes in a traffic jam is better than the collapse of women's football in Serbia and the symbolic message that not everything in football revolves around strength. The banner displayed at the launch sent out an even clearer message – 'Football is for everyone; football is for girls'.

Horns, applause, cheers... there were all sorts of encouraging reactions

from the drivers who found themselves in the girls' traffic jam.

"I am very glad that such a campaign dedicated to women's football has been launched. I am proud of everything that the Football Association of Serbia, together with the sponsors, have done for us, and I hope that a large number of girls will respond and start playing football," said Milica Kostić, goalkeeper of the Serbian national team.

Jelena Čanković, formerly with Barcelona and now a player with Swedish side Rosengård, can testify that women, too, can play for their country and in the UEFA club competitions.

A special message of support was sent by the head coach of the men's national team, Dragan 'Piksi' Stojković:

"Personally, I have a very positive opinion when it comes to women's football. In the past 15 to 20 years, women's football has been developing at tremendous speed and it has become extremely popular among girls. Full support to all these girls. Play football, enjoy football, and you will see how beautiful this sport is. You have our full support!"

SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

## MARTIN HASPRÚN, NEW TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

PETER SURIN



The Slovak Football Association (SFZ) has had a new technical director since February, when Štefan Tarkovič returned to the head coach role after serving as technical director since January 2019. Tarkovič had been appointed as caretaker of the national team in autumn 2020 and after qualifying for EURO 2020, he will now be in the head coach's seat until the end of the 2022 World Cup qualification phase.

Tarkovič's successor as technical director, Martin Hasprún, was until February the SFZ's youth football manager and he will keep youth football under his wing.

"I see it as a big responsibility. My father, Viliam, was working in the football structures for years and he set the bar very high with his work," said Hasprún,

who has a solid playing career behind him in the youth categories, including representing his country in the European Under-16 Championship.



He is a highly qualified coach and has worked with youth players at Inter Bratislava and the Vengloš football academy. He has been involved with the SFZ since August 2007.

Tarkovič and Hasprún are sharing the tasks, with Tarkovič taking care of the national teams and Hasprún looking after grassroots football, organisational tasks, women's football development, youth football and coach education.

"I am fully behind the strategy set by Štefan for the technical department, as are all our colleagues. This means we will work on the development of Slovakian football in line with the core principles of our strategy. We have people who are doing a great job and who understand football."

## SEGER EXTENDS EUROPEAN RECORD FOR NUMBER OF CAPS

ANDREAS NILSSON

 The European record for international caps now stands at 221, after Caroline Seger left the Tokyo Olympics (her 12th major final tournament) with a silver medal.

Caroline Seger made her international debut in 2005, and broke the Swedish and European record for international appearances in June when she surpassed former team-mate (and current boss at Rosengård) Therese Sjögran on 214 caps. German scoring legend Birgit Prinz also stands at 214, with three other Europeans (all women) above the 200 mark.

As part of the celebrations, the Swedish FA produced a video for Seger featuring past and present team-mates



and rivals offering congratulations on her achievement. Players such as Marta, Megan Rapinoe, Christine Sinclair and

follow the advice of Brazilian legend Marta in the tribute video: “Now go play a 100 more!”

Ada Hegerberg all lined up to pay tribute to Seger’s career so far (Full video on [https://youtu.be/LW\\_HxAz\\_IeM](https://youtu.be/LW_HxAz_IeM)).

36-year-old Seger has made a tremendous impact on women’s football, and with the Women’s EURO coming up in 2022, many in Sweden hope that she will now

## LAUNCH OF A FOOTBALL-THEMED CURRICULUM RESOURCE

MELISSA PALMER

 Ahead of Wales’ involvement in EURO 2020, the Football Association of Wales (FAW) and the FAW Trust teamed up with two Key Stage 2 teachers [teaching 7–11 year-olds] to develop and produce a bespoke, bilingual football-themed education pack.

The FAW’s latest education pack is a curriculum resource created for Key Stage 2 teachers, guardians and learners across Wales. The pack is free of charge and can be accessed via ‘Hwb’, the Welsh government’s digital platform for learning and teaching in Wales.

This resource contains a package of planned rich learning tasks and a series of activities which teachers and guardians can use and adapt to fit the needs of their students or children.

The education pack employs the themes of literacy, numeracy and digital competency across the curriculum areas,



via a series of fun, exciting learning challenges, all with the aim of further engaging with and inspiring Wales’ 7–11 year-olds.

To further showcase the FAW’s educational packs, a series of humorous videos featuring women’s and men’s Wales’ players has been released across

the FAW’s social channels. With the hope of engaging a younger audience, players answered questions related to the resources, describing their favourite post-match meals and go-to dance moves, along with the key question they would ask their team-mates in a press conference.

**OCTOBER**

**5/6 October**

UEFA Women's Champions League: group matches (matchday 1)

**6–10 October, Italy**

UEFA Nations League: finals

**7–9 October**

FIFA World Cup qualifiers: matchday 7

**10–12 October**

FIFA World Cup qualifiers: matchday 8

**13/14 October**

UEFA Women's Champions League: group matches (matchday 2)

**19/20 October**

UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 3)  
UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions League path: group matches (matchday 3)

**20 October**

UEFA Youth League – domestic champions path: first round (return legs)

**20–26 October**

2023 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifiers

**21 October**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: group matches (matchday 3)

**26–31 October**

UEFA Futsal Champions League: main round

**NOVEMBER**

**2/3 November**

UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 4)  
UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions League path: group matches (matchday 4)

**3 November, Nyon**

UEFA Futsal Champions League: elite round draw

**3 November**

UEFA Youth League – domestic champions path: round two (first legs)

**4 November**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: group matches (matchday 4)

**9/10 November**

UEFA Women's Champions League: group matches (matchday 3)

**11–13 November**

FIFA World Cup qualifiers: matchday 9

**14–16 November**

FIFA World Cup qualifiers: matchday 10

**14–17 November**

UEFA Futsal EURO: play-offs

**17/18 November**

UEFA Women's Champions League: group matches (matchday 4)

**18 November**

FIFA World Cup qualifiers: play-off draws

**23/24 November**

UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 5)  
UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions League path: group matches (matchday 5)

**24 November**

UEFA Youth League – domestic champions path: second round (return legs)

**24–30 November**

2023 FIFA Women's World Cup qualifiers

**25 November**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: group matches (matchday 5)

**30 November – 5 December**

UEFA Futsal Champions League: elite round

**DECEMBER**

**5 December**

2022/23 UEFA Nations League: group stage draw

**7/8 December**

UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 6)  
UEFA Youth League – UEFA Champions League path: group matches (matchday 6)

**8/9 December**

UEFA Women's Champions League: group matches (matchday 5)

**9 December**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: group matches (matchday 6)

**9 December, Nyon**

UEFA European Under-19 Championship: draws for the 2021/22 elite round and the 2022/23 second round

**13 December, Nyon**

UEFA Champions League: round of 16 draw  
UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: play-off draws

**14 December, Nyon**

UEFA Youth League: play-off draw

**15/16 December**

UEFA Women's Champions League: group matches (matchday 6)

**20 December, Nyon**

UEFA Women's Champions League: quarter-final and semi-final draws

**NOTICES**

Elected president of their national associations: **Robert Huygens** (Belgium), **Conrad Kirkwood** (Northern Ireland), **Cezary Kulesza** (Poland), **Marijan Kustić** (Croatia), **Stephen Williams** (Wales).

Re-elected president of their national associations: **Rod Petrie** (Scotland), **Dejan Savićević** (Montenegro).



# RESPECT

