

UEFA



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WINNING ON AND OFF THE PITCH





BECAUSE EVERY
CHILD IS A CHAMPION



UEFA
FOUNDATION
for children



Theodore Theodoridis
UEFA General Secretary

EMBRACING EUROPEAN FOOTBALL'S SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

From the global audience watching the men's Champions League final at Istanbul's Atatürk Olympic Stadium to the record crowds following the Regions' Cup final tournament in Galicia, UEFA's competition finals have once again demonstrated our sport's enduring ability to bring people together from all walks of life.

Of course, popularity brings influence. While it's unrealistic to believe any sport can single-handedly change society for the better, a community that unites millions of people regardless of ethnicity, gender, age or nationality is a great starting point. The final months of the 2022/23 season have demonstrated how European football is making significant progress in delivering on its enormous potential for social good.

Starting in Istanbul, where the UEFA Foundation for Children teamed up with Türkiye's Bonyan non-governmental organisation to deliver much-needed respite to children affected by February's devastating earthquakes in south-east Türkiye and Syria. More than 40 boys and girls were given the chance to join the final training sessions of Manchester City and Inter Milan and meet their players. The foundation is also raising funds to distribute to partner organisations that use sport to help children seriously injured by the earthquakes.

UEFA's annual grassroots awards, announced in April, provided further evidence of how associations and clubs across Europe make a difference to local communities. The winners include Polish club Amp Futbol Polska, organisers of the first-ever international women's amputee football event, and the Danish association's Football Fitness training camp, which uses a modified form of the game as 'medicine' to improve the well-being of older citizens.

At the end of June, UEFA staged the Respect forum at the German Football Association (DFB) campus in Frankfurt. In a first for European football, the event gathered more than 200 stakeholders, including social responsibility experts from associations, to share their knowledge and experiences on how to make football a driving force for social and environmental sustainability – in particular, at EURO 2024. In a joint initiative with our partner the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, the forum also saw 16 teams composed of refugee players compete for the Unity EURO Cup.

On and off the pitch, there can be no doubt that European football is raising its game to embrace the wider social responsibility that comes with its influence.

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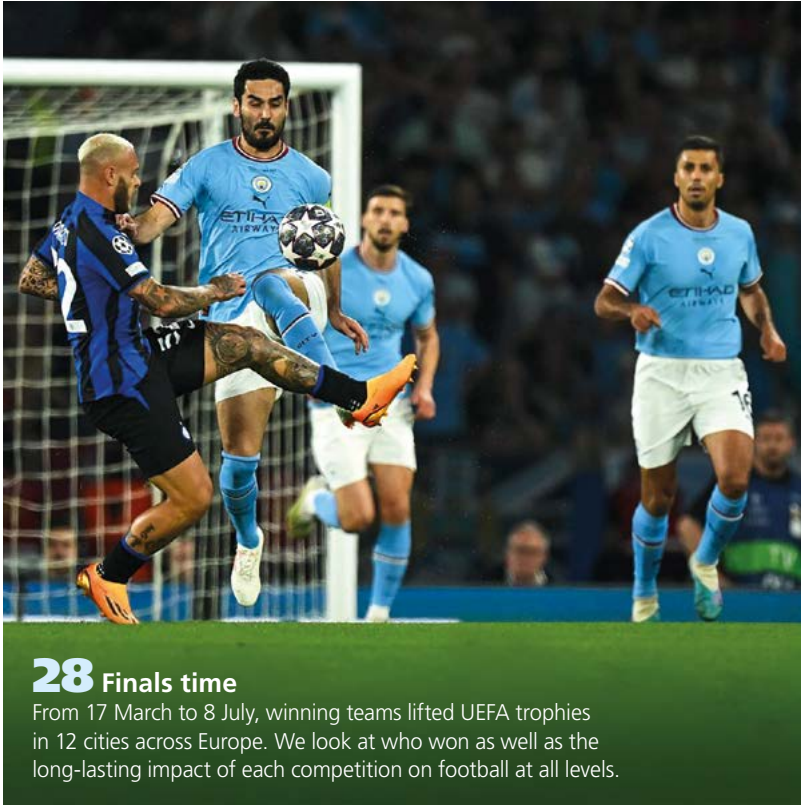
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ALEKSANDER ČEFERIN RE-ELECTED BY ACCLAMATION

The UEFA Congress re-elected Aleksander Čeferin as UEFA’s president for a further four-year term and also held elections for seats on the UEFA Executive Committee and FIFA Council.

At the 47th Ordinary UEFA Congress, held on 5 April in Lisbon, Portugal, UEFA’s 55 member associations unanimously re-elected Aleksander Čeferin as UEFA president for a four-year term by acclamation.



Elections for the UEFA Executive Committee

The UEFA Congress elected the following candidates for seven positions on the UEFA Executive Committee for four-year terms.

First ballot (absolute majority 28 – more than half of the 55 valid votes cast)

| ELECTED | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Candidate | | number of votes |
| Armand Duka (Albania)* | | 45 |
| Jesper Møller Christensen (Denmark)* | | 42 |
| Petr Fousek (Czechia) | | 40 |
| Levan Kobiashvili (Georgia) | | 40 |
| Luis Rubiales (Spain)* | | 40 |
| Philippe Diallo (France) | | 37 |
| Andrii Pavelko (Ukraine)* | | 31 |
| *re-elected | | |

| NOT ELECTED | | |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------------|
| Candidate | | number of votes |
| Hugo Quaderer (Liechtenstein) | | 25 |
| Bjorn Vassallo (Malta) | | 25 |
| Lise Klaveness (Norway) | | 18 |
| Rod Petrie (Scotland) | | 15 |

Sándor Csányi (Hungary), Fernando Gomes (Portugal) and Davor Šuker (Croatia) were not standing for re-election. Laura McAllister (Wales) was elected for the reserved female member position on the UEFA Executive Committee for a four-year term (replacing Florence Hardouin, France, who has finished her term) and Hans-Joachim Watzke (Germany) was elected for one member position on the UEFA Executive Committee for a two-year term, both by acclamation.

Elections for the FIFA Council
Debbie Hewitt (England) was elected with 39 votes for the FIFA vice-president position reserved for the four British associations for a four-year term. The second candidate, David Martin (Northern Ireland), received 16 votes. Sándor Csányi was re-elected as a FIFA vice-president for a four-year term by acclamation after Ari Lahti (Finland) had withdrawn his candidature. Fernando Gomes was elected as an ordinary member of the FIFA Council for a four-year term and Bernd Neuendorf (Germany) as an ordinary member for a two-year term, both by acclamation.

Constitutive UEFA Executive Committee meeting
Laura McAllister and Gabriele Gravina (Italy) were appointed as UEFA vice-presidents at the constitutive UEFA Executive Committee meeting held after the UEFA Congress, replacing Fernando Gomes and Sándor Csányi.

