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FUTSAL EURO RAISING THE ROOF





BECAUSE EVERY
CHILD IS A CHAMPION





Theodore Theodoridis
UEFA General Secretary

THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIP WHEN THE PACE OF CHANGE FEELS RELENTLESS

The world has arguably experienced more change and disruption in the past two years than in the previous decade. First, the pandemic turned our lives and economies upside down. Then, just when this crisis started to recede, the war in Ukraine sent shockwaves around the globe, creating unspeakable suffering for ordinary men, women and children, and displacing millions.

Amid such volatility, adapting quickly to the unexpected has become the expected state of affairs for every international organisation, including our own. This edition of UEFA Direct is rich in examples of how UEFA has responded quickly to the relentless pace of change to safeguard the game. I would like to single out three:

- Recognising the financial hit of the global pandemic on clubs' finances and the evolution of the football industry, on 7 April, our Executive Committee approved a major reform of UEFA's club licensing and financial fair play regulations. Based on three objectives – solvency, stability and cost control – the new measures also encourage clubs to invest in infrastructure and youth development to build a more sustainable future.
- Within days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we relocated the 2022 men's Champions League final from St Petersburg to the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, Paris and suspended all Russian teams from participation in UEFA competitions until further notice. At the same time, we have worked closely with the Ukrainian Association of Football to help young female footballers continue their careers in other European leagues and foreign players to safely leave the country. We have also organised training camps for Ukraine's national teams.
- When Futsal EURO 2022 kicked off in the Netherlands in January, matches took place behind closed doors – as required by Dutch regulations. By the time Portugal won the tournament less than three weeks later, fans were back (in limited numbers), a reflection of declining infection rates. In both cases, UEFA worked closely with the Royal Netherlands Football Association, local authorities and participating teams to ensure the right measures were in place to protect everyone present in Amsterdam's Ziggo Dome.

These are not just case studies in good governance. They underline the essential role of cooperation in navigating troubled times. Outside of UEFA, few people appreciate that our organisation is, above all, a partnership that draws on the collective strength and knowledge of Europe's 55 member associations. In these shock-prone times, the pace of change is not about to slow. Thankfully, European football has a tried and tested platform for keeping ahead.

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REACTING TO EUROPEAN CRISES

The grave security situation in Europe and the ongoing pandemic across the continent have prompted significant decisions by UEFA's Executive Committee in recent months. UEFA Direct rounds up the most important decisions and discussions from a hectic period.

Following the grave escalation of the security situation in Europe, the Executive Committee decided to relocate the 2021/22 UEFA men's Champions League final on 28 May from St Petersburg to the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, Paris.

16 December

The Executive Committee was updated on the proposed European club football recovery plan seeking to use UEFA club competition revenues as security to allow European clubs access to liquidity in the coming years.

The objective of this planned financing programme, expected to be the first if its kind in Europe, is to structurally improve the financial stability of European football clubs by leveraging UEFA's club competition media rights revenues. The programme will provide eligible clubs with a stable source of funding at competitive rates over a long period of time and establish a framework for future football funding.

The update came as UEFA, in consultation with the European Club Association, was examining how to relieve part of the clubs' income gap brought about by COVID-19, while also providing clubs with a sustainable long-term financing solution.

The financing programme, requiring ratification by the UEFA Executive Committee, would also be accompanied by the implementation of stricter club licensing and financial fair play regulations, with the ultimate goal being the financial stability of the entire European club football ecosystem.

7 February

The UEFA Executive Committee appointed TEAM Marketing as its global sales partner to market the commercial rights for its men's club competitions for the 2024–27 cycle. The Relevant Sports Group was selected to sell the media rights specifically in the United States for the same period.

The deals guarantee increased revenues for participating clubs and bigger solidarity payments for teams that do not qualify to take part in the men's club competitions. They also provide UEFA with significant funding to invest in European football's overall development.

9 February

The Executive Committee approved further amendments to the UEFA Return to Play Protocol. The amendments in the protocol's sixth edition reflect the evolution of the epidemiological situation in Europe.

- Given the development of PCR tests and the reduced turnaround time for delivery of test results, individuals of the relevant target groups who are either not fully vaccinated and/or not recently recovered from COVID-19 are only able to access the match venue on production of a negative PCR test.
- The principle of reciprocal testing was also introduced. As some countries within UEFA's territory require COVID-19 testing to enter the country, visiting teams are required to undergo specific COVID-19 testing to be able to reach the match venue. To ensure the equal treatment of teams playing against each other, if the whole visiting team

delegation is required to perform pre-departure and/or on-arrival tests to enter the match venue's country, the whole host team delegation is subject to the same testing requirements as the visiting team's delegation.

25 February

Following the grave escalation of the security situation in Europe, the Executive Committee decided to relocate the 2021/22 UEFA men's Champions League final on 28 May from St Petersburg to the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, Paris.

The committee also decided that Russian and Ukrainian clubs and national teams competing in UEFA competitions would have to play their home matches at neutral venues until further notice.

28 February

The Bureau of the FIFA Council and UEFA Executive Committee jointly decided that all Russian teams, whether

national representative teams or club teams, would be suspended from participation in FIFA and UEFA competitions until further notice. "Both presidents hope that the situation in Ukraine will improve significantly and rapidly," a joint statement said, "so that football can again be a vector for unity and peace amongst people."

3 March

The Executive Committee ruled that all Belarusian clubs and national teams taking part in UEFA competitions would be required to play their home matches at neutral venues with immediate effect. Furthermore, no spectators would be permitted to attend matches hosted by teams from Belarus.

21 March

Amid uncertainty surrounding the escalating military conflict in Ukraine and the resulting humanitarian crisis, the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfers

of Players were amended to include temporary and exceptional rules, including provisions on the suspension of contracts between players/coaches and clubs affiliated to the Ukrainian Association of Football (UAF) and the Football Union of Russia (FUR). Most notably, the new provisions allow players in question to play for another club until 30 June 2022.

Consequently, the UEFA Executive Committee decided to include a provision in its current 2021/22 men's and women's club competition regulations enabling clubs to register a maximum of two additional players registered with a club affiliated to the UAF or the FUR whose contracts had been suspended in accordance with Annex 7 of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfers of Players. The deadlines set for the UEFA men's competitions were 1 April 2022 and 7 April 2022 for the UEFA Women's Champions League.

PROTECTING FOOTBALL'S FUTURE: NEW UEFA FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY REGULATIONS

The need to adapt to modern realities and the football industry's evolution over the past decade has led to the introduction of UEFA's new Club Licensing and Financial Sustainability Regulations. The regulations were approved by the UEFA Executive Committee at its meeting in Nyon on 7 April.

The new regulations come into force in June 2022 for gradual implementation over a three-year period and are the first major reform of UEFA's finance regulations since their introduction in 2010. They aim to help clubs achieve greater financial stability, protect football in the long term, and reinforce the game's sustainability.

Crucial project

The continued evolution of UEFA's club licensing and financial regulations has been a crucial project over the years, and its success can be measured by the remarkable overall improvement in European clubs' finances in the past decade.

Overdue payables (payables to football clubs, employees, social/tax authorities, and UEFA) have been all but wiped out. Club finances have been turned around: in 2009, net losses across Europe's top-division clubs totalled €1.6 billion. By 2018, this had become a profit of €140 million.

Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has affected clubs' finances given the loss of operating revenues and a collapse of player transfer profits, with top-division clubs suffering losses of €7 billion in 2020 and 2021. Improved financial solutions were required to confront unprecedented circumstances, alongside greater globalisation and technological innovation within the European football industry.

'Need for wholesale reform'

UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin agreed that UEFA's first financial regulations had achieved their objective.

"They helped pull European football finances back from the brink and revolutionised how European football clubs are run," he reflected.

"However," he added, "the evolution of the football industry, alongside the inevitable financial effects of the pandemic, has shown the need for wholesale reform." In a thorough consultation process within European football, UEFA heard a clear call for change, and responded proactively. The new regulations have emerged from this essential and fruitful dialogue.

Key objectives

The regulations feature three key objectives: all clubs must be solvent, stable, and keep their costs under control. A package of new measures also encourages football clubs to invest in infrastructure and youth development for their long-term benefit.

Solvency: The new 'no overdue payables' rule ensures better protection of creditors. Controls will be performed every quarter, and a stricter approach will be shown towards late payers.

Stability: New football earnings requirements evolve out of the existing break-even requirements and promise greater stability in club finances. To ease implementation for clubs, the calculation of football earnings is similar to the calculation of the break-even result. While the acceptable deviation has increased from €30 million over three years to €60 million over three years, requirements to ensure the fair value of transactions and to improve the clubs' balance sheets have been significantly reinforced.

Cost control: The key introduction of a squad cost rule will create better control regarding player wages, transfer costs and agents' costs. The provisions limit spending on wages, transfers, and agent fees to 70% of club revenue. Assessments will be performed on a timely basis, and breaches will bring pre-defined financial penalties and sporting measures.

Club licensing

The regulations also contain key amendments to UEFA's club licensing system which are aimed at continuing to raise standards in the entire football community. In addition to increasing support for youth development, the objective is to further strengthen the development of women's football; increase professional requirements to help raise standards in coaching education, safety and security and match organisation; and improve protection of creditors and the overall equity position of football clubs.

Positive message

The new regulations feature reframed reporting periods enabling UEFA to identify breaches to the regulations as they occur. Breaches will be punished by the Club Financial Control Body (CFCB) under sanctions listed in the CFCB procedural regulations.

The UEFA president concluded with a positive message when the new regulations were unveiled in Nyon. "These regulations will help us protect the game," he said, "and prepare it for any potential future shocks, while encouraging rational investments and building a more sustainable future for the game." 🌱

UEFA fair play rankings for 2020/21



Norway topped the overall fair play rankings for 2020/21.

UEFA'S RESPECT fair play rankings for the 2020/21 season are based on the fair play scores of all UEFA club and national team competition matches between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021.

Only associations represented in a minimum of 25 matches have been ranked. This cut-off point corresponds to the total

number of UEFA matches divided by the number of participating UEFA member associations.

Awards are in theory given every year to the highest-ranking associations in the following three categories:

- Overall fair play
- Improvement in overall fair play score from one season to the next
- Behaviour of spectators

Exceptionally, owing to the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21, which resulted in a large number of matches being played behind closed doors, no award will be presented in the spectator behaviour category and no score for this category has been taken into account in the rankings for 2020/21.

The association with the highest score in each of the remaining two categories receives €50,000 to donate to amateur or professional clubs of its choice, to finance projects promoting fair play and respect.

The winners are:

- Overall fair play: Norway, with 8.44 points.
- Improvement in overall fair play score from one season to the next: Slovenia, which went from 7.896 points in 2019/20 to 8.178 points in 2020/21.



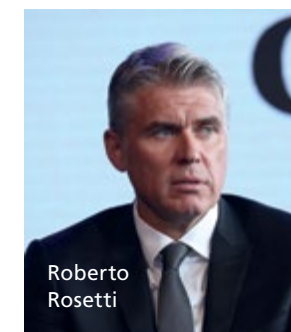
Chelsea win Club World Cup

Scheduled to be held in Japan last December, the Club World Cup was finally held in the United Arab Emirates from 3 to 12 February. Having reached the semi-finals, Chelsea beat the Saudis of Al Hilal SFC 1-0 before going on to clinch the final 2-1 against Brazilian club Palmeiras.



Chelsea's Callum Hudson-Odoi shows the Club World Cup trophy to supporters before the UEFA Champions League round of 16 first-leg match between Chelsea and Lille at Stamford Bridge on 22 February.

Referees asked to protect football's image



players to pressure referees into giving opponents red or yellow cards, and efforts to deceive the referee through acts of simulation. They were also urged to react firmly in instances of mobbing, where groups of players surround and put pressure on referees.

UEFA Referees Committee chairman and chief refereeing officer Roberto Rosetti thanked referees for their diligence after being

THE WINTER COURSE for referees, held online owing to the pandemic in mid-February, gave UEFA the opportunity to pass on instructions to and hear feedback from 81 top male and female referees as they prepared for a challenging second half of the season.

The referees were briefed to intervene and take firm action against overreaction by players to innocuous fouls, attempts by

asked to take their UEFA fitness test in their home countries.

"They've videoed their tests," he said, "and have sent the results to [Belgian sports scientist and UEFA referee training expert] Werner Helsen – they've showed their professional attitude and attention to detail, and emphasised their commitment to being top athletes."

VAR fine-tuning

The video assistant referee (VAR) system was a key element of the course, with 25 video assistant referees studying and giving feedback on video clips of incidents that took place in the first half of the season. Another former referee and new Referees Committee member, Carlos Velasco Carballo, led the sessions.

Women's EURO target

With the selection of the Women's EURO referees due to take place after the Women's Champions League quarter-finals in March, Rosetti told the 23 female match officials present at the course to prove that they were worthy of a place in the EURO team.

PORTUGAL WIN A TOURNAMENT MEMORABLE FOR MANY REASONS

The first 16-team men's Futsal EURO was a prominent landmark in the development of the indoor game in Europe. But it was a landmark that narrowly avoided becoming invisible amid the mists of the pandemic.

The prologue to any review of the on-court proceedings has to be a round of applause for the people who managed to deliver the 32-match event in the Netherlands.

The mists of time will inevitably obscure the extraordinary circumstances that surrounded the historic final tournament, staged from 19 January to 6 February 2022. At the time, the pandemic was nothing new. But, at the most inopportune moment, the Omicron variant burst on to the scene with such vigour that, five weeks before kick-off, the Dutch government decreed a semi-lockdown scenario, including a ban on spectators at sporting events. UEFA embarked on rapid-response consultations with the host association

– the KNVB – which remained confident that the EURO could still be staged if 'bubbles' were created and strict health protocols were observed. But the challenge was to safely gather 16 delegations from all over Europe into Amsterdam and Groningen, the venues for the group stage of the expanded tournament. Plus a cosmopolitan squad of match officials, UEFA venue teams, organisers from the KNVB, and all the volunteers who play crucial roles in making a major event tick.

In the meantime, UEFA's chief medical officer, Zoran Bahtijarević, had been encouraging everybody to urgently finalise vaccination programmes, bearing in mind that some participants hailed from eastern European countries where

not all vaccinations were in line with EU requirements. And the enormity of the challenge was brought home during the Christmas break, when news came through that the World Junior Ice Hockey Championship in Canada was being cancelled mid-tournament due to the high number of COVID cases. And there were other reasons to feel deflated. In advance sales, 22,000 tickets for UEFA Futsal EURO 2022 had already been sold. But the ban on spectators left no alternative but to refund money and play behind closed doors.

But adversity breeds innovation. The KNVB came up with the creative idea of populating the empty stands with colourful cut-out fake spectators. Within each team bubble, COVID →



testing became part of daily routines to safeguard health and keep the tournament alive. There were some positive tests. And on a couple of occasions, team sheets had only ten names on them. But, overall, the strict protocols meant that the impact was minimal.

Quite a show

So much for the pandemic. Now it is time to get down to the futsal. The show, miraculously, stayed on the road. And it turned out to be quite a show.

Any expansion of a final tournament inevitably raises questions about downturns in quality. These were emphatically answered by Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Georgia and Slovakia, the four debutants in the 16-team line-up. Three of the quartet made an immediate impact by progressing beyond the group stage.

Finland served notice of intent by drawing 3-3 with Italy in Groningen and clinched second place in Group B by beating Slovenia 2-1 on Matchday 3. In between, they suffered a 6-2 defeat by Kazakhstan in a game that illustrated two contrasting strategies. Finland coach Mićo Martić opted for blink-of-an-eye



substitutions, sending on players for spells as short as a single minute, aiming to maintain maximum physical intensity. Kaká, by contrast, kept his key players such as Douglas Junior and Tynan on court for more than 30 minutes per game. Whereas Martić had used all his outfielders within eight minutes, Kaká relied heavily on half a dozen.

The startling outcome of that group was that Italy ended at the bottom of it. After draws with Finland and Slovenia, costly defensive errors in a 4-1 defeat by Kazakhstan then signified a group-stage

exit by the two-time champions for the second successive EURO.

There was also disappointment for the hosts. Despite defeat by world champions Portugal, a 3-2 comeback win over Ukraine had left them needing a point against Serbia – already eliminated after 4-2 and 6-1 defeats against Portugal and Ukraine respectively. When 2-0 up at half-time, the Dutch seemed to be on track for the quarter-finals – only for a second-half slump and a missed penalty to consign them to a 3-2 defeat and a three-way tie on three points that



Poland and Slovakia drew 2-2 in their group match, but it was Slovakia which qualified for the quarter-finals.

Ukraine's players celebrate after their second goal against Kazakhstan in the quarter-finals.



allowed Ukraine to slip into second place behind Portugal.