Annual report and finances
The UEFA annual report for 2021/22, the 2021/22 financial statements and annexes, and the budget for the 2023/24 financial year were all approved.

Next UEFA Congress
The 48th Ordinary UEFA Congress will take place in Madrid, Spain, on 8 February 2024.

“Protecting this game is our mission. Our goal. Our purpose. Our raison d’être. We are elected, and we have a duty to set an example. We must never forget this.”
Aleksander Čeferin
UEFA President



VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

A stellar line-up of former footballers and elite coaches assembled at UEFA’s headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland, on 24 April for the inaugural meeting of the UEFA Football Board.

The newly formed advisory body will draw on the experience and expertise of its members to provide an institutional but independent voice on key football topics such as the Laws of the Game and referees’ interpretation of the line of intervention, the video assistant referee system (VAR), the handball rule and player behaviour. The first meeting brought together Éric Abidal, Rafael Benítez, Fabio Capello, Petr Čech, Luís Figo, Robbie Keane, Jürgen Klinsmann, Ronald Koeman, Philipp Lahm, Michael Laudrup, Paolo Maldini, Roberto Martínez, Predrag Mijatović, Gareth

Southgate, Patrick Vieira, Rudi Völler, Javier Zanetti and Zinédine Zidane. Carlo Ancelotti, Gareth Bale, Rio Ferdinand, Henrik Larsson, Juan Mata and José Mourinho, who were unable to attend in person, were invited to share input on the agenda’s main points of discussion ahead of the meeting. The board expressed satisfaction with the current standard of refereeing in UEFA’s men’s club competitions, encouraging adoption of the same unified approach across the European game. It also made several recommendations for the 2023/24 season to improve

“UEFA is delighted to see that the very ones who have shaped the game’s history with their talents and philosophy are gathered again around our common goal – to protect the game of football and its essential values.”
Aleksander Čeferin, UEFA president

application of the handball rule, stipulating that not every touch of a player’s hand/arm with the ball is an offence.

- UEFA should clarify that no handball offence should be called against a player if the ball is previously deflected from their own body and, in particular, when the ball does not go towards the goal.
- The board recommends that not every handball should automatically lead to a caution after every shot at goal, as indicated by current guidelines.
- The board encourages referees to be more decisive in cautioning players for unsporting behaviour, especially when attempting to deceive the referee by feigning injury or pretending to have been fouled.
- The board calls on UEFA to launch an initiative towards the International Football Association Board (IFAB) for the amendment of Law 12, which rules that a player should be sent off for denying the opposing team a goal or an obvious goal-scoring opportunity by a handball offence. The board feels players should be sent off only if they deliberately and intentionally touch the ball with their hand/arm. In case of other handball offences, players should only be cautioned.

UEFA also updated board members on the international match calendar as well as implementation of post-2024 reforms to its men’s senior club competitions. A similar board will be created for women’s football. ⚽

SUMMER 2025 IN SWITZERLAND!

The next UEFA Women's EURO will take place in the heart of Europe after Switzerland was chosen as the host nation by the UEFA Executive Committee at its meeting in Lisbon on 4 April.

The UEFA Women's EURO tournament, which set new standards in England in 2022 with a record 574,875 fans attending matches and a further 374 million watching around the world, heads to Switzerland for the first time in 2025.

Venues

The 2025 edition will be staged across eight existing stadiums with a combined capacity of more than 175,000 seats: St Jakob-Park (Basel), Stadion Wankdorf (Bern), Stade de Genève (Geneva), Stadion Letzigrund (Zurich), Stadion St Gallen (St Gallen), Luzern Arena (Lucerne), Stockhorn Arena (Thun) and Stade de Tourbillon (Sion). The travel time between paired venues will range from 30 minutes to two hours by road or rail. The Swiss FA aims to sell all of the 700,000+ tickets available for the tournament's 31 matches.

Bid vision and legacy

Switzerland, which jointly hosted the men's EURO with Austria in 2008, is committed to using Women's EURO 2025 to accelerate the development of women's football, both domestically and internationally. The association wants to make football the most popular sport for women and girls in the country, strengthen and further professionalise its Women's Super League and national team, and promote diversity within the game. The Swiss bid, which was up against the French Football Federation, the Polish Football Association and a combined bid from the associations of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, promises a high-quality, environmentally friendly tournament. For example, match tickets will include 24 hours of free nationwide public transport. In line with UEFA's recently introduced guidelines, the Swiss

approach also embraces circular economy models (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover) to minimise waste wherever possible. Further social responsibility initiatives are planned regarding human rights, inclusion and equality. Hosting the Women's EURO is likely to significantly boost the Swiss economy, generating added value for restaurants, hotels and shops. Host venues will organise cultural and entertainment events for the large numbers of foreign supporters expected to attend the tournament.

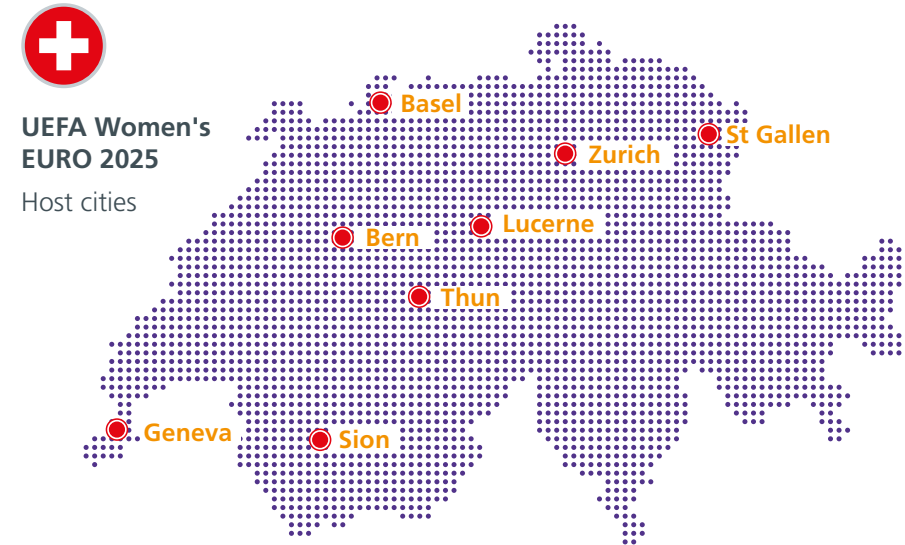
Women's football in Switzerland

Switzerland was an early pioneer of women's football in Europe, launching a national league in 1970. In 2020, to mark its 50th anniversary, the Swiss FA relaunched the competition in its present guise as the Women's Super League, heralding a new era that has brought unprecedented commercial support and a first live television deal.

The association's drive to promote women's football has seen a steady increase in the number of licensed female players, from 20,000 in 2016 to 25,000 in 2020. The Swiss women's national team, among the first in Europe to be formed, is a key driver of this impressive progress, reaching two Women's EUROs and two Women's World Cups in the past few years. The decision to bring Women's EURO 2025 to Switzerland will be a further catalyst for raising standards.

Building the future

The rising popularity of the women's game is evident in the success of initiatives like UEFA Playmakers, which gives girls aged five to eight a fun first introduction to the beautiful game. The programme, which currently operates in 44 UEFA member associations, was introduced in Switzerland in April 2021, and since then more than 700 girls have participated in sessions delivered by over 100 coaches in centres across the country.



NEW UEFA WOMEN'S NATIONS LEAGUE TAKES SHAPE

The new UEFA Women's Nations League kicked off on 2 May with the draw to split the participating teams into groups within three leagues.

The UEFA Women's Nations League offers promotion, relegation and Nations League finals in between, and adds exciting European Qualifiers play-off matches at the end. With a similar format to the men's UEFA Nations League, the draw divided the 51 participating teams into three leagues (two of 16 and the other of 19) on the basis of their positions in the UEFA women's national team coefficient rankings issued after the conclusion of the group stage of the European qualifying competition for the 2023 Women's World Cup. They were then drawn into groups within their leagues.

League A

- Group A1: England, Netherlands, Belgium, Scotland
- Group A2: France, Norway, Austria, Portugal
- Group A3: Germany, Denmark, Iceland, Wales
- Group A4: Sweden, Spain, Italy, Switzerland

League B

- Group B1: Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, Hungary, Albania
- Group B2: Finland, Romania, Slovakia, Croatia
- Group B3: Poland, Serbia, Ukraine, Greece

- Group B4: Czechia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus
- League C
- Group C1: Malta, Moldova, Latvia, Andorra
- Group C2: Türkiye, Luxembourg, Lithuania, Georgia
- Group C3: Azerbaijan, Montenegro, Cyprus, Faroe Islands
- Group C4: Israel, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Armenia
- Group C5: North Macedonia, Kosovo, Bulgaria

The league stage will determine which four teams progress to the finals (which will also act as Europe's 2024 Olympic qualifiers) and also promotion and relegation between the leagues ahead of the European Qualifiers phase for Women's EURO 2025.

2023/24 calendar
League stage

- All matches in the league stage are played according to a league system, with each team playing one home match and one away match against each of the other teams in their group.
- Matchday 1: 21/22 September 2023
- Matchday 2: 26 September 2023
- Matchday 3: 26/27 October 2023

- Matchday 4: 31 October 2023
- Matchday 5: 30 November/1 December 2023
- Matchday 6: 5 December 2023

Finals (21–28 February 2024)
The four League A group winners qualify for the knockout finals. They will be played as single-leg games, with two semi-finals, a third-place play-off and a final. A draw will determine the semi-final ties and the home team for each of the matches. The two finalists qualify for the 2024 women's Olympic football tournament, alongside hosts France.

Promotion/relegation/play-offs (21–28 February 2024)
League A
The top two teams in each group remain in League A for the European Qualifiers for Women's EURO 2025. The four third-placed teams play off against the second-placed teams in each group of League B. The winners of each match play in League A for the European Qualifiers phase; the defeated teams play in League B. The fourth-placed teams are relegated to League B.

League B
The four group winners are promoted to League A. The four second-placed teams play against the third-placed teams in League A. The winner of each match will play in League A; the defeated teams will play in League B. The three best third-placed teams play off against the three best-ranked second-placed teams of League C. The winners will play in League B for the European Qualifiers phase; the defeated teams will play in League C. The lowest-ranked third-placed team and the four fourth-placed teams are relegated to League C.

League C
The five group winners are promoted to League B. The three best-ranked second-placed teams play off against the three best third-placed teams of League B. The winners will play in League B for the European Qualifiers phase; the defeated teams will play in League C. The remaining teams stay in League C. All matches are played over two legs, with the ties determined by a draw. The third-placed teams are seeded for the draw and play their respective second-leg matches at home.



CELEBRATING EUROPE'S COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

Six European clubs, national associations and initiatives have been honoured for their outstanding work in developing grassroots football.



Each season, UEFA's grassroots awards turn the floodlights on some of European football's lesser-known places and people, celebrating the individuals, clubs, associations and initiatives that create opportunities for everyone to play the game, making vital contributions to local communities.

"The elite game relies on a strong grassroots base, and that is why it is imperative that we celebrate the lesser-known stars who are bringing the game to people of all ages and abilities across Europe," said Zvonimir Boban, UEFA technical director and chief of football, before the announcement of this year's award winners.

Since their launch in 2010, UEFA has handed out no fewer than 127 UEFA Grassroots Awards to winners representing more than 40 European countries. In this special section, we celebrate the achievements of the 2022/23 gold, silver and bronze medal winners in the five categories, as well as the winners of a special award.

The 2022/23 UEFA Grassroots Awards winners

Best Professional Club

★ Olympique de Marseille (France)

Marseille and its OM Foundation helped create La Castellane FC, a grassroots community club in the north of the historic port city.

Since its birth four years ago, La Castellane has developed into a pillar of the local community, providing social support and a safe place to play for local children and young people. With 15 teams and more than 130 registered players, the club has grown rapidly, introducing a women's section for 2022/23.

As well as paying fees, donating equipment and training coaches, Marseille also offer Castellane players, staff and volunteers the opportunity to train at the OM campus, with regular invitations to matches and concerts at their iconic Stade Vélodrome home.

The joy of football is celebrated at 2023 UEFA Grassroots Awards winners' events in Cyprus (left), Marseille (above) and Finland (right).



Lucie Venet, executive director of the OM Foundation, explained: "We knew that children were playing football, but they didn't have a football club. So, the purpose was really to give them the opportunity to practise football in a club affiliated to the French Football Federation with qualified coaches. La Castellane is more than just a football club. The purpose is really to offer new opportunities and have a positive impact on the players, not only as players, but as the citizens of tomorrow."

★ Silver: Ayr United Football Academy (Scotland)

Scottish second-tier club Ayr United delivers various projects for local people of all ages. The academy welcomes people regardless of their background or ability to play football and has had a significant positive impact on the local community.

★ Bronze: NK Istra 1961 (Croatia)

With almost 400 registered players, including 100 with professional contracts, NK Istra is the leading football club in the Croatian region of Istria. The club is heavily engaged in the local community, working with kindergartens and primary schools and creating a handy guide for grassroots coaches.

Best Amateur Club

★ Ilves (Finland)

Ilves is the largest football club in Finland, with more than 5,000 registered players, offering playing opportunities that cater for young children, seniors and disabled players – living proof that football is for everyone.