Russia were impeccable in Group C, their off-ball movement a key feature in wins against Slovakia, Poland and Croatia. A single point for Poland was scant reward for fresh, dynamic, uninhibited attacking undermined by wayward finishing. But, again, the group had a sting in the tail. Croatia, before a 4-0 defeat against Russia, had beaten Poland 3-1 and needed only a point against Slovakia to reach the last eight. But the debutants capitalised on lapses of concentration to go 5-1 ahead and, although use of the flying goalkeeper pulled two goals back, a surprise loss sent Croatia to the airport.

In Group D, the sting was at the other end – when debutants Georgia came from 2-0 down in their opening match to beat Azerbaijan 3-2. Another comeback provided a 2-1 win over fellow newcomers Bosnia and Herzegovina, allowing Avtandil Asatiani's team to qualify with a game to spare – fortunately, as they were brought to earth by an 8-0 defeat against Spain, who, as suggested by the form book, won the group despite conceding a 2-2 draw to Azerbaijan. Bosnia and Herzegovina's three defeats passed a harsh sentence on creditable performances while Azerbaijan who, creditably, took four points from their other two games, were let down by that poor second half against Georgia and joined the band of illustrious fallers in a roller-coaster group stage.

Fans make a difference

By that time, real spectators had begun to appear. In mid-tournament, the Dutch government decided to ease restrictions – though concerns about viral loadings in sports halls meant that, when the knockout rounds kicked off at the Ziggo Dome in Amsterdam, attendance was limited to 1,250. Numbers were small but the decibels were massive. Songs, chants, drums, colour... suddenly the tournament came to life.

"The fans made a lot of difference," said Portugal coach Jorge Braz. "When you take the team out to warm up and everything's empty, something's missing.



You feel 'this isn't real futsal; this isn't real sport.' At this level, sport exists for the fans. What we felt with all our Portuguese fans in the semi-final and final, those are the greatest sensations you have in a match."

But Portugal were made to sweat for their great sensations. Firstly by Finland, whose intensity, vertical attacking and spectacular long-range shooting posed questions. Outstanding collective spirit and mental resilience allowed the debutants to equalise twice before succumbing to a 3-2 defeat that put an end to a Martić era dating back to 2013. The fact that Panu Autio scored Finland's last goal provided a fitting finale to a 16-year international career by the captain of a team that has raised a Nordic flag in European futsal and steadily climbed into the top 20 of the world rankings.

On the same day, about 30 Ukraine supporters were in the Ziggo Dome to watch their team take on Kazakhstan, and many more would have liked to share a thrilling spectacle. Kazakhstan, it could be argued, paid a price for reliance on a nucleus of players. With Tynan and Edson

suspended, Kaká basically relied on five outfielders. And team leader Douglas Junior was on court for all but 178 seconds of the 40 minutes. Ukraine, spreading the workload more evenly, took a first-half lead from the penalty spot. But the quarter-final burst into top gear during a pulsating second half when Kazakhstan had 70% of the ball but allowed Oleksandr Kosenko's team to indulge its preference for counterattacks, one of which allowed Ihor Korsun to double the lead. Then, with goalkeeper Higuita stranded on the halfway line during a trademark upfield sortie, Mykhailo Zvarych lobbed into an unguarded net to make it 3-0. With either Higuita or a genuine outfielder as flying keeper, back came Kazakhstan 3-1, 3-2 and, when an equaliser seemed likely with two minutes to play, two interceptions and two shots into unguarded nets to make it 5-2; plus, 44 seconds from time, the final consolation goal as Kazakhstan crashed out 5-3.

No such drama on the following day, as the other two debutants bowed out. Although Georgia battled valiantly from start to finish and momentarily fought back to 1-1, Artem Niyazov set Russia on the road to a 3-1 victory, with Ivan Chishkala striking the other two. Slovakia also fought to the last, but resorting to the flying goalkeeper to break up Spain's rhythm when already two goals behind in the first half was a clear indication that the objective was damage limitation. Fede Vidal's side, with 62% of possession during the second half, played out the game with a degree of comfort and Spain sailed into a semi-final against Portugal with a 5-1 win. →



Portugal's Tomas Paco tackles Russia's Andrei Afanasyev in the final.

García aka ‘Chino’ emphasised Spain’s superiority by making it 2-0 before half-time, Portugal’s title defence looked decidedly shaky.

But there was no escaping the old adage about a ‘game of two halves’. Spain, after the break, were simply unrecognisable, hitting aimless long passes and tamely surrendering possession to a Portugal side who were thrown a lifeline via a penalty with just over ten minutes to play. With Braz increasingly using his plan B of a 1-3-1 formation with Zicky as the attacking spearhead, his team’s total dominance was translated on to the scoreboard by Zicky’s double strike – the second coming 79 seconds from time when he turned in a cross driven in from the right by Erick. A late flurry with Chino as flying keeper was fruitless. And Portugal were in the final.

Russia join Portugal in the final

Ukraine v Russia was all about tension, rapid turnovers and imprecise passing. Sergei Skorovich favoured a 1-3-1 set-up, alternating Anton Sokolov with Andrei Afanasyev in the pivotal role. He was rewarded by a goal from each in the opening quarter hour, the latter heading a long throw from his keeper against the Ukraine crossbar and turning in the rebound. Kosenko’s team, although struggling to contain Russia’s neat combination play, hauled themselves

back into the match via a long-range strike after a corner, but fell 3-1 behind when Niyazov hit a goal-of-the-tournament bicycle kick. With the flying keeper on court, Ukraine scored again and, with 70 seconds on the clock, had a penalty saved by the Russia keeper, Dmitri Putilov. Both semi-finals had ended with 3-2 on the scoreboard and, when the two losers met with the bronze medal at stake, Spain returned to their brilliant best to record a 4-1 victory that included two goals in 26 seconds during the second half of a game that signalled the end of a 15-year international career for their skipper, Carlos Ortiz.

It may have been only partially full but the Ziggo Dome was rocking when Portugal and Russia ran out to dispute the final. And, to the delight of the raucous Portuguese fans, what they saw was a case of déjà vu.

Russia made a roaring start, with Skorovich again favouring 1-3-1, Afanasyev and Sokolov alternating as pivot and, with their strength, ball-shielding and ability to turn on a coin, testing Portugal’s defensive abilities. Braz’s team, starting in 1-4-0 with Erick as occasional pivot, made an edgy start, as they had done against Serbia and Spain, with imprecisions in their passing and defensive play induced by Russia’s aggressive high press and vertical attacking. Even when Braz sent on Zicky – well into the seventh minute – to try his hand with the 1-3-1 variation, Russia continued to dominate and took the lead when Sokolov turned past Pany Varela and beat André Sousa with a fierce left-footed shot. Skorovich sporadically switched to 1-4-0 with Artem Antoshkin and Paulinho

as key defensive components, while Sergei Abramov sought to exploit his solo skills. It was no surprise when Russia doubled their lead, a run on the left setting up Afanasyev for a low finish. The fact that Portugal’s first shot on target in open play was after 17’34 speaks volumes for their difficulties. But a set play threw them a lifeline 81 seconds before the break, Tomás Paço shooting home after a kick-in.

Portugal do it again

The déjà vu element came to the fore after the break. As Serbia and Spain had done, Russia faded away. Braz threw Zicky increasingly into the fray in his more incisive 1-3-1 variation, Russia’s aggressive high pressing gave way to deeper defending which invited Pany and Pauleta to exploit solo skills and connect with Zicky, whose ball-shielding ability frustrated the Russia defence. It was Portugal’s turn to dominate the tempo of the game.

Even so, it took another set play to bring them level, with André Coelho hitting a kick-in directly past Dimitri Putilov. Russia reeled from the psychological impact of surrendering a 2-0 lead, while Portugal’s ‘calm strength’ was rebooted. Then Zicky shielded the ball and played it to the left while André Coelho outsprinted his marker to meet the cross at the back post. Abramov immediately emerged in the flying keeper’s jersey but Russia’s power play failed to bear fruit and, with the clock ticking down, Pany stole possession from Antoshkin and ran it into an unguarded goal to clinch a 4-2 win and a successful defence of the European title. It was a memorable climax to a tournament that was memorable for many reasons. 🇵🇹



Bruno Coelho savours Portugal’s second triumph after their first in 2018.

UEFA FUTSAL EURO 22™

RESULTS

GROUP STAGE

	GROUP A	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	POINTS
1	PORTUGAL	3	3	0	0	9
2	UKRAINE	3	1	0	2	3
3	NETHERLANDS	3	1	0	2	3
4	SERBIA	3	1	0	2	3

	GROUP B	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	POINTS
1	KAZAKHSTAN	3	2	1	0	7
2	FINLAND	3	1	1	1	4
3	SLOVENIA	3	0	2	1	2
4	ITALY	3	0	2	1	2

	GROUP C	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	POINTS
1	RUSSIA	3	3	0	0	9
2	SLOVAKIA	3	1	1	1	4
3	CROATIA	3	1	0	2	3
4	POLAND	3	0	1	2	1

	GROUP D	PLAYED	WON	DRAWN	LOST	POINTS
1	SPAIN	3	2	1	0	7
2	GEORGIA	3	2	0	1	6
3	AZERBAIJAN	3	1	1	1	4
4	BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	3	0	0	3	0

KNOCKOUT STAGE

QUARTER-FINALS

Kazakhstan	-	Ukraine	3-5	(0-1)
Portugal	-	Finland	3-2	(2-1)
Russia	-	Georgia	3-1	(0-0)
Spain	-	Slovakia	5-1	(3-0)

SEMI-FINALS

Portugal	-	Spain	3-2	(0-2)
Ukraine	-	Russia	2-3	(1-2)

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF

Spain	-	Ukraine	4-1	(2-1)
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FINAL

Portugal	-	Russia	4-2	(1-2)
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HOW THE WOMEN'S EURO WAS BORN

The road to the launch of a European national women's team competition opened out over a ten-year period from the start of the 1970s.

The earliest evidence of UEFA's interest in women's football appears in November 1970, in a report by the then general secretary, Hans Bangerter, to UEFA's Executive Committee at that month's meeting in Paris. The report focused on an investigation into the situation of women's football in UEFA's member countries.

According to the minutes of the meeting: "It was decided to recommend the associations to keep a watchful eye on the further development of ladies' football in their country in order to avoid that wily business managers get a hold of it."

Closer attention followed when women's football was placed on the agenda for the Extraordinary UEFA Congress in Monte Carlo in June 1971. Delegates heard that opinions on the women's game were divided, especially on medical grounds. Nevertheless, UEFA was curious to find out the overall situation across Europe. A circular letter was addressed to national associations, which provided important feedback: women's football was being played in 22 European countries. However, only eight national associations had actually assumed its control and organisation.

Congress resolution

Consequently, the UEFA Executive Committee considered it essential to bring the sport under the wing of the national associations before anyone else intervened. The Monte Carlo Congress adopted the following resolution: "The Extraordinary Congress of UEFA requests the Executive Committee to examine the question of women's football in detail and to take the necessary measures in order to ensure its uniform organisation in all member associations. The UEFA member associations agree to take charge of the control of women's football in their

countries, and they require that international matches, competitions, and tournaments be exclusively controlled by the international football authorities, FIFA and UEFA, respectively."

A committee dealing with women's football was set up and tasked with drafting a set of guidelines on women's football structures and standardisation, given the amount of variation from one country to the next in areas as fundamental as the size of the ball and the length of matches.

First women's committee

The Executive Committee's response to the guidelines was to officially establish a Women's Football Committee, which included Sweden's Kerstin Rosén – the first female member of a UEFA committee.

The committee formed to analyse women's football at its first meeting in 1971.



France's national team at a training session in February 1979.

The new committee met in Zurich in March 1973 during a women's football conference involving representatives of 11 UEFA member associations. A survey carried out before the conference, to which 23 national associations had responded, showed that seven associations ran national women's championships, and another seven regional women's leagues. The survey also revealed some support for the introduction of an international competition managed by UEFA, although some countries favoured the idea of a competition for national teams and others a competition for clubs.

The majority, however, thought it was still too early to launch any type of

continental competition for women. The conference delegates unanimously agreed that regulating women's football by placing it under the authority of the national associations remained the overriding priority.

Loss of momentum

The development of the women's football movement faltered during the ensuing years, as its growth slowed down in all but a few countries. The UEFA Women's Football Committee met only once in 1974, noting that there were still many, primarily financial, obstacles to the creation of any European competition. This was the committee's last meeting before it was dissolved in 1978.

"It was not felt absolutely necessary to have any further direct influence on the development of women's football on a European level," explained Hans Bangerter in his annual report. "After a pause for reflection, however," he added significantly, "this aspect of the game will shortly be receiving the appropriate attention again."

This change of direction followed a survey conducted among the member associations, in which many of the respondents had reported fresh impetus in women's football activities. Consequently, after the period of reflection described by Hans Bangerter, another UEFA women's football conference was convened in Zurich in February 1980. →



Left above: Belgium play England at a tournament in April 1977.
Left below: In 1983, England take on the Republic of Ireland in the first UEFA Competition for Women's National Representative Teams, which would become the European Women's Championship for the 1989–91 edition.



Competition call – green light

The event was attended by delegates from 18 national associations. Participants thought that UEFA should devote more attention to the women’s game, and that the national associations should do everything possible to save it from falling into the hands of organisers who were putting their own interests above those of the sport itself.

Crucially, they also felt that the time had come to launch a European competition for national teams.

The UEFA Women’s Football Committee was revived with two female members – Patricia Gregory (England) and Hannelore Ratzburg (Germany) – sitting alongside chairman Louis Wouters (Belgium), who had recently been elected to the UEFA Executive Committee, Bronisław Kołodziej (Poland) and Carl Nielsen (Denmark). Their first task was to examine the feasibility of meeting the wishes expressed at the Zurich conference.



Hannelore Ratzburg, member of the reconstituted UEFA Women’s Football Committee in the early 1980s.

Discussions at the committee’s meeting in Lisbon in March 1981 centred on the potential for a national team competition – the introduction of a competition for club teams was felt to be impossible for financial reasons. After extensive deliberations, the committee decided to submit a series of conclusions to the Executive Committee for approval.

“It was agreed,” the minutes stated, “that UEFA should start a competition for national representative women’s teams under condition that at least 12 national associations will enter a team.

“It was emphasised that, according to the opinions expressed at the 2nd Conference on Women’s Football, 16 national associations are interested in such a competition, of which 12 have already formed regular national sides. Thus, the minimum number of 12 entries should easily be achieved.”

Meeting in Florence in April 1981 after the Women’s Football Committee had communicated its support for the creation of a competition, the Executive Committee gave the green light to the project on condition that, as proposed, at least 12 of UEFA’s 34 member associations were prepared to take part. The Women’s Football Committee was asked to draw up draft regulations for the competition, which were eventually ratified in the second half of the year.

Positive response

When entries were invited in December 1981 for the first UEFA Competition for Women’s National Representative Teams, the final response was extremely positive: no fewer than 16 national associations entered.

The committee drew up four groups of four teams each for the qualifying competition, which would kick off in the summer of 1982, with the groups based on what UEFA described as “economic criteria”.

- Group 1:** Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden
- Group 2:** England, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, Scotland
- Group 3:** France, Italy, Portugal, Switzerland
- Group 4:** Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, West Germany

The destiny of the first title would then be decided in a knockout phase of two-legged matches featuring the four group winners, with the final taking place in May 1984.

“Everything moved really fast,” recalled Hannelore Ratzburg in the April 2006 issue of UEFA’s official magazine, UEFA Direct. “The decision was taken in 1981, and the first matches were already played



In 2017, the Women’s EURO saw the Netherlands win at home, beating Denmark in the final in front of 28,000 enthusiastic spectators in Enschede.

the next year. The fact that 16 associations entered in such a short space of time was brilliant.

“In Germany,” she added, “the [German Football Association] DFB entered the competition first and then I had to set about creating a national women’s team afterwards. We even had to postpone our first match against Belgium because we still didn’t have a team.”

The fact that fewer than half of UEFA’s member associations at the time entered proved to be a barrier to the new competition receiving championship status – this would eventually follow for the 1989–91 edition. The regulations also stipulated that matches would be played over two halves of 35 minutes each, using size 4 footballs.

The first-ever match in the competition took place on 18 August 1982, when Finland entertained Sweden in Vammala – the Swedes running out 6-0 winners. By the late autumn of 1983, Denmark, England, Italy and Sweden had emerged as qualifying group winners.

Sweden stride to glory

The semi-finals in April 1984 were hard-fought contests. England beat



Sweden celebrate winning the inaugural UEFA women’s title in 1984.