UEFA research has demonstrated that Ilves' social contribution equates to more than €31m each year in in-kind and direct savings – either through promoting a healthy lifestyle or supporting schools and kindergartens. Each season, the club teaches 1,000 volunteers to become better coaches, physiotherapists and team managers, offering UEFA-level training. In turn, this has seen the club produce elite-level talent – by 2021, more than 50 youth national team players had come through the Ilves system.

Matti Anttonen, Ilves FC executive director, said: "The biggest thing we can share is the love of football and futsal and the love of sports. If we can share that message, it's going to benefit Ilves, benefit football in the region and the whole of Finland. We get the message to parents that this is a safe environment and that a healthy lifestyle is one of our main club values – they know this is where they want their kids to grow up." →



★ Silver: Fontenilles FC (France)

Fontenilles FC is a well-known name in grassroots football through its involvement in many programmes. Even though the club's financial and human resources are limited, with just one full-time employee for 530 registered members, Fontenilles provides invaluable social support to its members (for example, helping with homework), and promotes solidarity and fair play.

★ Bronze: Bo'ness United Community FC (Scotland)

Bo'ness provides footballing opportunities and pathways for boys and girls aged from 3 to 18. The club runs many programmes, such as Fun Friday, midnight league football for teenagers and school sessions for local primary and high schools.

★ Best Social Initiative

★ Football Fitness training camp (Denmark)

The Danish Football Association's Football Fitness training camp uses football as 'medicine' to help improve the health and well-being of older citizens, promoting physical health and friendship through a modified form of the game.

The programme, which plans a huge expansion in 2023 for up to 500 players,

provided 57 recreational players – a group with an average age of 72 and composed of 42 women and 15 men – with a four-day football fitness camp on the island of Bornholm.

Consisting of two 75-minute training sessions, complete with injury-prevention warm-ups, the camp also offered education sessions on the principles behind football fitness and a barbecue allowing participants to share experiences from life in and out of the game.

Peter Krustup, professor of sport and health sciences at the University of Southern Denmark, explained: "Football is a very special tool because it combines health promotion with fun and camaraderie that many people can benefit from, regardless of their age, gender and social background. Football training is a fantastic prevention and treatment for lifestyle diseases, both related to cardiovascular diseases, metabolic diseases and musculoskeletal challenges."

★ Silver: Backyard Goals Football Rescue Tour (Hungary)

This regional movement was launched in eastern Hungary to engage communities with a passive relationship with football. An exhibition in the local museum of Sátoraljaújhely presented the impressions of journalist Péter Csillag in an exploration of Hungarian village football in some 200 locations.

★ Bronze: Football Girls Leuven (Belgium)

Founded in 2020 as a club exclusively for girls (aged 5+) to offer support and improve accessibility, Football Girls Leuven welcomes children from different backgrounds and now boasts 141 members.

★ Best Disability Initiative

★ Women's amputee football (Poland)

In 2022, the Amp Futbol Polska organisation and the Polish Football Association launched Europe's first women's amputee football team.

Now boasting a squad of 17, the team holds two-day training camps each month, and hosted the first-ever international women's amputee football event in March. The initiative is a perfect example of how the beautiful game is for everyone, regardless of age, background or ability.

Mateusz Widlak, CEO of Amp Futbol Polska, said: "Sometimes, the way people with disabilities are presented is that they need help, but when we are showing the same people with disabilities in a football context it's more about respect and about them becoming heroes. Our women's amputee team can change the perception of people with disabilities. But, also, how people with disabilities are looking at themselves. This project is good for the players, as well as people in society."

The winning project in Denmark uses football to promote fitness, good health and friendship among older citizens.



Poland's award-winning activities promoting women's amputee football show perfectly how the game is for everyone.

★ Silver: Football For All – Ibbenbürener Kickers (Germany)

Founded in 2019 and based on inclusivity of players of all genders and ages, Ibbenbürener Kickers is made up of both disabled and non-disabled players. In 2022, the club had nearly 100 regular players.

★ Bronze: Margam Stags youth club (Wales)

This club is a mini-community dedicated to people with a wide range of disabilities. Several parents, some of whom have disabilities themselves, volunteer as coaches, ensuring a safe, respectful and supportive environment for all participants. →

How does UEFA select its grassroots award winners?

The UEFA Grassroots Awards have been celebrating outstanding contributions and achievements in the game since 2010. Focused on football outside the elite game, the awards honour some of the unsung heroes and inspiring initiatives that make football such a vital part of communities throughout Europe.

Candidates are nominated by Europe's national football associations, with award winners selected by UEFA's Development and Technical Assistance Committee following recommendations made by the UEFA Grassroots Panel.



Polish men's national amputee team player Marcin Oleksy, honoured at international level for his skills, trains with the women's national amputee squad.

"Now the only things we have in our grassroots championships below the age of 15 are participation, fun, love of the game and football for everyone. At the end of the year, we have a huge grassroots festival and all the kids are winners."

Harris Kyrillou
CFA grassroots
football manager



The Cyprus Football Association earned its award for its determined efforts to create a positive football atmosphere for children.

★ **Best Participation Initiative** **Cyprus Football Association (CFA)**

By unifying different elements of grassroots football, the CFA has increased youth participation and created a more positive environment for children to enjoy the game, based less on results and more on enjoyment and fair play.

Previously, private academies operated outside of the CFA's influence, often playing unregistered or overage players to gain advantage, but in 2019 the association introduced a new scheme to bring all youth football under its jurisdiction.

Four years on, the unification programme has absorbed all 134 academies across the

country into its registration system.

A total of 1,047 teams now offer more than 10,000 fully registered 5-to-15-year-olds the chance to play football. Today, 14,000 matches are played each year, each fully funded by the CFA, including event and refereeing costs.

Harris Kyrillou, CFA grassroots football manager, said: "We used to have standings, leagues, qualifications and championship finals from Under-12 upwards, but it was like a small war among the teams, coaches and even the fans. Now the only things we have in our grassroots championships below the age of 15 are participation, fun, love of the game and football for everyone. At the end of the year, we have a huge grassroots festival and all the kids are winners."

★ **Silver: Futboliukas (Lithuanian Football Federation)**

The objective of the highly successful Futboliukas programme is the mass participation of children in football-related activities in kindergartens. Over the past year, applications have increased by more than 300%.

★ **Bronze: Active through Football (English Football Association)**

This project uses football as a platform to increase the physical activity of specific target groups who would otherwise face obstacles and inequalities, for example adults with learning disabilities and physical or mental health conditions.



"Almost all the football clubs in Moldova gave up their training facilities to give the refugees and their children somewhere to sleep. We didn't have a plan or any budget but we just wanted to help these people. We are all just volunteers who wanted to help."