Denmark 2-1 in Crewe and 1-0 away in Hjørring, while Sweden followed up a 3-2 win against Italy in Rome – in front of a crowd of 10,000 – with a 2-1 success in Linköping.

Gothenburg’s Ullevi stadium was the venue for the final’s first leg on 21 May 1984, and Pia Sundhage, who went on to establish legendary status in the women’s game as a player and coach, scored the only goal with a bullet header after an hour to give Sweden a narrow advantage.

The return leg at Kenilworth Road, Luton, six days later proved to be a demanding tussle owing to heavy rain and a sodden pitch. England levelled on aggregate through Linda Curl on the half-hour mark, and although Sweden hit the woodwork the game went to a dramatic penalty shoot-out.

Sweden’s goalkeeper, Elisabeth Leidinge, made a crucial save, and it was left to Sundhage, whose outstanding international playing career began in 1975 and lasted until 1996, to give her team a 4-3 shoot-out victory. She remembers: “I took the last shot. We won the final. It was a marvellous success.”

The first edition of the competition prompted UEFA to seek a more precise impression of the general status of women’s football in the different countries throughout Europe. “A comprehensive questionnaire revealed that women’s football is developing in most of the member associations,” said Hans Bangerter in his General Secretary’s Report for 1984–85.

“On the basis of the information thus received, it may be expected that even more European associations will enter the Women’s Competition in the future,” Bangerter added. The course for the future of women’s football was set at ‘go’. 🏆

WOMEN’S FOOTBALL



Women’s EURO honours board

1984
Winners: Sweden
Semi-finals: two legs (home and away)
Final: two legs in Gothenburg (Sweden) and Luton (England)

1987
Winners: Norway
Finals hosts: Norway (4 teams)

1989
Winners: West Germany
Finals hosts: West Germany (4 teams)

1991
Winners: Germany
Finals hosts: Denmark (4 teams)
* Competition given championship status for the 1989–91 edition

1993
Winners: Norway
Finals hosts: Italy (4 teams)

1995
Winners: Germany
Semi-finals: two legs (home and away)
Final: Kaiserslautern (Germany)

1997
Winners: Germany
Finals hosts: Norway/Sweden (8 teams)

2001
Winners: Germany
Finals hosts: Germany (8 teams)

2005
Winners: Germany
Finals hosts: England (8 teams)

2009
Winners: Germany
Finals hosts: Finland (12 teams)

2013
Winners: Germany
Finals hosts: Sweden (12 teams)

2017
Winners: Netherlands
Finals hosts: Netherlands (16 teams)

England launches arts programme for Women’s EURO 2022



Three specially commissioned projects, each led by artist Emma Smith, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and Idle Women, will celebrate the history of women’s football and its players and harness culture to encourage more people, particularly women and girls, to be inspired by the tournament.

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND has awarded £800,000 to Women’s EURO 2022 in England to run an exciting arts and cultural initiative alongside the tournament, thanks to National Lottery funding.

There will also be the opportunity for the public to create an original anthem to celebrate Women’s EURO 2022 in England, expressing the passion evident in the women’s football community through music. Running throughout the tournament from 6 to 31 July, in collaboration with the nine host cities around the country – Brighton & Hove, London, Manchester, Milton Keynes, Rotherham, Sheffield, Southampton, Trafford and Wigan & Leigh – the programme will reach nearly three million people and invite sports audiences and participants to engage with culture at an important moment for the country. The arts programme will be managed

by the English Football Association. It will be the first time the association has run such a programme alongside a major tournament and it hopes to establish female role models for both girls and boys through the arts. Darren Henley, Arts Council chief executive, said: “The Football Association’s first-ever arts programme will transform the streets and boroughs where people live throughout Women’s EURO 2022 this summer. The combined forces of culture and sport have the power to improve lives, regenerate neighbourhoods, support local economies and bring people together nationally and internationally.”

Trailblazers on and off the pitch

UEFA HAS OPENED a new art exhibition displaying the talents of European female artists inspired by their home countries’ qualification for this summer’s tournament.

On 29 March, with just 100 days to go until the start of UEFA Women’s EURO 2022, UEFA unveiled Trailblazers, a unique exhibition showcasing the work of European artists given a blank canvas to celebrate women’s football.

Tournament ambassador and former Germany international Josephine Henning, who picked up a paintbrush and turned to art after hanging up her football boots in 2018, designed the exhibition’s title poster. UEFA invited artists from nations participating in this summer’s tournament to create an image inspired by the game in their country. The result is a kaleidoscope of styles and strokes united in one gallery at UEFA’s headquarters on the banks of Lake Geneva in Switzerland.

The artworks will be heading to England this summer, where the biggest-ever Women’s EURO starts at Old Trafford in Manchester on 6 July.



Swiss artist Marilou Briner (left) and former German international Josephine Henning.



2022 World Cup draw



The draw produced the following groups:

- Group A:** Qatar, Ecuador, Senegal, Netherlands
- Group B:** England, Iran, United States, Wales/Scotland/Ukraine
- Group C:** Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Poland
- Group D:** France, Peru/ Australia/United Arab Emirates, Denmark, Tunisia
- Group E:** Spain, Costa

THE NAMES OF 12 OF EUROPE’S 13 representatives at the 2022 World Cup in Qatar were known when the final draw was made in Doha on 1 April. Ten secured their World Cup berths as winners of their qualifying groups, while Poland and Portugal made it through the play-offs. The rescheduled play-off final between Wales and either Scotland or Ukraine will determine the holder of Europe’s remaining slot.

- Rica/New Zealand, Germany, Japan
- Group F:** Belgium, Canada, Morocco, Croatia
- Group G:** Brazil, Serbia, Switzerland, Cameroon
- Group H:** Portugal, Ghana, Uruguay, Korea Republic

The opening match will be played on 21 November and the final takes place on 18 December.

European and South American champions to meet in Finalissima showdown at Wembley

LONDON’S ICONIC WEMBLEY STADIUM will be the setting for a showdown between EURO 2020 winners Italy and Copa América 2021 champions Argentina on Wednesday 1 June 2022.

Twenty-nine years after its last edition, the relaunch of this legendary footballing encounter is the result of the long-standing partnership between UEFA and CONMEBOL and will serve as a catalyst for the global development of football – uniting countries, continents and cultures, while also demonstrating to fans around the globe that football can be a force of good in turbulent times. In 1985, France triumphed over Uruguay in the inaugural competition. And in 1993, Argentina won the title back thanks to a penalty shoot-out success over Denmark.

OBITUARIES

- Ante Pavlović**, a former general secretary of the Football Association of Yugoslavia and honorary general secretary of the Croatian Football Federation (HNS), has passed away at the age of 88. In 2009 he was awarded the UEFA Order of Merit in Emerald for his services to football.
- Marcel Mathier**, a former president of the Swiss Football Association, has passed away at the age of 85. He worked as an advisor for EURO 2008, organised jointly by Switzerland and Austria. He was a member of the UEFA Finance Committee from 1998 to 2000 and also served as a match delegate.
- Brian Fear**, a former president of the Football Association of Wales, has passed away at the age of 85. From 1996 to 1998, he acted as a UEFA expert on transfer matters.
- Antero da Silva Resende**, a former president of the Portuguese Football Federation and UEFA Executive Committee member (1984–92), has passed away at the age of 96. He chaired UEFA’s Club Competitions Committee (1986–90), Women’s Football Committee (1990–92) and Licensed Match Agents Committee (1984–92). He was also a member and a vice-chairman of the UEFA Legal Committee (1992–2000) and for many years represented the Executive Committee on the UEFA transfer experts’ panel. He was awarded the UEFA Order of Merit in Diamond in 2004.

Former UEFA vice-president Egidius Braun passes away



ON 16 MARCH, European football learned of the death of Egidius Braun at the age of 97. Egidius Braun was president of the German Football Association (DFB) from 1992 to 2001. He was a UEFA vice-president from 1992 to 2000 and a member of the UEFA Executive Committee from 1988 to 2000, and also served as

UEFA treasurer (1996–2000) and chairman of several key UEFA committees, including the Finance Committee (1996–2000), the Committee for the European Championship (1992–2000) and the Committee for the European Under-21 Championship (1992–96). He was also a UEFA representative on the Consultative Committee for EU matters and a member of several expert panels. A tireless servant to football, he was made an honorary member of UEFA in 2000, and was awarded the UEFA Order of Merit in Diamond – reserved for people who have assumed the highest functions in football, or who have served the game with particular distinction – in 2004.

THE RISE OF THE SPECIALIST COACH

Roberto Mancini with his team of specialist coaches. Left to right: Alberico Evani, Gianluca Viali, Gianni Vio, Claudio Donatelli, Andrea Scanavino and Valter Di Salvo.

For many years, the roles of those involved in the preparation of team performance have been firmly set. In most cases, a small team of staff, led by the head coach, have had responsibility for all aspects of the coaching process. However, the last decade has seen significant change to the design and delivery of elite training sessions.

There are now more eyes on player performance than ever before. At both club and national level, roles such as attacking coach, defensive coach, individual development coach and other titles are becoming more commonplace. Liverpool now employ a throw-in coach. Italy's men's and women's

national teams have a specialist responsible for set plays. When England won the men's U-17 and U-20 World Cups in 2017, specific coaches focused on in-possession and out-of-possession phases of the game. With the number of specialist positions in the game continuing to grow, it is fair to say the role of the specialist coach is on the rise. →





Thomas Grønnemark, here in a training session with Liverpool, is surprised that specialist throw-in coaches did not exist sooner.

Thomas Grønnemark: Liverpool's throw-in coach

Before entering the world of professional football, Thomas Grønnemark, Liverpool's specialist throw-in coach, was an athlete on the Danish national bobsleigh team.



“I don’t see throw-in coaching as a separate path from ‘normal’ training. No, the throw-in work should be integrated. At Liverpool it’s an integral part of the playing style and it’s an integral part of the training.”

Thomas Grønnemark
Liverpool's throw-in coach

It was here the 46-year-old learned to appreciate that taking care of detail leads to successful performance.

“One of the reasons I’m good at analysing the game of football is that we analysed our bobsleigh start over 7,000 times,” says Grønnemark. “We looked at the position of the hips, hands, feet, as well as our rhythm and many other things. Then we looked at the sledge position in the different curves of the run.”

Unlike athletics, Grønnemark felt that the ‘sources of truth’ in football were often reliant on ‘tradition and story’, rather than data. “When I came to football, it just felt so far behind,” says the Dane, who began working as a throw-in coach in 2004. “When you watch a football match and possession is lost from a throw-in, the commentators are not saying anything. It’s almost accepted that throw-ins are bad. A lot of teams still throw the ball down the line and hope to win the duel. But if you’re just doing that, there’s a bigger risk of losing the ball.”

Grønnemark accepted an offer from Jürgen Klopp to join Liverpool in 2018/19. By the end of that season, he had helped the Anfield club move from 18th to first in the Premier League rankings for retaining possession under pressure from throw-ins. “At the start with Liverpool, I just helped them learn the basics,” says Grønnemark. “I also started analysing all the throw-ins from all of their games and sending reports.”



Changing how coaches and players thought about throw-ins was another key part of the work. “We normally have 40 to 60 throw-ins in a match,” explains Grønnemark. “And the situation following the throw-in normally takes around 15 to 20 minutes of analysis. So, a throw-in is not only a small part of football, it’s actually a gigantic part.”

Grønnemark has implemented this process at a host of other clubs – he currently works with ten professional teams around the world. “I found clubs, coaches and players were lacking knowledge around how to keep possession and create chances from throw-ins. So, I felt it was so important to improve the throw-in.”

Integrated, not isolated, coaching practices

A common misconception is that specialist coaches like Grønnemark work in isolation away from other elements of the coaching process. Although there may be some one-to-one and small group work, the key is effective integration. “I don’t see throw-in coaching as a separate path from ‘normal’ training,” he says. “No, the throw-in work should be integrated. At Liverpool it’s an integral part of the playing style and it’s an integral part of the training, and that’s the way it should be.”

Developing ‘throw-in intelligence’ is a core part of Grønnemark’s approach and can only be achieved by creating game-realistic situations in training, says the Dane. “The relations between the players are so important. Not only in space creation but also things like eye contact, body signals and reading body language.

“In my philosophy, you don’t know who should receive the ball because there are many different options. This links to eye contact and reading each other’s body language. Of course, this is developed in the small basic exercises, but it’s also developed in small-sided games or bigger match exercises that utilise different zones. And, of course, you can’t expect to have perfect relations after a week or after one visit from me. It takes work.”

Grønnemark lists basketball, American football, handball, ice hockey and athletics as influences on his way of working. There are also less conventional areas of interest. “I observe birds and animals,” he explains. “I’m also getting inspiration from art, museums and different patterns that I see.



Gianni Vio with Roberto Mancini.

“I’ve also taken inspiration from the Roman army,” he adds. “Two thousand years ago, they had archers who were stationed at the front of the army in battle. They had to shoot the arrows before going back through the rest of the army in a chaotic situation. The army had different systems where they could get those archers back through the ranks without anyone getting hurt or falling over each other. There is so much valuable inspiration and knowledge from different areas and people that you can pick up.”

Gianni Vio: Italy's set-pieces coach

Another specialist coach with a unique background and methodology is former banker Gianni Vio. The UEFA Pro licence holder is the set-pieces coach for the Italian men’s and women’s national teams and explains that it is clear from the data why this area of specialism is so important. “30–35% of the goals come from dead balls,” says Vio. “In today’s game it is one of the aspects that can really make the difference.

“A three-year university study on the Premier League says that only 2.2% of corners lead to a goal,” he adds. “It means we are not doing the job properly in more than 97% of cases. Working on this aspect can be a great advantage.”

Vio believes that dedicating resource into improving set pieces could be as profitable as having an additional striker. “If we manage to improve even by just a few percentage points, it could mean scoring 15–20 more goals in the season,” says Vio. “Which is like having an important striker. This is why I would like to be considered as an additional striker, not as a coach.”

How Vio works collaboratively with the head coach is crucial to ensuring his set-piece work fits with the other aspects of the coaching process. “I think it’s one of the great qualities that Roberto Mancini has,” explains Vio. “He is not only coordinating but also understanding very easily what we are doing. He is also very good at involving us in every aspect. We really feel like we are his second team for sure.” →



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Gianni Vio
Italy's set-pieces coach



“Each aspect was integrated. On the grass, we would break off for position-specific warm-ups and those groups would work on key practices and themes linked to the session objective. Those groups would then come together again. They were always interacting and interchanging.”

Matt Crocker
England head of development team coaching between 2013 and 2020

Matt Crocker: England’s U-17 and U-20 World Cup success

In 2017, England celebrated unprecedented success at men’s youth level, winning both the U-17 and U-20 World Cups. Silverware was reward for the integration of a number of specialist coaches into an overall ‘coaching model’ explains Matt Crocker, England head of development team coaching between 2013 and 2020.

“Our coaching model was based on a head coach, in-possession coach, out-of-possession coach and a goalkeeping coach responsible for set plays,” explains Crocker. “But each aspect was integrated. On the grass, we would break off for position-specific warm-ups and those groups would work on key practices and themes linked to the session objective. Those groups would then come together again. They were always interacting and interchanging.”

Research into other sports led Crocker and the England staff to implement the idea of ‘pack’ coaching – a method championed in a number of American sports. “‘Pack’ coaching is based on the idea that the game is ever-changing,” explains Crocker. “The game is scruffy and untidy: there’s attack, defence and always opposition working against you.

“A session might have had a specific focus on an in-possession theme, but the role of the out-of-possession coach was to make things even more difficult for the in-possession team. This was the opposite of what you would traditionally see. Normally, a co-coach would try to help make a practice work. We were more interested in how the coaches could

make it more difficult for each other, because that’s what the opposition are doing in an 11v11 game.”

Integrating each element into a cohesive session plan was key to the process, explains Crocker. “The coaching team would continually refine session plans – sometimes getting up to version eight or nine – due to the extent of discussion and debate in order to make things difficult rather than to make things easy.”

Changing coaching models: game coach and individual development coach

When Crocker joined Premier League side Southampton as director of football operations in 2020, the idea of integrated specialist coaching continued to evolve. “At Southampton, with the Under-18 and the B team, we implemented the idea of a game coach and an individual development coach,” says Crocker. “The game coach is responsible for delivering the club philosophy – the ‘playbook’ – preparing players for games and making sure that the practice design is right. The individual development coach is responsible for the individual development plans of players.”

Although the two roles overlap, there are clear focus areas and responsibilities for training and matchday, explains Crocker. “The individual development coach leads the process of looking at what each player needs to do to grab the shirt in front of them, which is obviously the first-team shirt,” he says. “On gameday our individual

development coach’s role is to watch the game through a totally different pair of spectacles to the game coach. They are looking at key individuals. They might pick out two, three or four individuals that they can have a specific ‘laser focus’ on in the game and feed back to directly.