Diana Bulgaru, FMF grassroots manager

Special award **Football Association of Moldova (FMF)**

In response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and by working alongside UEFA, the UEFA Foundation for Children and UNICEF, Moldova's football community has united to provide support and opportunity for thousands of children and families.

The FMF offered its national training centre and futsal arena as accommodation, providing equipment and supplies, as well as organising a wide variety of football activities for children.

It is estimated that the association has directly helped more than 10,000 refugee children over the past year. Many beneficiaries are now integrated into Moldovan schools and sports clubs, giving them the chance to build a brighter future.

In addition to support at home, the FMF has also sent humanitarian supplies into Ukraine, including three trucks packed with medicines, food, sports equipment and kits. The sports equipment and kits allowed special youth sports events to be held for 3,000 children.

Diana Bulgaru, FMF grassroots manager, explained: "Two days after the war started, we had a lot of refugees coming to our country. It was very hard to see these people crossing the border only in slippers and with a small bag. We started a lot of activities to help them – almost all the football clubs in Moldova gave up their training facilities to give the refugees and their children somewhere to sleep. We didn't have a plan or any budget but we just wanted to help these people. We are all just volunteers who wanted to help."

How is UEFA developing grassroots football across Europe?

UEFA is dedicated to ensuring that everybody, everywhere can play football in a safe and quality-controlled environment.

Last year, we finalised a framework to guide national associations in shaping their own vision for the development of grassroots clubs, unveiled at the UEFA Grassroots Conference in Madrid in September.

Additionally, we continue to set standards for the grassroots coaching community, with the UEFA C diploma offering an introduction to structured coaching for parents, teachers and volunteers keen to get involved in the game.

Helping to build a brighter future: Moldova's football community has joined forces to support families and children – including refugees – affected by the war in Ukraine.



DIARY OF UEFA'S INAUGURAL RESPECT FORUM

On 28 and 29 June, UEFA gathered more than 200 stakeholders, from inside and outside of the game, at the German Football Association’s campus in Frankfurt to share their expertise and experiences on how to make football a driving force for social and environmental sustainability.

The first-ever UEFA Respect Forum brought together stakeholders from across the European football ecosystem with one common goal: "inspire, activate and accelerate collective action" to respect human rights and the environment.

"With this forum, we want to catalyse the creation of an ever-growing community of sustainability managers and stakeholders who interact in person around a wide range of societal and environmental trends, practices and innovations," said Michele Uva, UEFA’s director for social and environmental sustainability.

Over the course of the two days, the participants, including 36 speakers, had the opportunity to meet, engage and learn from speakers and panellists representing UEFA member associations, clubs, partners, non-governmental organisations and academic institutions.

The result was an invaluable range of insights and innovative solutions. From the first day, speakers consistently emphasised the importance of collaboration and collective action in driving progress toward sustainability objectives.

Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, underscored the role of football in aiding the integration of refugees into host communities and supporting their mental and physical health. "We often say that one of the best ways to protect refugees is to include them in society," said Grandi. "Sport is a powerful instrument of inclusion and integration."

The session on leading practices and trends in social and environment sustainability set the tone by stressing that sustainability should be viewed as a long-term investment by all parties.

This is a central tenet of UEFA’s strategic approach, which has also embedded sustainability into its club competition licensing rules.

Opening eyes

Patrick Vieira, the Arsenal legend and EURO 2000 winner with France, and Union Berlin midfielder Morten Thorsby demonstrated the influential role that athletes can play in driving conversations and taking action on critical issues like discrimination and climate change within football.

"When I was younger, I was really inspired by some players who opened my eyes and made me understand I had a responsibility as a black player to show togetherness," Vieira said. "It’s important for me today to open the eyes of the next generation and build the tools that will allow us to change people’s mindsets."

Pivotal role of national associations

In a separate discussion, Teresa Romão, general secretary of the Portuguese Football Federation, and Ingo Mach, sustainability manager for the Austrian Football Association (ÖFB), highlighted the pivotal role of European football’s national associations in driving positive outcomes.

Romão explained that the Portuguese federation has evolved from a purely governing body into a socially active organisation that engages with its community. In turn, Mach showcased the ÖFB’s innovative approach to climate action.

Partnerships key to cutting football’s environmental impact

Two separate panels focused on partnerships and events as a means to reduce football’s environmental impact.

Jaz Rabadia, head of responsible business and sustainability at Just Eat Takeaway.com, an official UEFA partner, guided the forum through a road map towards the first fully circular UEFA Women’s Champions League final. Alison Biscoe (Centre for Sport and Human Rights), Alessandra Priante (UN World Tourism) and Lene Kryger (Sport Event Denmark) shared insights on how events can transform sustainability risks into opportunities.

"We’re marrying our worlds and that’s the beauty of this partnership," said Rabadia. "We know food, we know packaging. UEFA know football, they know stadiums, they know events. So, when the two of us come together we can really fuse objectives around UEFA’s and our own sustainability commitments – and push ourselves a little bit further in terms of what actions we can take."

Football for Refugees

The forum’s first day also included the second Unity EURO Cup, a joint initiative between UEFA and the UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency. Played at the DFB campus, the tournament featured 16 teams, each including eight refugee players, three non-refugee players and a minimum of two women. Finland emerged as the 2023 champions, but, in truth, every one of the 170 players taking part in this unique tournament should be considered a winner (see pages 18-19).



The forum also took time to celebrate standout contributions by European clubs and players to furthering sustainability and anti-discrimination causes, handing out the first-ever FootbALL Awards:

- **Royal Belgian Football Association:** acknowledged for developing a comprehensive football social responsibility strategy.
- **Arsenal FC:** recognised for the impact of anti-knife crime campaign, No More Red.
- **Deutsche Fußball Liga (DFL):** praised for its international weeks against racism initiative.
- **Lilian Thuram, France’s EURO 2000 and 1998 World Cup winner:** honoured for his tireless efforts to fight racism.

Sustainability, part of EURO 2024’s DNA

With Germany due to host EURO 2024 in less than 12 months, the forum dedicated its second day to discussing how the German government, the German Football Association (DFB) and UEFA are making sustainability part of the tournament’s DNA.

Opening the second day with a keynote speech, Nancy Faeser, German federal minister of the interior and community, said: "When we say we want a sustainable EURO 2024, we mean more than reusable cups and renewable energy – we want to create something that lasts."

"It’s a big opportunity for us to show how sustainability can be a driving force for the event’s success," said Michele Uva, UEFA’s director of sustainability,

whose presentation set out how the tournament’s ESG (environmental, social and governance) targets are all aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Lasting legacy

A range of EURO 2024 stakeholders underlined the tournament’s potential for leaving a lasting legacy, not just for football but wider society. Célia Šašić, DFB vice-president for diversity and equality, suggested that EURO 2024 presented Europe with an opportunity to discover a "new sense" of who we are amid challenging times. "This is a chance for Germany and European society to come together to build a new sense of ‘we’. We have war ongoing just around the corner, we had COVID-19 – crises everywhere," she said. "I think this can be a marker for us to come together as a community in Europe and decide our values and celebrate the way of life we have."

Heike Ullrich, DFB general secretary, observed that by gathering diverse views from sustainability stakeholders, the Respect forum represented an early example of EURO’s 2024 legacy. "This forum would not have happened here in Frankfurt if not for (EURO 2024), so the legacy has already started by working here with you," she said.

The forum concluded with a series of workshops diving into practical approaches for football to tackle discrimination, to measure the direct and indirect greenhouse gas emissions it generates, and to advance the development of walking football. 🌱

FINLAND WIN SECOND UNITY EURO CUP

This year’s Unity EURO Cup once again lived up to its promise of inclusion and empowerment for the 16 national teams involved, bringing together male and female refugees and local players from the participating European nations.

At the end of a memorable day marked by a spirit of sportsmanship and inclusion, Finland triumphed 2-1 over the Republic of Ireland in the final of the 2023 Unity EURO Cup.

This unique tournament, staged on 28 June in Frankfurt, Germany, gave the players the opportunity to represent their host country, or the European Union in the case of Team EU, in an international competition.

Highlighting the inclusionary power of sport
On and off the pitch, the 2023 Unity EURO Cup highlighted the role that football can play in strengthening ties



Lara Suffel/DFB



Lara Suffel/DFB

Finland emerged as the 2023 champions, but, in truth, every one of the 170 players should be considered a winner.



Lara Suffel/DFB

between host communities and refugees, breaking down barriers and creating a spirit of inclusion through the universal language of sport.

Football can also help in changing negative perceptions and attitudes towards displaced people, helping them to feel included and integrate into their adopted communities. The Unity EURO Cup also outlines the power of football when it comes to building a better future for refugees around the world.

The UEFA President, Aleksander Čeferin, said: “Football is a unifying force in a world burdened by barriers. This tournament beautifully exemplifies our sport’s profound impact on people’s lives and promotes the values that UNHCR and UEFA stand for. Starting in unfamiliar surroundings is often challenging, but football can act as a powerful catalyst for integration and connection. It fosters understanding and unlocks opportunities for structured engagements and experiences that can genuinely affect our communities.”

As part of the UEFA Football Sustainability Strategy 2030, UEFA actively promotes the integration of

refugees, asylum seekers and displaced individuals within the host communities through football.

UNHCR has developed the UNHCR sport strategy – More than a Game – which outlines the role that sport and sports organisations can play in improving the lives of displaced and stateless people and in supporting integration with host communities.

Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, declared: “This tournament is a great example of how sport can unite individuals and communities, break down cultural barriers and empower people. Providing people whose lives have been severely affected by war, conflict, discrimination or persecution with opportunities to engage in sport can help them heal, strengthen their skills – or help develop new ones – and feel included. We can see it in our everyday work with refugees, and I could see it again today.”

Former international referee Felix Brych, who took charge of the 2017 men’s UEFA Champions League final, officiated the tournament’s final at the DFB campus in Frankfurt. Each team was also supported by an eminent ambassador, with local fans and teams invited to watch the group stage on the premises of SC Weiss-Blau, a local Frankfurt club.

“The Unity EURO Cup connects people and nations and creates a positive atmosphere even in difficult times. On the pitch, everyone is equal, and everyone plays by the same rules,” Brych said. “Being a part of this tournament means a lot to me, it was a great honour.”

As the trophy was handed over to celebrations from Finland, team captain Hassan Yaghoubi said: “It’s a special tournament, it’s an amazing opportunity for everyone here to come together, to meet each other and I hope this will continue every year. Football is, in my opinion, the best sport in the world. To see all these people together, enjoying themselves and laughing, it is what life is all about.”

This year’s tournament involved 16 teams – twice as many as the first edition held in 2022 in Switzerland – with players representing Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland, Spain, Switzerland, Ukraine and an EU team. 🌐



UEFA PRESIDENT SEES FOOTBALL'S FORCE FOR GOOD IN UGANDA

In March, the UEFA president, Aleksander Čeferin, visited a non-governmental organisation in Kampala that uses sport to bring hope to vulnerable young people growing up in one of the country's largest slum districts.

The UEFA president witnessed first-hand how sport can change the lives of vulnerable young people when he visited the Acholi Quarters district of Kampala – home to one of Uganda's largest slum communities.

Here, the Aliguma Foundation, a non-governmental organisation, is building sports facilities, training coaches and creating social and economic opportunities for some 2,500 children and 850 caregivers. The initiative, known as the Sports for Resilience and Empowerment Project, receives funding support from the UEFA Foundation for Children.

“This wasn't just an ordinary visit. It was a game changer.”

Ritah Aliguma, Aliguma Foundation CEO

Visibly moved by his conversations with local schoolchildren and community leaders, the UEFA president said: “It's not only about elite competitions. Football can also be a force for good.”

“This wasn't just an ordinary visit. It was a game changer,” said Ritah Aliguma, Aliguma Foundation CEO, describing the impact of the UEFA president's visit to a community where 20,000 people daily live with the challenges of poverty and deprivation.

“The UEFA president walking through one of the largest slum communities in Kampala gave hope to so many destitute people. We can dream again, knowing that all things are possible.”

After watching a tournament match played on a makeshift football pitch in Acholi, the UEFA president added: “We should use football to do good,

UEFA
FOUNDATION
for children™

The UEFA Foundation for Children's 2023 call for projects requiring financial support runs from 1 to 28 July 2023. Applicants are invited to submit their projects through the dedicated platform on the foundation's official website: <https://uefafoundation.org>

and working with the Aliguma Foundation is one way we can do so.”

UEFA's commitment

Since its creation in 2015, the UEFA Foundation for Children has supported over 400 projects worldwide, donated equipment and provided grants – all with the goal of assisting the world's poorest, most vulnerable children or crisis-stricken regions. 🌟



The Estádio José Alvalade will host the UEFA Women's Champions League final in 2025.

LISBON TO HOST 2025 UEFA WOMEN'S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE FINAL

Among the decisions taken by the UEFA Executive Committee on 28 June were the following:

Host appointments

The Estádio José Alvalade (home to Sporting Clube de Portugal) in Lisbon was appointed to host the UEFA Women's Champions League final in 2025. The new Agia Sofia Stadium (home to AEK Athens FC) was selected as the venue for the UEFA Conference League final in 2024, with the decision to be confirmed in December following a period of observation, while Stadion Wrocław (home to WKS Śląsk Wrocław) will host the same event one year later. Finally, Poland will host the European Women's Under-19 Championship final tournament in 2025.