“Whereas the game coach is looking at the performance of the team and the style that we follow in the philosophy of the first team. If there are tactical tweaks that we need to make at half-time to refine and help us perform better, they will do that. But the two coaches have got to work really closely together.”

With traditional coaching roles continuing to change, a wider variety of coaching skills and knowledge will be needed to be effective in the future, says Crocker. “I think the key skills for the specialist coach are being open-minded and inquisitive,” he says. “The specialist coach has to be accepting they haven’t got all the answers. They need to be humble and vulnerable enough to go and ask, research and learn – whether that be from players, other members of staff or from research. They have to be really open-minded and curiosity is key.

“Also there has to be a real passion for attention to detail. In terms of technical details, it is somebody who is prepared to look beyond traditional coaching methods at things like biomechanics, movement patterns and someone who values the input from sports science and other areas. It is somebody who is open-minded and understands that the solution to an issue might also be psychological.”



Frans Hoek: From goalkeeper coach to ‘goalplayer’ coach

Goalkeepers have long benefited from specialist coaching. However, as the role of the goalkeeper continues to change, so too must the associated coaching methods, says Netherlands’ goalkeeping coach, Frans Hoek. “The role of the goalkeeper coach has changed because the game is changing,” explains Hoek, who has worked for Ajax, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Manchester United, Galatasaray as well as the Polish and Saudi Arabian national teams in a distinguished

coaching career spanning nearly 40 years. “The goalkeeper of today is, in my opinion, a ‘goalplayer’ and is doing everything that the outfield players are doing. The only difference is the goalkeeper is allowed by the rules to use their arms and hands within the box. If you take away the gloves, goalkeepers look the same as players, only with their own specific task.”

Hoek points to Manchester City and the role of the goalkeeper in Pep Guardiola’s team to emphasise the game understanding needed for a goalkeeper, or goalplayer, to be effective in the

modern game. “You can see with Pep at Manchester City how important the goalplayer is to their whole way of playing in both attack and defence. It means there has been an enormous development to the role of the goalplayer to play this way.”

To effectively support these changes, there is still much work to be done, says Hoek. “If you look at goalplayer coaching, in some cases, you don’t see a very big development yet. What we often see happening is that the goalplayer and the goalplayer coach are more or less creating their own unit. But if you are working →



“The goalkeeper of today is, in my opinion, a ‘goalplayer’ and is doing everything that the outfield players are doing. The only difference is the goalkeeper is allowed by the rules to use their arms and hands within the box. If you take away the gloves, goalkeepers look the same as players, only with their own specific task.”

Frans Hoek
Netherlands’ goalkeeping coach



With skills worthy of an outfield player, Gianluigi Donnarumma and Manuel Neuer are perfect illustrations of the ‘goalplayer’ of today.

separately with the goalplayers, you have nothing to do with the team, you have no teammates to work together with and no opponents.”

Integrating goalkeepers into outfield practices is not a new idea, but it is an approach that must stay up to date with the latest trends in the game in order to be effective, says Hoek. “The moment you put the goalplayer in the game situation, as a goalplayer coach you need the competencies of a regular coach as well as your specific knowledge on goalplaying. Which means you need to know how to attack, defend, transition, and how the goalplayer can help their team-mates. So, it’s a much more complex situation with a different kind of specialisation.”

How information from the goalplayer coach is communicated back to the head coach is another key part of the role, says Hoek. “I always try to place myself in the role of the head coach,” says Hoek, who has worked alongside Johan Cruyff, Louis van Gaal and Leo Beenhakker during his



career. “I want the head coach to see me as an objective advisor. I want them to see me as somebody that gives the best possible advice that is based on facts and not subjective feelings.

“When I first started, I worked more on emotion, feeling and intuition. Now the feeling and intuition are there, but I can describe it a lot better. My job is to provide all the options to the head coach and make it very objective advice. And I think it’s so important that you don’t only think about the goalplayer but you think wider and understand the overall picture of the team. Then the head coach looks at you as a full part of the staff.”

Open-minded head coaches

How head coaches embrace the rise of specialist coaches will continue to provide both challenge and opportunity in the future. With greater numbers of specialist staff to manage and multiple information streams to understand and utilise, the skills required of the future head coach will continue to evolve.

“I think that the development in the area of specialist coaching is just starting,” says Hoek. “If you remember the time when the head coach did everything, it was difficult for them to ‘zoom in’ on the detail. Now you have a coaching staff of six, seven or more people, so everybody can ‘zoom in’ on certain situations and take out everything. There should not be one detail that is missed.”

With greater resource comes the need for greater clarity and communication from the head coach, says Hoek. “With more and more coaches, they all need to bring the same message,” says Hoek. “The more people that are involved, the more difficult it is because you have to communicate and discuss with each other. You have to speak the same football language. The big challenge for the head coach is to get every piece into the whole puzzle and not leave it as different pieces. Having a clear vision and knowing how all the bits and pieces fit together will be key.”

Head coaches will also need to develop a greater range of ‘softer’ skills,

says Crocker. “I think the days of the ‘superhero’ leader, the single person that leads from the front, is becoming less and less,” he says. “With advancements in specialist coaches, data and sports science, the role of the head coach is changing and is evolving. Having outstanding communication skills is absolutely key, but that communication is not only one way. The head coach has to create a listening environment, because that’s the hardest thing to do when you’ve got such a short amount of time and there’s so much pressure.

“Head coaches have to really listen to their staff with regards to the information that’s coming in and utilise the level of expertise they are surrounded by. They can’t be great at all elements of the process, so filtering all that information is key. Similarly, head coaches have to know their ‘blind spots’, share those with staff and show a certain level of vulnerability. If the head coach can do that, I think they will get a lot more out of the team of staff around them.” 🌱

Guillaume Gille, head coach of the French national handball team

‘We’re entering a new era’

Other team sports are also calling on the services of specialist coaches to help improve individual and team performance. Guillaume Gille, head coach of the French men’s national handball team, the current Olympic champions, explains how coaches in his sport are becoming more and

more specialised.

“The French national handball team has goalkeeper coaches, fitness coaches, video analysts, assistant coaches, and so on. It’s very similar to football, but on a smaller scale, because we don’t have the same financial resources.

“I expect a specialist coach to have particular expertise in a specific field, as well as the ability to work as part of a team. If one of my fitness coaches does whatever they like or decides to do things their own way rather than act in the best interests of the team, disaster is inevitable. Information must be shared effectively to enable all staff members to help the



players perform to the best of their ability.

“We are all trying to analyse and understand the players’ performances on the court, gathering as much information as possible so we can help them fulfil their potential. We’re entering a new era. Data is already being used widely, but not in a joined-up way.

“When you use GPS trackers to measure distances covered or high-

intensity runs, you’re seeing things through a very small window. Thanks to video tracking, I think we will soon be able to access a player’s complete data – physical, mental and technical – and therefore manage our team better. This will create the need for more specialists to collect the data, pick out the key information, pass it on and use it.”

EUROPE'S UNITED FRONT DETAILED IN NEW CLUB LANDSCAPE REPORT

At the beginning of February, UEFA released the 13th edition of The European Club Footballing Landscape report, its annual club licensing benchmarking report on European club football.

While the report again provides the most authoritative, accurate and detailed review of the European football finance landscape, competition landscape and player landscape, this year's edition also provides an update on the seismic effect that a second year of COVID-19 disruption has had on top-division clubs.

One of the starkest findings of the report is that the majority of the lost revenues, €4.4 billion and counting, comes from lost gate receipts, with this revenue stream almost wiped out (88% down) during the 2020/21 financial year as a result of empty stands from the health emergency. Gate revenues contributed just 2% of club revenues across Europe, down from 16% pre-pandemic.

Naturally, the loss of gate receipts has had a profound impact on overall club finances. The report shows that the overall pandemic impact effect on club revenues over the 2019/20 and 2020/21 seasons is expected to be €7 billion.

But the publication shows that two key forms of club income remain strong. The report shows healthy television revenues in 2021, after disruption and rebates in 2020. In addition, the new UEFA men's club competition rights cycle (2021/22–2023/24) has seen further growth in broadcast rights revenue.

€1 billion in youth investment

Prize money will increase to over €2.7 billion per year, to be shared among the 96 clubs participating in the three men's senior club competitions. Solidarity payments for youth development to clubs that do not qualify for any of the UEFA men's club competitions are projected to increase by more than 60%. Since the start of the UEFA Champions League, more than €1 billion has been distributed to more than 1,500 clubs and academies across Europe for youth investment purposes.

The report also shows that players aged 23 or under accounted for 55% of total transfer spending (by value) across Europe's 20 largest transfer markets, compared with a ten-year average of 47%. This suggests that clubs increasingly believe that value can be found in younger players, given their resale potential.

Women's football focus

The report includes a dedicated and detailed chapter on the growth and status of women's football in Europe. It shows that a major contributing factor in the growing commercialisation of the women's game is the increased exposure gained through match broadcasts. Twenty of Europe's 42 top divisions now have structured domestic broadcasting deals in place across a range of media platforms.

New players section

There is also a new players section. Among the wealth of information contained within, it shows that among the 'Big 5' men's leagues (England, Spain, Italy, Germany and France), Italy's Serie A clubs used the most players on average, fielding an average of 30.9 players, four more than clubs in the English Premier League. LOSC Lille fielded the fewest players (21) of all clubs in the 'Big 5' leagues, with only Sweden's Halmstads BK using fewer (20) overall. By contrast, FC Schalke 04 used 42 players, the most of all the 'Big 5' league clubs, while Russia's PFK Tambov fielded an extraordinary 50 players over the course of their league season. The report also simulates the likely impact of new FIFA regulations on European clubs.

In the report foreword, UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin says: "In last year's foreword, I expressed the hope that we would see a glimpse of the green pitch of recovery – and we have. With 2021/22 seasons nearing their halfway point, attendances are showing signs of a strong recovery. This is an important indicator of the state of clubs, and has been achieved thanks to major efforts in match organisation and in the development of effective health protocols across Europe."

Looking ahead, he adds: "One lesson of the past two years has been that it is only by showing solidarity and working together that European football can overcome existential challenges such as the pandemic. That was also a lesson drawn from the so-called Super League project. The self-interested actions of a misguided few were thwarted by the unity of European football – fans, clubs, players, and national associations."

"This report provides sobering details of the post-pandemic challenges that await us, but it also illustrates the remarkable robustness and resilience of European football, with its unified approach. Ultimately, the pandemic will only make us stronger. The COVID crisis has also highlighted to what extent football is part of the fabric of European life. Football was a true lifeline for many."

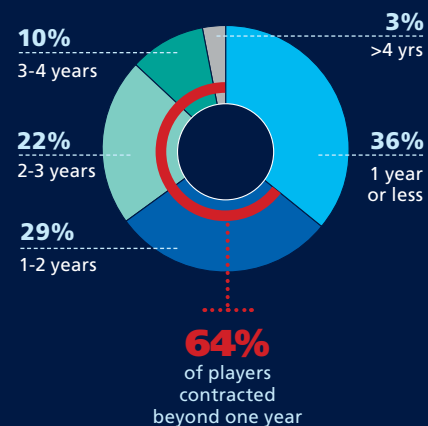


RIDING OUT THE STORM



PLAYER CONTRACT LENGTH in 1st division

In percentage*

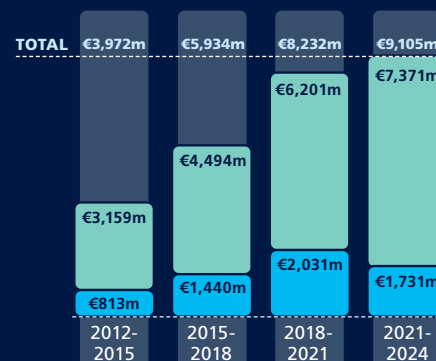


	1 year or less	1-2 years	2-3 years	3-4 years	>4 years	Average in months
	21%	26%	23%	20%	10%	32,7
	29%	28%	23%	15%	5%	28,6
	29%	26%	23%	13%	8%	29,7
	35%	22%	25%	13%	5%	27,5
	29%	25%	29%	11%	5%	28,6
	41%	27%	21%	8%	3%	24,5
	36%	31%	22%	8%	4%	25,5
	41%	32%	18%	8%	2%	23,7
	33%	25%	24%	13%	5%	27,9
	36%	32%	19%	11%	1%	25,0

*Information sourced directly from clubs (or Transfermarkt where data not available). This analysis excludes academy or non-first team squad players.

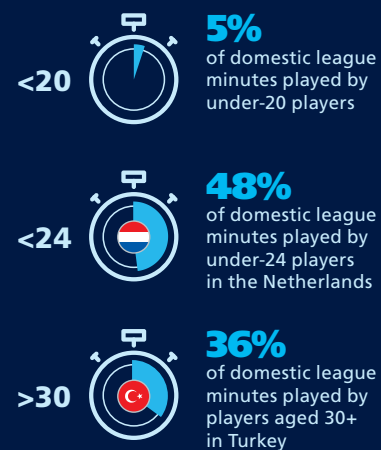
UEFA CLUB COMPETITION BROADCAST REVENUES

- European territories
- Rest of the world



62% Increase in solidarity payments to clubs outside the 'Big 5' leagues

BREAKDOWN OF MINUTES PLAYED in 1st division by age (in percentage)

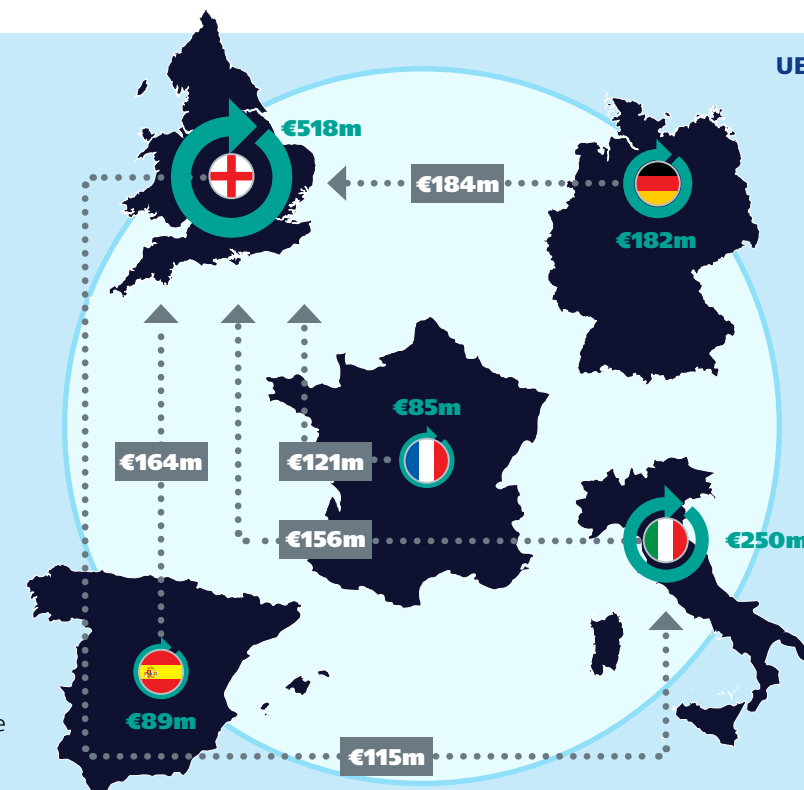


	<20	20-23	24-29	>30
	3%	25%	55%	17%
	5%	30%	48%	17%
	3%	20%	49%	27%
	2%	25%	49%	24%
	6%	32%	43%	19%
	3%	27%	45%	24%
	2%	14%	49%	36%
	8%	40%	39%	13%
	4%	28%	50%	17%
	6%	31%	46%	17%

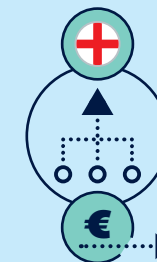
Legend: <20 (light blue), 20-23 (medium blue), 24-29 (light green), >30 (dark green)

TEN LARGEST TRANSFER FLOWS in summer 2021

Major transfer flows by value
The map on this page shows the ten largest transfer flows by value in summer 2021. Arrows denote cross-border flows, while circles denote domestic flows.