2026 World Cup

UEFA will recommend a two-stage qualifying format to FIFA – a group phase followed by play-offs – to determine the 16 European teams in the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

UEFA Conference League

The Executive Committee approved the proposed name change to the UEFA Europa Conference League, which will be known as the UEFA Conference League from the 2024/25 season. The change follows research among fans and commercial partners that found that removing 'Europa' from the name of the competition would enable its further development as a stand-alone competition.

UEFA Youth League format

The competition will adapt to the new format of the senior UEFA club competitions and include the 36 youth teams of the clubs that qualify for the league phase of the 2024/25 UEFA Champions League (Champions League path). The domestic champions path will be restructured to include the domestic youth champions of all UEFA member associations.

Stronger voice for players and fans

The Executive Committee also decided to integrate the voices of players (via FIFPRO Europe) and fans (via Football Supporters Europe) into its decision-making process. These stakeholders will now hold dedicated seats on relevant UEFA standing committees, joining members from national associations, leagues and clubs. Additionally, UEFA has created new, bilateral stakeholder-specific platforms to further increase the opportunity for dialogue and understanding. These action-oriented advisory boards will complement the annual UEFA Convention on the Future of European Football and also forge exclusive channels of communication for each stakeholder group to work directly with UEFA.

The next meeting of the UEFA Executive Committee is scheduled to take place on 26 September 2023 in Limassol, Cyprus.

Sky's the limit

UEFA HAS TEAMED UP with the European Space Agency (ESA) to go where no sports organisation has gone before.

On 8 May, UEFA announced an agreement with the ESA – the first-ever agreement between a sports governing body and an organisation dedicated to the exploration of space.

Andrea Traverso, UEFA's director of financial sustainability and research, said: “We are confident that this partnership with the ESA will bring incredible value to UEFA.”

The pioneering partnership, which will run until 31 December 2025, is the result of the UEFA innovation hub's efforts to foster cross-industrial collaboration, identifying cutting edge solutions to the ever-changing world of football.

“It is a way for us to address some of European football's key strategic challenges by leveraging the expertise, network and resources of an innovative pioneer like the ESA and to explore joint collaboration in creating relevant and tangible solutions,” added Traverso, “This partnership underlines UEFA's ambition to nurture new types of cooperation to adapt ourselves even more rapidly.”

Innovation and technology

To launch the initiative, UEFA and the ESA are prioritising three areas of cooperation:

- **Pitch mapping tool**
Sourcing socio-economic, weather and health data to improve UEFA's artificial intelligence (AI) pitch detection tool. This uses data and satellite imagery to plot an accurate map showing all football pitches across UEFA's 55 member associations.
- **Crowd management solutions**
Running an open call for tech providers in the ESA network to support two types of crowd management solutions:
1. provide more accurate data on crowd movement around stadiums;
2. access historical crowd data for specific venues.
- **Sustainability**
Exploring the potential for technologies used in the space industry to develop social and environmental solutions for European football.

'PART OF THE TEAM AND NOT IN ISOLATION'

THE FUTURE OF GOALKEEPING AND GOALKEEPER COACHING

The new UEFA Goalkeeper Coaching publication outlines how goalkeeper coaching has evolved and the importance of integrating the goalkeeper into the team unit.

Ensuring goalkeepers are viewed as part of the team and not in isolation is one of the key headlines from UEFA's new goalkeeper coaching publication, launched earlier this year through UEFA's Share programme.

Produced by members of UEFA's goalkeeper advisory group, the 33-page document promotes an integrated and collaborative approach to goalkeeper coaching and underlines the importance of starting from the game when designing practice sessions for goalkeepers.

"Being a goalkeeper coach has evolved over the decades and the demands of modern football coaching are now very high," explains Hans Leitert, a member of the working group for the development of the UEFA Goalkeeper Coaching document. "Since UEFA implemented the UEFA goalkeeping A and B licences, I think all the associations have realised that the requirements to be a goalkeeping coach are different from the age when goalkeeper coaching started and when goalkeeping coaching became a full-time profession."

How goalkeeper coaching has evolved from a largely isolated and individual pursuit to one that requires integration within the team and overall coaching process is detailed throughout the document. "When goalkeeper coaching first started, it was always related to technical and physical elements," explains Leitert. "So, historically speaking, goalkeeper coaching was based on how goalkeepers dive, how they kick the ball and how they parried the ball. It was more working on technical guidelines, but very isolated and very distant from the requirements of the game."

Helping goalkeeper coaches develop a wider view of the game by linking game principles to goalkeeping principles is another key point encouraged in the publication. "We want to develop a common understanding that whatever we coach during the training process should have the game as a foundation," explains Leitert. →

Wolfsburg goalkeeper Julia Kassen makes a save in training ahead of the recent UEFA Women's Champions League final.



“Coaches should not be thinking about an isolated approach where it’s one goalkeeper coach and a small number of goalkeepers. Instead, we want people to consider goalkeeper coaching and goalkeeping as a mainly integrated and collaborative setting. The work should have the game as the primary idea. Whatever goalkeeper coaches do, it should be for the benefit of the player that has to play a game.”

The challenges of moving from an isolated to a collaborative approach

Given the history and culture of goalkeeping, it remains a challenge to move those involved from an isolated to a more integrated and collaborative approach. “One of the biggest challenges we have is to get coaches thinking ‘from the game’,” explains Packie Bonner, UEFA goalkeeper advisory group member and former Celtic FC and Republic of Ireland goalkeeper. “We want goalkeeper coaches to think ‘backwards’ from the game (when planning the training sessions) and ask themselves: ‘What’s the game telling us and how should that impact how we work with goalkeepers?’”

The document outlines the overall principles of the game of football and how they relate to goalkeepers and goalkeeper coaches. “We felt it was crucial that we gave people something they could actually use (in practice),” adds Bonner.

Although Bonner believes there are many examples where goalkeeper coaches work collaboratively within the wider coaching staff, the picture across Europe is one that can still be improved.

“Although we have seen great improvements in this area, there are still lots of goalkeeper coaches working in isolation,” explains Bonner. “How to make that step from isolation to collaboration and to work effectively with outfield players and other members of the coaching staff is a big challenge for goalkeeper coaches. It has improved, but, in my belief, it still has a long way to go.”