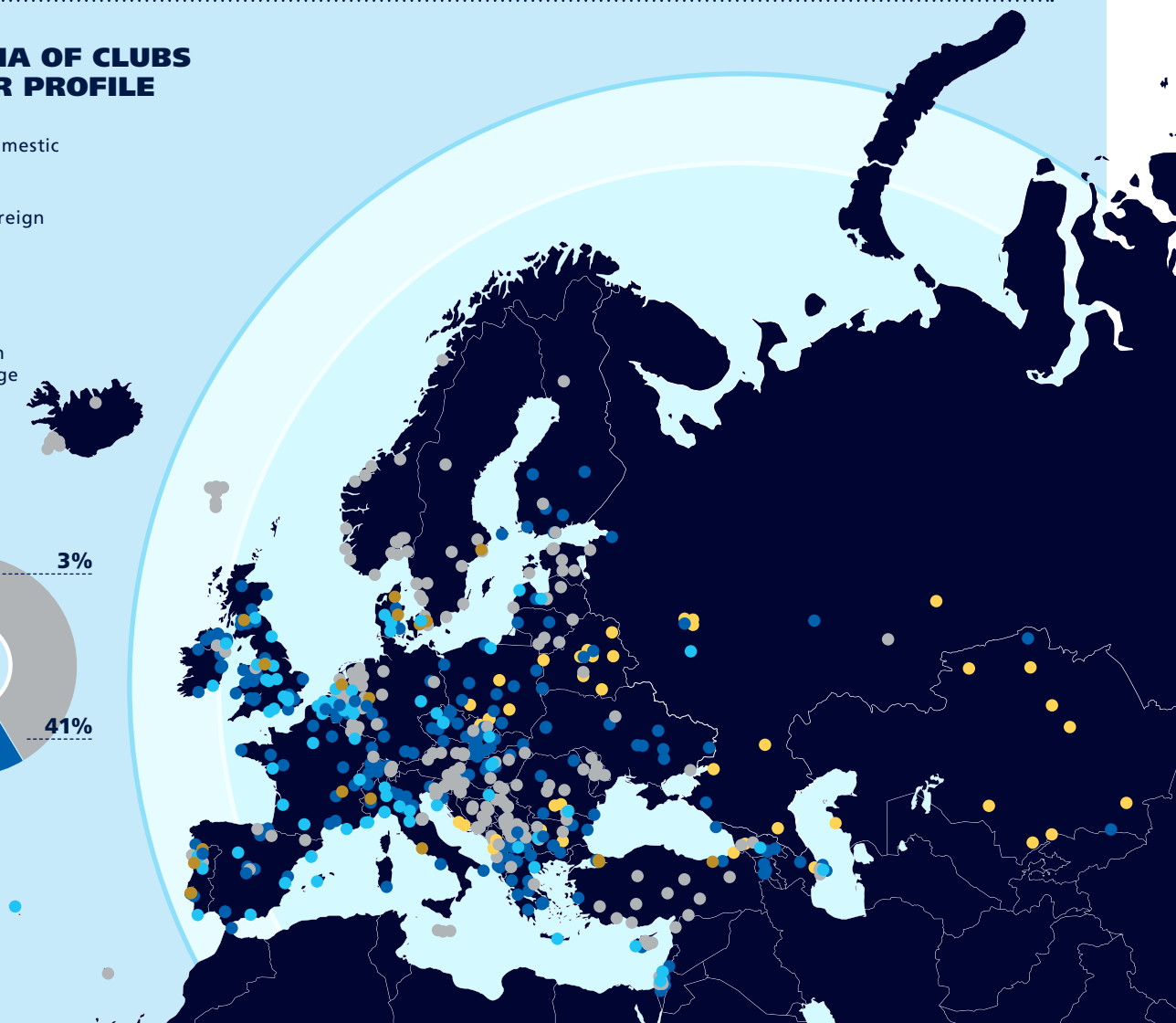
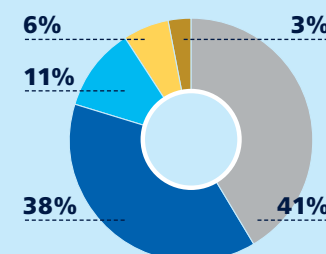
6 out of 10 largest flows involved England



10 out of 10 All of the ten largest transfer flows involved at least one of the 'Big 5'

PANORAMA OF CLUBS BY OWNER PROFILE

- Owned by domestic private party
- Owned by foreign private party
- Association/foundation
- Club listed on stock exchange
- Government-controlled



A SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY FOCUSING ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Strength through Unity aims to inspire, activate and accelerate collective action to respect human rights and the environment within the context of European football through to 2030.



In mid-December, UEFA announced the launch of its innovative Football Sustainability Strategy 2030 – Strength through Unity, a long-term commitment by UEFA.

Through its new strategy, which will run until 2030, UEFA wants to inspire, activate and accelerate collective action to respect human rights and the environment within the context of European football. However, UEFA cannot act alone. Strength through Unity is a practical strategy that aims to mobilise the European football ecosystem around a common approach through clearly defined targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) in order to invest in football’s future prosperity.

Close collaboration essential

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, said: “This strategy is titled Strength through Unity to signify that these complex issues can only be addressed and solved if we work in close collaboration with all

our football stakeholders, agree on a shared agenda, use a common language and adopt a consistent approach. I am convinced that if football comes together and bundles its power to drive sustainable change, it will be able to have a strong and long-lasting positive impact. As UEFA, we need to set the right example towards sustainable change and inspire and mobilise others to follow.”

The strategy was developed by linking football to sustainability, aligned with UEFA’s principles and with the demands of global institutions and civil society. UEFA recognised that sustainability requires the right balance between socially responsible and environmentally friendly actions and practices to preserve the long-term viability of football.

Clear targets

Strength through Unity is formulated around 11 policies, each supported by a 2030 ambition, targets and KPIs, and will

be implemented in five areas of action: UEFA as an internal organisation, UEFA events, UEFA members, the football ecosystem, and partners and society, which includes groups such as sponsors, fans and global institutions.

Each policy is described in detail and every one of them has a clear 2030 ambition and plan linking topics to targets to KPIs, with the understanding that these will evolve to keep up with the fast-moving world of sustainability.

Michele Uva, UEFA’s football social responsibility director, explained: “This document is not a final destination but the starting point to operationalise the strategy, a difficult yet fascinating task ahead. We will create guidelines and programmes to support member associations, leagues and clubs in developing their own strategies. We need to work as one team, with one common language and approach, to amplify football’s positive impact and make the most of our collective efforts. We will create a community of manager experts in sustainability to rally their teams. Measuring and reporting will be decisive to demonstrate how football is using its powerful platform to improve sustainability.”

Strength through Unity concurs with internationally recognised frameworks and standards, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Sports for Climate Action Framework, the European Green Deal, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the UN Global Compact Principles and the Global Reporting Initiative.

UEFA’s approach is likely to evolve through periodic reviews and assessments of progress. This may lead to consolidating some of the policies. An integrated and flexible method is essential to tackle human rights and environmental considerations and balance all aspects of sustainability. A review of the strategy’s effectiveness and architecture is envisaged for 2025.

This journey will present challenges on the way. To overcome these, the European football ecosystem must acknowledge the urgency for action and collaborate around a common agenda.

Strength through unity! →

THIS STRATEGY cannot be successful in splendid isolation – collaboration is necessary to maximise positive impacts and to prevent and mitigate risks.

UEFA aims to rally the European football ecosystem to gather around a common agenda and create effective synergies.

At the heart of European football, UEFA operates in tandem with its members – the 55 member associations – while leagues and clubs play an active role in organising games and competitions.



Other stakeholders actively participate in UEFA competitions at each level of the game, from players and fans to coaches, referees, officials and volunteers. Sponsors, the media and different institutions complete the stakeholder field.

In undertaking collaborative efforts with its stakeholders, UEFA can leverage the heartfelt, shared passion for football to offer a platform of collaboration, united by the positive values of the sport. This is underpinned by the popularity of football, which enables UEFA to amplify the sustainable message to a global audience.

ELEVEN POLICIES HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR THE STRATEGIC PERIOD 2021–30

POLICIES 1-7: RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS



ANTI-RACISM

2030 AMBITION
Eradicate racism in all its forms on and around the pitch across European football.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA conducts a review to further improve existing systems for reporting racism and racial discrimination across European football. Consequently, it ensures systems are developed and accessible to support victims. Furthermore, the structures and communications around the investigation and sanctioning of discrimination cases will be strengthened. Lastly, discriminatory actions and management procedures within stadiums as well as UEFA online platforms will be identified.



CHILD AND YOUTH PROTECTION

2030 AMBITION
Provide a safe and empowering

environment for all children and youth to play football.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA continues to support dedicated practitioners across Europe in developing child and youth protection policies. This includes event-specific safeguarding arrangements and protocols, reporting, case management, training of coaches, event workforce and volunteers. The organisation continuously updates the online UEFA child safeguarding platform to facilitate continuous learning.



EQUALITY AND INCLUSION

2030 AMBITION
Establish an inclusive football ecosystem that guarantees equal

rights and opportunities to all active in the sport.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA continues to explore ways to encourage diversity and provide equal opportunities to each member of the football community. It sets governance standards for its own organisation and events regarding equal rights and opportunities. Lastly, it trains and engages grassroots to elite-level coaches, players, officials and administrators on the importance of equal opportunities and inclusion.



FOOTBALL FOR ALL ABILITIES

2030 AMBITION
Guarantee barrier-free access for any individual wanting to play, attend events or work in football.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA engages football coaches by including football for all abilities in its coach education programmes. Furthermore, the organisation actively addresses barriers by continuing to raise accessibility levels at stadiums and events, and by offering employment, vocational training or volunteering opportunities. Lastly, it fosters enhanced collaboration between football stakeholders, such as member associations and European expert organisations.



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

2030 AMBITION
Mobilise the football community to promote better health and active

lifestyles, and widen the engagement of players across age groups, particularly older people.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA operationalises topics such as physical activity, nutrition, mental health and avoidance of substance abuse into campaigns that leverage world and international days across each calendar

year. This includes competence building across the target groups of staff, managers, coaches, trainers, mentors and referees. In addition, UEFA continues to enable access to healthy food at its own events.



REFUGEE SUPPORT

2030 AMBITION
Be a driving organisation and

advocate the protection and inclusion of refugees through sport.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA, together with UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, collaborates with European football stakeholders to operationalise the above focus areas. Furthermore, the organisation will continue to roll out a grants-based programme providing dedicated funding to member associations. Lastly, UEFA collects and shares good practices to inspire the entire football community around tangible ways to support refugees through football.



SOLIDARITY AND RIGHTS

2030 AMBITION
Embed human rights principles into all strategic

decisions and business relationships and be recognised for valuable initiatives of solidarity in the European football ecosystem.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA continues to operationalise its Human Rights Commitment – adopted by the Executive Committee in July 2021 – by catalysing actions across regulations, policies, guidelines and business relationships. In addition, UEFA continuously improves solidarity mechanisms (including natural disaster grants) that contribute to the restoration of football assets through seed funding.

POLICIES 8-11: RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT



CIRCULAR ECONOMY

2030 AMBITION
Embed the 4R approach – built around Reducing,

Reusing, Recycling and Recovering – in all operations to minimise the impact of football on the environment and drive resource efficiency and cost savings.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA catalyses circular economy solutions together with partners and stadiums/event venues, with a particular focus on product packaging, plastics, single-use items, food loss and waste. Furthermore, it integrates circularity criteria in the UEFA Stadium Infrastructure Regulations as well as in UEFA headquarters' facility management. The organisation also creates and continuously updates a repository of best practices targeting football, capturing innovations and lessons learned across member associations, leagues and clubs.



CLIMATE AND ADVOCACY

2030 AMBITION
Reduce European football's carbon footprint and

be a credible reference partner for organisations working on climate protection.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA transitions from a reliance on compensation to a focus on reducing emissions from its carbon footprint. Furthermore, it leverages the global popularity of UEFA's elite competitions to communicate about the urgency of climate action. Alongside, a repository of best practices in football solutions targeting environmental protection will be created, capturing innovations and lessons learned. Lastly, UEFA continues efforts to minimise its internal organisational footprint.



EVENT SUSTAINABILITY

2030 AMBITION
Setting a new benchmark for zero-impact

sporting events by developing and rolling out UEFA's own sustainable event management system.

MOVING FORWARD

The creation of the UEFA sustainable event management system (SEMS) will enable the measurement and benchmarking of event sustainability in football and provide end-to-end traceability of UEFA's impacts across its events. In the further implementation of the system, UEFA will collaborate closely with member associations, leagues and clubs. This will result in a process of continuous improvement around areas

such as carbon footprint measurement, sustainable procurement and waste management. Lastly, this will lead to further cooperation and innovation with host cities, partners and other football stakeholders to shape a sustainable legacy for events.



INFRASTRUCTURE SUSTAINABILITY

2030 AMBITION
Continue to raise the bar for European football infrastructure

by setting criteria and sharing best practices for a new generation of sustainable football venues.

MOVING FORWARD

UEFA produces a Guide to Sustainable Stadiums, which integrates best practices in a wide range of areas (e.g. pitch treatment, energy, water, materials, electricity, mobility).

Furthermore, UEFA integrates sustainability criteria into its Stadium Infrastructure Regulations as part of the UEFA club licensing system.

The sustainability section on UEFA.com has been redesigned and is available at www.uefa.com/sustainability.

Targets and KPIs embedded in the strategy



For each of the 11 policies, topics have been translated into targets and key performance indicators (KPIs) that will guide the action plan.

Targets are the drivers of our aspirations and are related to the levers that UEFA can mobilise to inspire, activate and accelerate sustainable change.

Each target is linked to specific sustainable goals (SDGs), the guiding reference for all sustainable development actors worldwide.



GRASSROOTS STARS RECOGNISED WITH 2021/22 AWARDS

Winners from Belgium, Germany, Moldova, Scotland and Spain have been honoured in the 2021/22 UEFA Grassroots Awards.

The UEFA Grassroots Awards have been running since 2010, with 111 award winners from 40 national associations. The awards recognise outstanding work below the elite levels of the game, shining a spotlight on projects, clubs and national associations that are raising the standards of grassroots football and providing an important contribution to the communities around them.

Despite ongoing challenges owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been another stellar year for nominations, with 90 candidates whittled down to gold, silver and bronze winners in each of the five categories.

Candidates are nominated by UEFA's member national associations, with award winners selected by UEFA's Executive Committee, following

recommendations from the organisation's Grassroots Panel and Development and Technical Assistance Committee. This season, particular attention was paid to contributions to returning to play after the halt caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, said: "Selecting the winners of the UEFA Grassroots Awards is always an enjoyable and inspiring task. It highlights the impressive, inclusive, and noteworthy projects of national associations and clubs across the continent, whose influence often sways beyond sports. Congratulations to the winners, and I wish you and all the nominees even more future success as you continue to forge these outstanding projects that have an essential impact on the game's growth and your communities."

THE 2021/22 UEFA GRASSROOTS AWARDS WINNERS

Best Amateur Club: IK Dien (Belgium)

Founded in 1924, Ik Dien, located in Edegem, take the gold award for their commitment to the local community, providing grassroots football for men, women, boys and girls, as well as staging their own Rainbow Month to promote diversity and equality among its 800 members.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic affecting the game across Europe, Ik Dien (which translates as 'I serve') has worked to offer playing opportunities to people of all ages, organising walking football programmes for veterans and youth initiatives for young players. The club has also placed a strong emphasis on the development of girls' football by taking part in the UEFA Playmakers scheme and organising its own girls' football festivals.

Silver: FC Kumayri (Armenia)
Bronze: Udruženje Respekt (Bosnia and Herzegovina)



IK Dien



Best Professional Club: Athletic Bilbao (Spain)

Through its academy and community work, Athletic Bilbao has developed a comprehensive child protection and safeguarding policy, enabling the protection of all young people in the club's care.

Athletic's Aterpe (Basque for 'shelter') programme, which enables a safe environment for players, ballboys and girls, and player escorts, includes preventive elements, staff training and action protocols, with special attention to caring for children in vulnerable social situations. Athletic works with more than 150 grassroots clubs in the surrounding region, supporting them with training, medical and financial assistance.

Silver: Ferencvárosi TC (Hungary)
Bronze: FK Vilnius (Lithuania)



Athletic Bilbao

Best Participation Initiative: Football in Schools (Moldova)

The Football in Schools initiative is the main pillar of the Football Association of Moldova (FMF) strategy, benefiting more than 11,000 students and over 400 teachers so far, with the aim of reaching 45,000 children by 2024.



By offering specialist football classes and renovating pitches and surrounding infrastructure, the FMF is creating opportunities for children to grow up in a happy and healthy environment, as well as being more engaged at school.

Silver: Fotbollsgnistan (Sweden)
Bronze: Grassroots Campaign 2021 (Netherlands)

FMF

Best Disability Initiative: Scottish Para-Football (Scotland)

Scottish Para-Football was created in 2019 as the world's first disability football national association. Following investment from the Scottish FA, it brings together nine different organisations governing different types of disability football – amputee football, cerebral palsy football, deaf football, frame football, learning disability football, autism football, football memories, mental health football and powerchair football – under a single national umbrella. The result is more access and facilities for disabled people, ensuring more players are taking up the game and being physically active.

Silver: Football Your Way (England)
Bronze: Nobody Offside (Belgium)



Scottish FA



Discover Football

Best Social Initiative: Discover Football (Germany)

Discover Football uses football to fight for girls', women's and LGBTIQ+ rights, advocating a world in which anyone can practise sport without the threat of discrimination. Founded by a group of committed football enthusiasts, the NGO organises a biennial football festival, as well as international exchanges, conferences, workshops, seminars and tournaments where women acquire skills and knowledge to help them gain autonomy, social mobility and power.

Silver: Time to Tackle (Scotland)
Bronze: Tirana United (Albania)

UEFA #EQUALGAME AWARDS

UEFA presented three #EqualGame Awards to celebrate vital anti-discrimination and social inclusion work during the UEFA Nations League draw ceremony on 16 December in Nyon.



Since 2018, and under the banner of UEFA’s Respect campaign, the #EqualGame Awards have been celebrating individuals or football organisations that have acted as role models in promoting diversity, inclusion and accessibility in European football.

The latest award winners – Khalida Popal, Juan Mata and the German Football Association (DFB) – have all demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities in creating a more open, diverse

and accessible game, providing a powerful example to follow during the 2020/21 season and beyond.

Aleksander Čeferin, the UEFA president, said: “Each of these three #EqualGame Award winners is a fine example of how football can be used as a catalyst for positive change. They can and should be very proud of their achievements and I would like to personally thank them for their exemplary leadership that will, hopefully, inspire many others.”

Khalida Popal: a shining light for women in football all over the world

Khalida Popal received the #EqualGame Award for her tireless work in fighting gender stereotypes and empowering girls, women and minority communities through sport.

Popal, 34, had to leave her native Afghanistan, where she was founder and captain of the women’s national team, ten years ago. While experiencing life in refugee centres in both Norway and Denmark, she used the power of football to help her and other women to overcome stress, trauma and depression and bring hope and joy to their lives again. Now settled in Denmark, Popal

continues to use football to create social inclusion opportunities – she is founder of the Girl Power organisation and an ambassador for the Street Child World Cup.

Since the unrest in Afghanistan and fall of Kabul last year, Popal has worked tirelessly to evacuate the team’s players and make sure they find a place to resettle.

On receiving her #EqualGame Award, Khalida Popal said: “It is recognition not only for me and for my work, but it will inspire other women and girls to use their platform and the power of their platform and voices to make this game beautiful and more inclusive.”



Juan Mata: a uniting example from the Manchester United midfielder

Already a EURO 2012, UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League winner, Juan Mata is also one of the most socially conscious active players around, setting the perfect example off the field with Common Goal, the charity he co-founded in 2017.

Common Goal makes positive change in socially challenged communities, using football’s power and popularity to tackle gender inequality, promote inclusion and provide more opportunities for underprivileged children.

By inspiring players, coaches and other personalities, including the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, to commit 1% of their salaries to the project, Mata is proving football can make a direct positive change to communities all over the world.

On receiving his #EqualGame Award, Juan Mata said: “I am proud of the work that our organisations are doing and proud of the stories of people that have overcome difficult problems. This is what we want to do through Common Goal – to give people a choice to decide their futures.”



DFB: commitment to football for everyone

The DFB is one of the biggest sports associations in the world and sees it as its responsibility to promote football in Germany as a sport for everyone,

with a strong and enduring focus on inclusion. The DFB champions diversity and its positive impact on football and society. Through its Football for All programme, the DFB is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment where everyone can enjoy the game.

The DFB was one of the first football associations to actively support refugees. What started with offering opportunities for refugees to play football turned into a huge inclusion programme. The DFB now also runs a leadership initiative to provide qualifications and integrate people from different backgrounds into their administration and volunteer programmes.

With a comprehensive action plan and resources in place for most diversity constructs in football, in January 2021, the DFB set up a national contact point for LGBTQI+ issues in football. The main aims of this independent entity are to increase visibility of LGBTQI+ communities in sport, develop and share best practices within football and work closely with all stakeholders towards more inclusive practices in the game.

DFB first vice-president Rainer Koch said: “The DFB is convinced that football is a strong force to foster social cohesion. Today’s award is for all people in the German FA working for an equal game, which nowadays is more important than ever.”



SUPPORTING ASSOCIATIONS WITH BRAND MANAGEMENT

The UEFA Grow programme is the central strategic development support programme which works with the national associations to nurture the game throughout Europe. The programme offers extensive consultancy services to UEFA's 55 member associations with the aim of assisting them to achieve their full potential.

One element that is critical to national associations achieving their full potential is effective brand management. A strong brand can attract more sponsors, develop an emotional bond with fans and other stakeholders, and support the association's strategic objectives. Creating a powerful brand portfolio is therefore key for national associations as well as for other football organisations such as leagues or clubs.

UEFA Grow has been a trusted partner in this domain, with 40 national associations having already benefitted from brand consultancy services offered by the UEFA Grow programme.

In 2020/21, the programme supported the Football Association of Wales (FAW) in creating a new brand for the domestic women's game – the Adran Leagues. This was part of a major restructure of the domestic pyramid and comprised the development of new names and brand identities for the league and cup competitions. The decision has been made to remove 'women's' from the rebranded league name to create parity across all FAW leagues, making Wales

only the third country in Europe to make such a move and the first in the UK.

Overall increase

The rebrand has been a massive success thus far. It helped secure the leagues' first multi-year commercial sponsorship deal, which is the most lucrative sponsorship of women's domestic football in Wales to date. The FAW saw a 1,720% increase in engagement and a 1,300% increase in profile visits from brand launch in June 2021 until January 2022. Thanks to the rebrand, the Adran Leagues also recorded an increase in TV viewership and national media coverage, higher attendances and strong endorsement from players. Clare Daley of Pontypridd Town said: "The new league branding makes me feel really proud as a player to play in the Adran Leagues. It's dynamic, exciting and modern, while having a Welsh identity that represents the pinnacle of football in Wales."

Commenting on the success of the rebrand and the role of UEFA Grow, Lowri Roberts, head of women's and girls' football at the FAW said: "We can't thank you enough for all of your work on this project. We really enjoyed the super engaging brand development process that made us really feel part of the creative team. Our values and identity have been captured perfectly within the brand."

The Football Association of Wales has rebranded its women's competitions as the Adran Leagues.

THE BRAND MANAGEMENT MODEL



Brand-new identity

In 2020/21, the UEFA Grow team also worked with the Lithuanian Football Federation, the Football Federation of Kosovo and the San Marino Football Federation on major rebranding projects, going through a full cycle of the UEFA Grow brand management model (see illustration above). In the planning phase, we reviewed the strategic plans and worked on a situational analysis. We defined the brand architecture and positioning, produced an agency briefing and ran a tender process. Through an extensive process with a creative agency, a new visual identity system was produced. The implementation phase comprised internal engagement as well as external activation. The sustain phase involved various evaluation activities (including stakeholder surveys) and continuous review and development to further develop the brand portfolios.

Many national associations are already benefitting from the brand consultancy services UEFA Grow has to offer. Nevertheless, a lack of continuous investment in brand management and

development remains an issue across national associations. For example, less than a dozen national associations have a headcount for a dedicated brand manager to look after the entire brand portfolio of the national association. Another key issue is that in many organisations there is still a perception that a brand is the same thing as a logo. But a brand is much more than that. A logo is merely a symbol that helps recognise a brand. A brand relates to a promise, a personality and a purpose. And this lack of understanding of the role of brand is a driver of the lack of investment in brand management. It is often people with little or no background information at top management and board level that make decisions on whether to invest in brand development or not.

UEFA Grow will continue to help national associations adopt a best practice approach for realising the full potential of their brands. The ultimate aim is to ensure that national associations use their brands as a strategic tool to create value for the organisation, football and society as a whole.

A series of videos on brand development

Following increased demand for more educational material that can be shared across the football community to address these issues, the UEFA Grow team created a series of video episodes on brand development and management.

The core purpose of the 11 video episodes is to:

- educate about role and importance of brands ("more than a logo");
- explain why the topic of 'brand' is important for national associations/football organisations;
- highlight cases from the world of football, sports and other industries;
- outline the support that is available from UEFA Grow.

The video series is targeted at top management, board members and staff members with little or no knowledge of brands, as well as leagues, clubs and other football organisations that are important stakeholders of the national associations, and brand/marketing leads, whose role is to manage the brand portfolio. The videos are available on UEFA Academy Online and are a useful asset for all national associations.

Best cases in brand development

Brand development was one of eight categories at the 2021 UEFA Grow Awards. In fact, it was the most competitive category with 22 entries from 20 national associations. If you are interested in finding out more about these cases, the brand development case book can be found at: <https://academyonline.uefa.com/resource/8929>.

A NEW HOME FOR OCEANIA FOOTBALL

The Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) opened its new headquarters in New Zealand last December, a project supported by UEFA's football development programme Assist.

The project has received funding from both FIFA and Assist, UEFA's global football development programme that supports our sister confederations and their national associations outside of Europe, ensuring the global game continues to grow.

An elite base

Te Kahu o Kiwa (its official Māori name) was opened with a traditional blessing ceremony and houses the OFC's New Zealand staff, serving as a base for visiting personnel and teams from the confederation's 11 member associations and two associate members.

In addition to the administration space, it features two artificial pitches and dressing rooms suitable for hosting elite matches.

The completion of the project will be marked with a formal inauguration later this year. UEFA is happy to have supported the OFC Home of Football project. The Oceania member associations now have a new home where they can meet, discuss and further develop football across the entire region, and this would not have been possible without the dedication and hard work of the entire OFC team.

Besides the Home of Football, UEFA has supported the launch of OFC Learn, a free educational platform funded by Assist and guided by the UEFA Academy, which will revolutionise the way people learn by offering different educational resources such as online courses, webinars, articles and group discussions to OFC national associations and their staff, sharing examples of European best practice. 🌐

Oceania Football Confederation launches Tonga fundraising campaign

As Tongans started to come to terms with the devastation wreaked by January's volcanic eruption and tsunami, the OFC launched a fundraising campaign to help finance the enormous rebuilding task that lies ahead.

"The OFC is committed to standing alongside Tonga. Our goal is to help Tongans rebuild livelihoods that have been destroyed by this unforeseen disaster," said the OFC president, Lambert Maltock.

UEFA has pledged its support for the OFC's Li'oa Ma'a Tonga campaign. "We will make a financial contribution and strongly encourage other members of the European football community to do the same," said the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin.

UEFA's web and social media channels also invited football fans across Europe to support the appeal.

The Austrian FA has an ongoing partnership with Tonga and donated €10,000 of its own money towards the campaign. It will also donate its €35,000 of UEFA Assist funding approved for the current financial year to help football in Tonga recover from the natural disaster.



The OFC's new Home of Football

CANAL 11 – TWO AND A HALF YEARS SERVING FOOTBALL AND SOCIETY

The Portuguese Football Federation's Canal 11, the first-ever television channel run by a UEFA member association, celebrated two and a half years of broadcasts on 1 February.

BY GERMANO ALMEIDA AND MATILDE DIAS

Within the space of only 30 months, the channel has become the cornerstone of the Portuguese Football Federation's content innovation project, which also includes the Portugal football school – a higher education initiative focused entirely on football.

Canal 11 is an innovative content platform, with more than 50 professionals dedicated to it. The television channel promotes Portuguese football through more than 750 broadcasts a year of live matches (other than the top two men's divisions and matches of the men's senior national team), with a special focus on women's and grassroots football, and also showing other Portuguese Football Federation (FPF) competitions, including futsal and beach soccer.

In addition to the sports dimension, the channel's programming has a strong social and responsibility component, providing the viewers with special content that promotes inclusion, diversity and accessibility: "Canal 11 has exactly the same goal as the FPF: to get more boys and girls involved in football. In order to achieve that, we count on the immense quality of young Portuguese footballers and also on the great passion that the Portuguese people have for the game. It is not by chance that we have good TV audiences in the 15–34 year-old segment, and we have already had periods, at night, with more women than men watching us," said Pedro Sousa, the channel's director, who sees the project as "a content platform," much more than "merely a television". We want to help "promote, protect and develop football," continued the person responsible for the FPF project, whose broadcasts started on 1 August 2019: "Competitions which are



CANAL 11 IN NUMBERS

150 live matches every month
5 matches on average per day
15 commentators
30 journalists and other full-time roles
30 employees as external service providers
350,000 followers on Instagram

295,000 fans on Facebook
216,000 subscribers on YouTube
65,000 followers on Twitter
21.6% of viewers in the 15–34 year-old segment (the most successful Portuguese TV channel in that age segment)
28.3% percentage of women in the total audience

NUMBERS IN 30 MONTHS
1,880 matches
752 matches a year
273 national team matches

FPF



perhaps not conducive to large TV audiences now have a platform to gain exposure and grow. It is worth showing what has not been seen on Portuguese television until now: Canal 11 shows

many women's matches, youth football and much more futsal."

In addition to boosting football and futsal participation, Canal 11 is also committed to changing perceptions and improving the atmosphere around the game: "We like to debate and discuss tactical aspects; we like to invite those who understand the game and can explain it. We believe that as we talk more about the game, more people will be interested in it and more people will want to play it or become spectators and consumers," Pedro Sousa added. 🌐



STRATEGY 2022–2025 LAUNCHED

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has laid out the blueprint for the future of the country's biggest participation sport with the launch of the FAI Strategy 2022–2025, which aims to use football to inspire the nation and connect communities.

BY GARETH MAHER

The strategy document was launched at a live event in Dublin in early February and hosted on the FAI's YouTube channel.

Announcing the association's vision and stated purpose to enrich the lives of all through positive football experiences, the strategy outlines the pillars and enablers that will drive this ambition. The six core pillars of the FAI for the next four years will be to transform football facilities and infrastructure; drive grassroots football as the heart of the game; nurture football pathways for all; develop the full potential of football for women and girls; frame a new future for the League of Ireland; and build for international success.

The FAI will work towards these goals by building a best in class, fit for purpose organisation; embracing digital technologies; building a trusted and respected brand; driving investment to achieve the strategy; and developing a collaborative and inclusive culture.

The FAI's CEO, Jonathan Hill, said: "Football is the biggest sport in Ireland and over the next four years and the lifespan of this strategy, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to develop, transform and inspire an association that can unite and deliver across all our pillars for all our members. It is up to all of us now to deliver a new and progressive association, to capitalise

on the governance reforms, the transparency and the clarity of thought and vision that have followed the events of recent years. We are now an association for the future. And to deliver this strategy, the game needs to come together like never before."

With the assistance of UEFA Grow in the development process, the FAI strategy was formalised following wide-ranging consultation across all levels of Irish football with players, fans, coaches, administrators, staff, parents and guardians, volunteers, media and the general public. Along the way, the FAI held nine regional meetings with affiliates as well as meetings, consultations and in-depth interviews with 44 different stakeholder groups, engaged with over 500 members of the football community, received 40 written submissions from stakeholders across all facets of the game, and received and analysed 5,709 responses to research surveys across multiple stakeholder cohorts.

In identifying and addressing the challenges the Irish game is facing and to ensure that the FAI's priorities are mandated from Irish football for Irish football, the FAI Strategy 2022–2025 document highlights 61 key performance indicators, including:

- 300,000 registered players by the end of 2025 with an increase of 50,000 female players and 28,500 male players;
- 3,000 registered referees and a 50% retention rate for newly qualified referees;
- 300 female UEFA coaching licence holders by 2025;
- 40% female representation across the FAI board, general assembly and committees by the end of 2023;
- Qualification for UEFA EURO 2024;
- Qualification for the Women's World Cup and/or UEFA Women's EURO 2025;
- Qualification for a minimum of two final tournaments per competition cycle at youth level;
- Turnover to exceed €50m by the end of 2025 with deferred income below €10m and ring-fenced cash reserves of at least €6m;
- New primary partner for the men's national team to be secured in 2022;
- Partnership and sponsorship revenue to increase by 50% by the end of 2025.

The FAI Strategy 2022–2025 is available at strategy.fai.ie.

ALBANIA

www.fshf.org

FOOTBALL FOR THE NATION STRATEGY LAUNCHED FOR 2022–25

ANDI VERCANI



In mid-February, the Albanian Football Association launched its strategy for 2022–25, Football for the Nation, a really ambitious work plan that is expected to bring quality developments in Albanian football in the next four years. The strategy has been prepared in collaboration with local stakeholders and UEFA Grow experts and is the result of long and detailed research work.

The ceremony to launch the strategy was attended by many distinguished personalities of Albanian football, representatives of the academic world, medicine and civil society, as well as the presidents of the football associations of Kosovo and North Macedonia, Agim Ademi and Muamed Sejдини.

In his speech, the president of the Albanian Football Association, Armand Duka, emphasised that the strategy will rely on some important bases that have already been laid by the Albanian FA and presented the nine main pillars: grassroots, education, national competitions, national teams, infrastructure, women's football, good governance, public relations and social responsibility.

"You actually have in your hands detailed and well-elaborated material which is a genuine work plan with steps and actions to achieve the important objectives we have set. We have set ourselves important goals, being aware of our role and power in society, being also aware of our capacities but also thinking about the future of football in



our country and its development in the best way possible. The main focus of our work will be children and young people, but at the same time we will share the positive experience of football with all Albanians and we will offer them the opportunity to engage in football," the Albanian FA president said.

ANDORRA

www.faf.ad

ANDORRAN FOOTBALL AND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY – THE PERFECT MATCH

PRESS OFFICE



The Andorran Football Federation (FAF) marked International Women's Day 2022 by underlining how this year's main theme – Break the Bias – drives all of its communication about the women's game.

Since 2015, the FAF has been fulfilling its promise to give equal visibility to both the men's and women's game, whether by posting highlight videos of the national teams in action on its official website or streaming all domestic league fixtures.

"Our goal is to give the same level of communication to men's and women's football in Andorra," said Felix Álvarez, the FAF president, last month, after meeting the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, at UEFA's headquarters. "We want to bring the



public closer to the game in Andorra. That means increasing the number of people watching and playing women's football as well as men's," added Mr Álvarez.

Andorra's national women's team debuted in 2014 with a 1-0 friendly win against Gibraltar, before making their first-ever competitive appearance in the preliminary round of Women's EURO 2017.

AZERBAIJAN

www.affa.az

30th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

TORA AKHMEDOVA

The Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA) held its 30th annual general meeting in Baku on 2 February.

After the AFFA president, Rovnag Abdullayev, had welcomed the participants, a video of some of the association's activities during the past year was shown.

Executive vice-president Elkhon Mammadov gave a report to the meeting. This was followed by reports from the chief accountant of the AFFA finance department, Khalid Javadov, and independent auditor Elnur Kazimov.

After a video of EURO 2020, the head of the AFFA infrastructure department, Kamran Valiyev, gave a presentation on the legacy of EURO 2020, and the head of marketing and sponsorship, Tural Piriye, presented a new project to be implemented within the football development fund. Next



The AFFA president, Rovnag Abdullayev, presents one of the volunteers with their plaque.

up was the chairman of the referees committee, Fritz Stuchlik, who reported on the implementation the video assistant referee (VAR) system.

Last but not least, National Olympic Committee vice-president Chingiz Huseynzada addressed the meeting. He highlighted the work that had been done and some of the projects that had been implemented to develop football

and ensure its popularity during the reporting period.

After the speeches, 12 volunteers received plaques for their contributions to the EURO 2020 matches in Baku and various AFFA events.

The meeting concluded with a closing speech by the AFFA president and was followed by a meeting of the AFFA executive committee.

BELGIUM

www.rbfa.be

RBFA (RE)LAUNCHES ITS APP

MATTEO BALLIAUW

After a careful analysis of our Best of Belgian Football App in 2020, we saw the need for a renewed digital platform as a central facilitator of our corporate strategy.

In order to grow commercially, which allows us to develop football in Belgium, and taking the new digital reality into account, the old set-up was no longer sufficient.

We want to be a media channel that offers exclusive and engaging content. We want to control the data and get to know our stakeholders as accurately as possible. And we want to control the visibility and messages of partners in advertisements that reach the right audiences. In this way, we can realise additional income, which can be reinvested in the development of football.

We will also be able to better communicate our own messages and call our stakeholders to action, in order to attract more grassroots participants (players, coaches, referees, etc.) and national team fans, as well as sell more merchandising and tickets.

In March 2021, we launched the first version of our new Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA) app, which allowed our fans to follow the national team during EURO 2020. Dedicated content, including news and video, could be consulted in an always-on way. Moreover, grassroots stakeholders could continue to consult the statistics of their favourite teams and themselves. Later on, in a later version, we added the functionality of quizzes, polls and match score predictions. After the summer break,

the newest releases focused on the possibility to broadcast livestreams of our national teams' games and grassroots football functionalities such as consulting coaching licences, courses and directions to games.

The objective is to further expand our app in 2022 with a lot of innovative features, to further enhance the customer experience of both football participants and fans. This will allow us to further monetise the assets of the application, including branded content, data-related activations and targeted communications.

Feel free to try out our RBFA app by downloading it from the Apple Store or Google Play Store. For more information, you can contact our RBFA knowledge centre on knowledge.centre@rbfa.be.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

PROUD TO BE AMONG THE 16 BEST FUTSAL TEAMS IN EUROPE

SLAVICA PECIKOZA

Our futsal national team achieved great success by qualifying for their first major tournament, Futsal EURO 2022. Although our team dominated in qualifying, they did not perform quite so well in the final tournament in the Netherlands.

"We did not have the experience needed to play at this level," said head coach Ivo Krezo. "There were moments when we played well and showed that we deserved to be at the European Championship finals. However, it was not consistent and it was certainly not enough for this tournament, where every mistake was punished immediately. Overall, the impressions of our debut performance are positive, regardless of the fact that we did not win a single point. We have seen what we need to change in our work and approach if we want to progress and win at the big competitions. I think we are closer to the teams in the top ten, and with better work in clubs and investment in younger players, we can expect better results in the future and the regular participation



of our futsal team in the biggest competitions." After 11 years of playing for their country and a historic appearance at the Futsal EURO, captain Anel Radmilović and goalkeeper Stanislav Galić retired from international football. "I played with great enthusiasm and proudly wore the captain's armband with the desire to qualify for the big competition. This participation in the EURO is the crowning moment of my career, in which I spent the best

years in the national team jersey," said Radmilović. "The greatest honour for an athlete is playing for the national team and there were many moments that I will remember, especially the beautiful ones," said Galić. "I say goodbye to the national team with the belief that by going to the European Championship finals we have set new standards and contributed to the popularisation of futsal in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

CROATIA

www.hns-cff.hr

A NEW ERA FOR FANS: A LOYALTY CRYPTO TOKEN

NIKA BAHTIJAREVIĆ

The Croatian Football Federation (HNS) is joining the digital revolution in global football and has collaborated with two Croatian companies – AMPnet and Biznisport – to issue the Vatrene loyalty crypto token and an accompanying mobile app.

With this new venture, the HNS will broaden its services for fans of the Croatian national teams and provide them with ample opportunities for interacting with players, participating in decision-

making within the Croatian FA and accessing other features that will be exclusively available to owners of the Vatrene token, such as ticket pre-sales, access to VIP experiences, and rewards and discounts from the HNS's commercial partners. In the future, fans will also be able to make payments with the Vatrene token at more than 200 retail outlets. "By stepping into the cryptocurrency market, we're making sure that we are staying on top of global trends, while also



connecting with our fans and providing them with opportunities and services that they haven't had access to so far. I am especially proud of the fact that we have partnered with two Croatian companies on this project because I think that the IT sector in Croatia is internationally competitive and that working with domestic companies ensures that our partners are as dedicated to this project as we are," said the HNS president, Marijan Kustić.

ENGLAND www.thefa.com

PARA ROLE MODELS RAISE AWARENESS OF DISABILITY FOOTBALL

CHRIS SWOFFER

The English FA's para role model programme was launched in 2018 with the aim of raising awareness of the opportunities available for people with a disability to play football and inspiring the next generation of players. The FA has a group of 18 para role models who have represented England at senior para team level. Each role model has been selected for their contribution to the game at the highest level, positive sporting behaviour on and off the field of play and leadership qualities. The role models cover each of the six senior disability teams – Powerchair, hearing impaired male and female,

cerebral palsy, partially sighted and blind. All have unique stories to share. The role models have gone through a six-month training programme focusing on skills such as public speaking. The programme has equipped the role models with the tools to deliver face-to-face presentations in environments ranging from primary schools to conferences, corporate events and clubs across England. The role models vary in experience, from professional public speakers to those who are just learning to tell their story. The one thing they all have in common is that they are outstanding people.



The programme sits alongside The FA's new Football Your Way plan, which sets out to help develop, improve and raise awareness of disability football in England.

ESTONIA www.jalgpall.ee

FOOTBALL INFRASTRUCTURE GROWING

MAARJA SAULEP

The Estonian Football Association and the ministry of culture have jointly launched a long-term project aimed at building indoor halls in all 15 counties of the country. In accordance with the project, the government will make an annual investment of €6 million (€1.5 million per indoor hall) and local governments will contribute about the same amount. Before the start of the project, there

were a handful of indoor halls in Estonia, located in the capital, Tallinn. For 2020, money was allocated for the construction of four indoor halls in Tartu, Rapla, Viljandi and Haapsalu. The last two were built and opened at the end of last year. Both the Viljandi Männimäe indoor hall and the Haapsalu Uuemõisa indoor hall have already been actively used by the Estonian women's national team and various youth teams. In the state budget

for 2021 and 2022, funds were allocated for the construction of eight more indoor halls in Jõhvi, Rakvere, Kuressaare, Pärnu, Narva, Paide, Jõgeva and Viimsi. The new football halls will have turf that meets FIFA requirements and will be located in the immediate vicinity of an educational institution. Therefore, they can also be used to promote other sports and physical activity. According to Anne Rei, general secretary of the Estonian Football Association, the project is a big step in the development of the sport. "The construction of indoor halls in Estonia was highly anticipated and this is also shown by our good cooperation with the government and local authorities. Due to the Estonian climate, training is often difficult during winter. Indoor halls significantly improve opportunities for all top and amateur athletes training in Estonia. This development is also useful in order to bring the training conditions of football players in Estonia in line with those of other ball games."



GERMANY www.dfb.de

YOUTH FOOTBALL REVAMPED FROM 2024

MICHAEL HERZ

The DFB's youth congress voted unanimously in favour of the mandatory adoption of new formats for children's football. The new German Football Association (DFB) regulations are due to come into force nationwide by the start of the 2024/25 season. This will mean the end of the current G, F and E tier competitions (U6–U11), replaced by new formats involving smaller teams on smaller pitches. The change is based on a two-year pilot phase involving all 21 regional associations in Germany along with a large number of district football associations and clubs.

The new formats will be rolled out across the country before the new rules take effect nationwide from the summer of 2024. The G tier (U6/U7) will then only be played as 2 v 2 or 3 v 3 with four mini-goals. The 3 v 3 set-up is also recommended in the F tier (U8/U9), though 4 v 4 or 5 v 5 games are also possible. In the E tier (U10/U11), the set-up then changes to 5 v 5 or 7 v 7 games. In this age group there is also a gradual transition to the use of small-sized goals and goalkeepers. To minimise the pressure to perform

and put the emphasis on the children's sporting development, no championship will be held for U6–U9. Instead, football afternoons and festivals with several teams and pitches are planned. The new playing formats include a rotation principle with predetermined substitutions so that all children have the opportunity to play. The most important long-term aim of the reform in these age groups is to promote the fun of playing football adapted to the particular age group, as this enables them to be more active and enjoy a greater sense of achievement.

GIBRALTAR www.gibraltarfifa.com

ORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STEVEN GONZALEZ

The Gibraltar Football Association held its third ordinary general assembly on 8 February, its first in over two years due to the pandemic. The assembly re-elected Michael Llamas as the Gibraltar FA's president and elected Paul Lyon as vice-president. Also elected to the association's Governance & Strategy Board were Kirsty Neale, Julian Santos and Kevin Duarte, with industry expertise in compliance, legal and accountancy fields respectively. The assembly was chaired by the Gibraltar FA's general secretary, Ivan Robba. Presentations were delivered, among other items, on the association's annual audited accounts, activity, and structural and organisational set-up. Delegates raised questions and encouraged constructive debate on the agenda items, and by the conclusion of the assembly there was general consensus on the way forward. UEFA was represented by its first vice-president, Karl-Erik Nilsson, and FIFA by FIFA Council member Isha Johanssen. In his address, the UEFA first vice-president commended the Gibraltar FA for being able to hold an in-person

general assembly in these times and congratulated the members on holding open and honest discussions on issues that football was currently facing as the fallout from the pandemic began to kick in. FIFA Council member Isha Johanssen expressed her delight at being present and highlighted how well the work of the Gibraltar FA was seen by FIFA.

On a personal level, she mentioned the similarities her country, Sierra Leone, shared with Gibraltar, a small country that was always aspiring to 'punch above its weight'. Speaking after the assembly, the Gibraltar FA general secretary, Ivan Robba, said: "This has been a much needed general assembly at which many issues required discussion and debate, especially given the time that has elapsed since we were last able to convene. I am delighted that we have been able to engage constructively with our stakeholders, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for attending and for their invaluable contributions throughout. I would also like to congratulate the elected members of the Governance & Strategy Board on their appointments, and look forward to working with them and with our members on all of the challenges that lie ahead."



ISRAEL

www.football.org.il

SCOUTING FOR THE NEXT ACADEMY INTAKE

EITAN DOTAN

The technical department of the Israel Football Association launched a new project at the Doha Stadium in Sakhnin in late January. The scouting department, headed by Moshe Sinai, is on the hunt for promising players for the football academy's youngest class year, who will begin their journey at the football academy this coming September.

Over the next few months, visits will be made to 11 areas, where all clubs have been asked to recommend three or four players with the greatest potential. The best of those players will be selected for the second phase of the selection process.

Moshe Sinai said: "We have to cover as many areas of the country as possible.



We will look at the children's technique to start with, but later we will also look at aspects such as speed and strength.

The teams at our Shefayim national team complex will conduct in-depth assessments."

LATVIA

www.lff.lv

FIRST INDOOR HALL OUTSIDE RIGA OPENS ITS DOORS

TOMS ĀRMANIS

A brand-new football hall was officially opened in the city of Rēzekne, in the heart of the Latgale region, at the beginning of February. The 64x43m pitch inside an air-supported dome becomes the fourth covered football structure in Latvia and the first outside the capital, Riga. It is also the first covered small-size pitch in Latvia. The facility was built in close cooperation with the local municipality.

This hall is the first of seven planned in various locations over four years as part of the Latvian Football Federation's football development programme. A full-size covered football hall in Liepāja will be opened later this year.

"Football infrastructure is the foundation for further development of the game in Latvia. Recent years have made it possible to open many new pitches in various places around the country, but infrastructure is still

insufficient, especially during the winter months. Therefore, it is our mission and commitment to resolve this problem during the next four years. We want to empower our clubs with the best

possible conditions for development and give our young players a comfortable environment to enjoy this beautiful game," said the federation's president, Vadims Ļašenko.



Vadims Ļašenko with the mayor of Rēzekne, Aleksandrs Bartaševičs.

LITHUANIA

www.lff.lt

SUPER CUP SIGNALS THE END OF THE WINTER BREAK

AGNĖ RUDYTĖ

After the winter break, football resumed in Lithuania with the Lithuanian super cup game. A special advertising campaign was created for this event, portraying four players from two competing teams enjoying their vacation when suddenly they receive a message that the vacation is over and football is back. Radio announcements invited football fans to get back to the stadiums, with an outdoor advertising campaign and social media content also proclaiming the end of the winter break.

"This year, we wanted to campaign from a different angle, to take a step

out of the football field and to advertise the super cup game from a vacation perspective. Vacation time is over, football is back, and not only do the players and coaches return to the field, but spectators return to the stadiums," says Edgaras Stankevičius, general secretary of the Lithuanian Football Federation.

Usually, the league winners face the cup winners in the super cup. However as Žalgiris Vilnius won the double last season, they faced league runners-up Sūduva Marijampolė for the first trophy of the year.



MALTA

www.mfa.com.mt

CONSTRUCTION OF NATIONAL FOOTBALL CENTRE GETS GREEN LIGHT

PAMELA SCHEMBRI

On 22 February, work began on the construction of a new national football centre at the Malta FA's football complex in Ta' Qali.

The state-of-the-art complex, which also encompasses a Category 1 stadium, represents one of the main infrastructural projects of the Malta FA strategy launched last year and is due to be completed in time to host matches in the men's European Under-19 Championship final tournament in 2023. It will also serve as the home of the Maltese national football teams, from the youths to the seniors, as well as the Inħobb il-Futbol Foundation, the development arm of the association, which is overseeing a series of projects focusing on football in schools, the pathway from grassroots to elite, girls' football and social responsibility.

The national football centre will house various facilities, including sports science research laboratories, medical facilities, a physiotherapy clinic, gymnasium, dressing rooms, catering facilities, multifunction



meeting and lecture rooms, relaxation areas and technical offices in sync with UEFA's Best Practice Guide to Training Centre Construction and Management. Designed by Maltese firm Innovative Architectural Structures, the centre will be built in accordance with the best environmental protection and sustainability standards.

In other news from the Malta FA, the technical centre launched a new digital magazine, Raise The Game, in January. All Malta FA-licensed coaches received

a free copy of Raise The Game, which is primarily intended to bring the technical centre closer to the ever-growing coaching community.

This initiative also complements the ongoing work of the Centre for Football Research and Development, which was established last year to encourage and inspire students and researchers to conduct football-related research with the Malta FA, thereby contributing towards the growth of Maltese football and the development of coaches.

THE BEST PLAYERS OF 2021

ION BUGA

Every year, the Football Association of Moldova designates its best players. For the second year in a row, Oleg Reabciuk and Natalia Munteanu were named the best Moldovan players in the men's and women's categories respectively.

Oleg Reabciuk has played for the Greek champions Olympiacos Piraeus since 2020. The 24-year-old has attracted significant interest from several European clubs over the past year, showing the great value of the Moldovan defender. Born in Ialoveni in Moldova, Reabciuk has grown as a player at the renowned FC Porto academy.

Natalia Munteanu is the most titled female player in Moldova and is captain of the women's senior national team. This winter, she moved to Ukraine, where she currently plays for Zhytlobud-1 Kharkiv. Before that, she spent some years at



Dinamo-BGU in Belarus, with whom she won several domestic titles, including two championships, two cups and a super cup, as well as the goalkeeper of the year award.

Moldovan champions Sheriff Tiraspol had an exceptional year, winning most of the 2021 awards, including the men's coach of the year award for Yuriy

Vernydub, after a great performance during the UEFA Champions League group stage.

The pandemic prevented the traditional end-of-year awards ceremony from taking place; instead, it was held as a virtual event broadcast on the Football Association of Moldova's official website, Facebook page and YouTube channel.

A NEW FIVE-YEAR CORPORATE STRATEGY

NIGEL TILSON

The Irish Football Association has published a new corporate strategy to guide its work over the next five years.

A Roadmap For Football – Irish FA Corporate Strategy 2022–27 covers all aspects and levels of the game across

Northern Ireland. The targets the association is aiming to meet over the next five years are outlined in seven strategic pillars: participation, performance, facilities, revenue, engagement, women's and girls' football, and corporate social responsibility and

sustainability. More than 30 strategic objectives and over 100 individual actions are included in the document.

The strategy seeks to grow the number of boys and girls playing football, introducing them to its positive health and social benefits, and to improve Northern Ireland's stadiums and the spectator experience.

Other objectives include enhancing the system of coaching and creating the conditions for more success with the senior men's, senior women's and other national teams – and increasing the number of players, coaches, officials and administrators involved in football.

Building an international-class national training and development centre is another goal, as is boosting facilities at all levels of the game, including improving playing surfaces used by teams at top club level.



PZPN ESTABLISHES SEPARATE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL DEPARTMENT

RAFAŁ CEPKO

For several years, women's football in Poland has been growing in importance. Reflecting that evolution, the Polish Football Association (PZPN) has established a separate department with the long-term goal of popularising the game on a mass scale.

Women's football in Poland is improving in organisational and sporting terms. Yet, despite attendance records being broken one after another, projects being developed in which girls are treated on equal terms with boys, cooperation with UEFA as part of the Playmakers programme for young girls, competition reforms and a considerable increase in financial outlay, women's football in Poland still fails to be as recognisable as it could be. The PZPN recognises that now is the time for the development of women's football to go faster.



"The women's football department plans to focus on creating something new. Each department employee knows and understands the uniqueness of women's

football. That is why projects closely related to initiatives aimed at girls and women will be carried out by our team, in cooperation with other departments, of course," explained Grzegorz Stefanowicz, who heads the new department.

In connection with the establishment of the women's football department, work on a development strategy for women's football has picked up pace significantly. This strategy will be used to develop new initiatives to engage more girls and women in football – not only football players but also coaches, officials, referees and volunteers.

The PZPN is in no doubt that any major achievement by the Polish women's national football team would be of great help in attracting interest, as would hosting a large international event. Poland is therefore among the candidates to host the UEFA Women's EURO in 2025.

A NEW EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

PAUL ZAHARIA

Education is one of the main pillars and key objectives of the football development strategy adopted by the members of the Romanian Football Federation (FRF) at its general assembly last year.

In this context, the FRF executive committee recently approved another important educational project, which forms part of the FRF technical strategy aimed at optimising young players' potential.

With the aim of ensuring the best possible education for academy managers, the FRF will select the best 20 to take part in an intensive education programme. Experienced international experts will lead the whole programme, for which 75% of the related costs will be covered by the FRF.

The programme, the FRF plans to repeat in 2023, will be structured in five modules covering topics such as the management and strategic role of an academy; the management of staff and relationships between the different departments; the development of a specific club philosophy in close connection with tendencies at European level; talent spotting and player selection; individual development; and transition towards the first team.

Belgian company Double Pass is the FRF's partner in this project, taking into account its experience of more than 20 years in advising and working with over 1,000 clubs, national associations and professional leagues, as well as having been FIFA's partner in its talent development programme since 2020.


In recent years, academies have acquired, as they should, an increasingly important role in Romanian football. The FRF continues to be involved in this area and the executive committee has decided that each top-league club will have to fulfil some crucial criteria in order to receive a licence. Starting with the 2022/23 season, each top-division club will have to invest a minimum of 5% of its income in its academy structure. In 2023/24, this minimum will increase to 6.5%, going up to 7.5% in 2024/25. Criteria related to financial transparency will also come into force in 2022/23, requiring all clubs applying for a top-division licence to publish the results of the expenses audit conducted at the level of their academies.

SAN MARINO

www.fsgc.sm

MARCO TURA RE-ELECTED AS PRESIDENT

LUCA PELLICIONI

 Marco Tura was re-elected president of the San Marino Football Federation (FSGC) at the federation's general assembly on 31 January. He received 44 votes in the second ballot, defeating Giampaolo Mazza (21 votes) following William Guerra's

elimination in the first round of voting (Tura 43, Mazza 12, Guerra 10). "I would like to thank all those who have chosen to follow the path of continuity by renewing their support. This result clearly shows that the assembly appreciates what has been achieved so far

and is a further vote of confidence for the next three years," said the president, who was unable to attend the assembly after testing positive for COVID-19. The general assembly also unanimously adopted the 2021 annual accounts and the 2022 provisional budget, and re-elected Marco Cevoli as auditor. Meanwhile, the following members were re-elected to the FSGC board: Luca Albani (52 votes), Luigi Zafferani (51), Filippo Bronzetti (50), Simone Grana (49), Gian Luca Angelini (40) and Stefano Bevitori (28). Two new board members were also elected, with Valeria Canini (34 votes) and Jessica Guidi (29) becoming the first female members in the association's history, which dates back more than 90 years. They replaced Alessandro Giaquinto and Corrado Selva, who were thanked for their nine years of service to San Marino football and for their efforts as board members during their two terms of office.



SERBIA

www.fss.rs

MEDIA LEARN THE INS AND OUTS OF VAR

MIRKO VRBICA

 The referees committee of the Football Association of Serbia, led by its chairman, Dejan Filipović, has held a special event for the media to familiarise them with video assistant referee (VAR) technology and answer their questions. Top referee Srđan Jovanović also attended the event. Many journalists, camera operators and photo reporters accepted the invitation of the Football Association of Serbia to the Stara Pazova sports centre, where they were able to visit the completely renovated 'house of football' as well as the entire sports centre itself, to see where the men's national team are preparing for the 2022 World Cup. Dejan Filipović and his colleagues presented some of the most interesting controversial situations from matches in



the first part of the season in Serbia's top two divisions. The chairman of the referees committee explained the reasons and principles that the referees adhere to

when making certain decisions and at the same time resolved many doubts regarding the interpretation of the Laws of the Game, with an emphasis on the application and functioning of VAR technology. Following the presentation, the media representatives were able to ask questions as well as put their newly acquired knowledge to the test in some simulated referee decision-making. A visit to the VAR room rounded off the event.

SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

FIRST FEMALE PRO LICENCE COACH IN SLOVAKIA

PETER SURIN

 As at mid-February, the Slovak Football Association had 268 coaches with the highest coaching qualification, the UEFA Pro licence. On 27 January, Natália Látal Mackovičová joined their ranks as the first female coach in Slovakia to reach that level. Mackovičová started playing football as a young girl. She played as a midfielder and was always a leader on and off the pitch. She played in Bratislava, where she was born, for Slovan Bratislava, before moving later to play in Austria and for Brentwood Town Ladies in England. She also made 30 appearances for the Slovak national team, but retired from international football quite early, aged 25, because she was more tempted by coaching. After finishing her studies at the faculty of physical education and sports, specialising in coaching, Mackovičová signed up for the UEFA Pro diploma course in February 2020. "Football is developing really quickly, I feel the need to keep up with the latest trends. I want



to develop and grow," she said. Her studies were complicated because of the pandemic, but the 38 year-old mother of two managed to cope, and in January this year she concluded the difficult exams, including an interview in front of the technical committee. "I am that type of person, someone who puts everything into what I do; I try to learn and combine it with experience,"


she said with the UEFA Pro diploma in her hands. Her coaching idol is José Mourinho; she appreciates his strategic thinking and the way he works with his teams, how he protects his players. Would she take on the challenge of coaching a men's team? "I often get this question, I also got it in the final exam, then from journalists. I can imagine coaching a men's team. It would fulfil me; I would enjoy it, definitely. However, I am determined to offer everything I have learned to women's football. I want women's football in Slovakia to do well and I want to be part of its development."

SWEDEN

www.svenskfotboll.se

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS IN THE NATIONAL TEAMS

ANDREAS NILSSON

 Support for parents and insurance for players who are out of contract – these are two of the elements in the new agreement between the Swedish FA and the national team players. The agreement applies equally to the men's and women's national teams. "We've seen players having trouble combining parenthood with playing for the national team. Unfortunately, many players, especially women, are also on short-term contracts with their clubs, which may leave them vulnerable to injuries when out of contract. By offering

parental support and full insurance coverage, we can hopefully make things easier for players who represent our national teams," said the Swedish FA general secretary, Håkan Sjöstrand. The parental support offered is available for players who are the sole custodians of a child or otherwise have a family situation that makes participation in international matches difficult. The agreement commits the Swedish FA to financing and facilitating the help and support the player needs in order to participate.

"We're happy with this; it's good to have a new agreement in place. The support offered is a good step forward to getting us the best possible conditions for success," said Caroline Seger, captain of the women's senior national team. The new deal is a joint agreement between the Swedish FA and both the men's and women's national teams. It covers all participation in the senior national teams but does not include compensation or bonuses for any upcoming final tournaments. The agreement runs from 2022 to 2024.

SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

INFOTAINMENT FOR SWISS FANS

MARTINA KÜPFER

 The Swiss Football Association (SFA), with the support of the UEFA Grow programme, rolled out a new social media strategy in March last year to help it interact even more closely with its target groups. The aim is to create greater proximity to the fans, provide personal insights, information and entertainment for the

community, and involve all the association's stakeholders as much as possible. "Our social media channels are the crown jewels of our communications strategy. This is where the threads all come together," says Adrian Arnold, the SFA head of corporate communications. One important consideration during the design stage was therefore how to

manage social media content in such a way that it would also be reflected in traditional coverage, such as print, online and TV.

A video posted after Northern Ireland's 0-0 draw against Italy in the World Cup qualifiers is the perfect example.

By way of thanks for the precious support against Switzerland's

rival, national team coach Murat Yakin was shown packing a box of the best Swiss chocolate to send to Belfast.

The home-made video accumulated 500,000 views on the various social media platforms and was relayed by media outlets throughout Europe, Asia and North and South America, both online and in print.

"It's not always only about games and results. We want the fans to be better acquainted with all the players, staff and the association as a whole while also entertaining them," says Adrian Arnold.

Taking account of the time investment and the quality of the content, the association is clearly on the right track, with numbers that meet expectations: the GIFs featuring the players of the national elite teams have been seen over 54 million times over a period of 11 months for the men's squad and nine months for the women's.




WALES

www.faw.cymru

A VISION FOR A MORE EQUAL AND DIVERSE GAME IN WALES

MELISSA PALMER

 The Football Association of Wales (FAW) recently shared PAWB, its equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy for 2021–26. The Welsh word PAWB translates as 'everyone', which is the identity of the FAW's EDI programmes and represents its ambition to make football for everyone, everywhere in Wales. The FAW wants to create a safe and inclusive environment for everyone regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, religion or belief, disability, sexual orientation, age or background. To do this, the association has identified four key priority themes and objectives, as detailed in PAWB: education and awareness, equality and diversity, report and challenge, listen and understand.

The foundation of the PAWB EDI strategy is education and the new PAWB microsite's resources hub provides a platform for the football family to learn about and develop their understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion. The resources currently cover topics such as challenging racism and discrimination, tackling online misogyny, becoming an LGBT+ inclusive club, a key dates calendar, and a language and terminology guide.

The PAWB microsite also houses the FAW's education programme, where the football family can book workshops and webinars across multiple topics. To help further develop a more equal,

representative and inclusive environment a Clwb PAWB programme has also been created, where equality champions are being established for each Welsh club. Together, working with the football family, the FAW can make strides forward in achieving its vision and ambition. The PAWB microsite can be viewed at PAWB.Cymru.



APRIL

5 April, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

European Women's Under-17 Championship: final draw

5/6 + 12/13 April

UEFA Champions League: quarter-finals

5–13 April

European Women's Under-19 Championship: round 2

6 April, Herzliya, Israel

European Under-17 Championship: final draw

7 April, Nyon, Switzerland

Executive Committee

7–12 April

Women's World Cup: qualifying matches

7 + 14 April

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: quarter-finals

22–25 April, Nyon, Switzerland

UEFA Youth League: finals

23/24 April

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

26/27 April

UEFA Champions League: semi-finals (first legs)

28 April

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: semi-finals (first legs)

28 April, Šamorín-Čilistov, Slovakia

European Under-19 Championship: final draw

29 April–1 May, Riga, Latvia

UEFA Futsal Champions League: finals

30 April/1 May

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

MAY

3/4 May

UEFA Champions League: semi-finals (return legs)

3–15 May, Bosnia and Herzegovina

European Women's Under-17 Championship: final tournament

5 May

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: semi-finals (return legs)

10 May, Vienna, Austria

Executive Committee

10–15 May

Women's Futsal EURO 2023: preliminary round

11 May, Vienna, Austria

Ordinary UEFA Congress

16 May–1 June, Israel

European Under-17 Championship: final tournament

18 May, Ostrava, Czech Republic

European Women's Under-19 Championship: final draw

18 May, Seville, Spain

UEFA Europa League: final

21 May, Turin, Italy

UEFA Women's Champions League: final

25 May, Tirana, Albania

UEFA Europa Conference League: final

28 May, Saint-Denis, France

UEFA Champions League: final

31 May, Nyon, Switzerland

2022/23 European Women's Under-19 and Under-17 Championships: round 1 draws

JUNE

2–14 June

European Under-21 Championship: qualifying matches

2–14 June

UEFA Nations League: matchdays 1-4

7 June, Nyon, Switzerland

2022/23 UEFA Champions League: preliminary round draw

14 June, Nyon, Switzerland

2022/23 UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa Conference League: first qualifying round draws

18 June–1 July, Slovakia

European Under-19 Championship: final tournament

21 June, Nyon, Switzerland

European Under-21 Championship: play-off draw

23–28 June

Women's World Cup: qualifying matches

24 June, Nyon, Switzerland

2022/23 UEFA Women's Champions League: preliminary and first round draws

27 June–9 July, Czech Republic

2022/23 European Women's Under-19 Championship: final tournament

NOTICES

- Royal Belgian Football Association – new address: Rue de Bruxelles 480, 1480 Tubize, Belgium
- Newly elected presidents of their national associations: **Adilet Barmenkulov** (Kazakhstan), **Lise Klaveness** (Norway), **Bernd Neuendorf** (Germany)
- Re-elected presidents of their national associations: **Armand Duka** (Albania), **Ján Kováčik** (Slovakia), **Michael Llamas** (Gibraltar), **Jesper Möller** (Denmark), **Vanda Sigurgeirsdóttir** (Iceland), **Marco Tura** (San Marino)
- **Heike Ullrich** is the new general secretary of the German Football Association

**It takes all our
tricks to protect
the climate.**



#EUGreenDeal