Raising the profile of goalkeeper coaches and helping individuals to be recognised for their expertise is all part of the process, believes Bonner. “The goalkeeper is obviously a huge part of any team in the modern game and if the head coach can connect the goalkeeper with the team properly, there are so many



UEFA technical instructor Packie Bonner makes a point at a UEFA Pro licence student exchange session.

| UEFA Goalkeeper Coaching | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| TEAM FUNCTIONS | TEAM TASK | TEAM PRINCIPLES | GOALKEEPING PRINCIPLES |
| Attacking (in possession) | Build up | <u>Direct play</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Play as directly as possible towards the opponent's goal <u>Possession-based play</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exploit spaces and create options to play together effectively | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Deal with the back pass and deliver long and accurate passes to progress into the opponent's half when required by game plan and game contextDeal with the back pass and clear the ball to escape high pressure and risk |
| | Create chances | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Occupy spaces/positions in front of the goalDeliver through balls, crosses and cut-backs into dangerous spacesPerform individual actions towards the opponent's goal | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Create options for a back pass to play together effectivelyAfter receiving a back pass, play effective passes to teammates or into areas that are not under immediate threat |
| | Finish on target | <ul style="list-style-type: none">ShootingHeadingUse other body parts and options if shooting and heading cannot be applied | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Mainly regular involvement: positioning, communication → especially organising the rest defence <i>(Note: delivering through balls applies to the goalkeeper during 'defending to attacking' transitions)</i> |
| Transition: attacking to defending | Build up Create chances Finish on target | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Where? – What part of the pitch?Who? – By individual/unit? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Only applicable if required by game context, e.g. team chasing the game in stoppage time: support teammates during attacking set play situations (e.g. corner) and try to finish on targetApplicable during penalty shoot-outs when goalkeeper is taking a penalty |
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Regular and high involvement: subject to area of loss of possession → repositioning and clear communicationIf goalkeeper responsible for transition, then either pressure on opponent/ball or quick repositioning to defend goal |

“We want goalkeeper coaches to think ‘backwards’ from the game and ask themselves: ‘What’s the game telling us and how should that impact how we work with goalkeepers?’”

Packie Bonner, UEFA goalkeeper advisory group member

benefits to be had. The goalkeeper coach is in the best position to do this and must be seen as just as important as the other members of staff.

“We want goalkeeper coaches to be, first and foremost, recognised as a coach with the speciality of goalkeeping. They have to be recognised as coaches who can work on the pitch with players and other members of staff.”

UEFA coach education and reality-based learning

How goalkeeper coaches work effectively on the training pitch with outfield coaches is a key part of the UEFA goalkeeping A licence and a concept that Bonner hopes will be integrated into the core strand of UEFA coaching courses in the future.

“In the past, such as when I went through my coach education, it was all about the coach stepping out in front of



“Being a goalkeeper coach has evolved over the decades and the demands of modern football coaching are now very high.”

Hans Leitert, member of the working group for the development of the UEFA Goalkeeper Coaching publication



Sevilla goalkeeper Yassine Bounou punches the ball clear during the UEFA Europa League final against Roma in Budapest in May.

people to show them that they can coach and control everything that is involved in a session,” explains Bonner. “The modern approach, and the one we have developed our UEFA A goalkeeping licence around, is that the coach must be able to work with other coaches out on the pitch.

“The goalkeeper coach is a support coach; they are not there as head coach or even as the main assistant coach. But within the support staff, you may have four or five coaches who are all support coaches and they are all finding their position on the pitch.

“That is no easy task and so we encourage our goalkeeper coaches to take this way of working into their training environment, try it out, work at it and get better at it. That’s why UEFA’s reality-based approach to learning is so important. I’ve seen very good examples of it, but I’ve also seen examples where it doesn’t work and then people revert back to what they are used to doing. So, it’s an ongoing education process.”

Developing a consistency of language when discussing goalkeeping

Another key issue highlighted in the document is the varied terminology and language used to describe goalkeeping.

“Across Europe, coaches and coach educators have their own way of presenting and using words to describe goalkeeping,” says Bonner. “Often it might mean something to them and within their own country, but translating that out of that country, or from a club or association to another, was sometimes quite difficult.

“Instead, if we can have a common terminology, we can trigger some direction to our critical thinking. For example, if we are all talking about the same zones on the pitch it will make things a lot easier.”

With many goalkeeper coaches working outside their native country, and also goalkeeper coaches attending goalkeeping courses across Europe, there are many reasons why a consistency in language and approach is required, says Bonner. “The number of staff moving from club to club, from association to association, and even attending courses in different countries is much greater than it was in the past. In the modern game, if you look at the staff working in any country you will see different nationalities and language. So, I think that is why consistency of terminology is important.” →



Above: Goalkeepers must also be able to distribute the ball with their feet – as shown here by Barcelona keeper Sandra Paños.

Right: Inter Milan’s goalkeeper André Onana in action during a training exercise.

Next steps: best practice video footage and relevant performance data

Given the speed at which the modern game is evolving, there is acknowledgment that the publication will continue to be updated, with best practice video footage and research ensuring the information remains contemporary and relevant.

“We want to back up the document with some strong video evidence, highlighting good examples from clubs and associations,” says Bonner. “The video footage will help us bring the document to life and also give us some more reference points and examples. We will also be linking to latest research and findings.

“Added to this, we will be measuring the impact of the document,” adds Bonner. “At the end of this year we will review how clubs and national associations are using the document in their work. We are also looking at how we integrate some of the key messages into the core UEFA coaching courses.”

Relevant performance data will also be included in future updates to the publication. “We would like to support all the goalkeeping principles with performance data,” adds Leitert. “We want to include objective data about the frequency of certain actions linked to the goalkeeping principles.

“From a goalkeeping perspective we want to know what happens often and what rarely happens. We also want to know those things that are decisive for the outcome of the game. From there, we can weigh up the importance of certain actions and prioritise what should be considered in the coaching courses and then also in the training programmes on the pitch. So, adding data is something very important.”

The UEFA Goalkeeper Coaching document was developed by Packie Bonner, Frans Hoek, Hans Leitert, Jan Erik Stinessen, Martin Thomas and Marc van Geersom. 🌱



Evolution of goalkeeping

Specific goalkeeper training started to become a regular feature around the 1970s, roughly a hundred years after the position had been formally established. It was mainly the head coach, and later the assistant coach, who dedicated specific time to providing some drills for the goalkeepers, usually before or after the team training session. These tended to be very repetitive physical exercises of goalkeeper-specific movements focusing on load and intensity rather than on game context. Consequently, while goalkeepers may have become fitter, their tactical awareness and goalkeeping skills mainly improved through game experience rather than through specific training routines. However, it would be unfair to judge the choice of training content in former times in the light of our current knowledge. In fact, the constructive intention to work with goalkeepers specifically using exercises that were related to their position should be appreciated, as it constituted a turning point in the evolution of football coaching. The goalkeepers themselves often determined the content and the progression of the exercises, whereas the coach’s duty and responsibility (whether it was the head or assistant coach) was limited to delivering the exercises in the way the goalkeepers expected.



 National team competitions  Club competitions

FINALS' IMPACT

From 17 March to 8 July 2023, winning teams lifted UEFA trophies in 12 European cities. The success of each competition extends far beyond the celebrations on the pitch, with a long-lasting impact for football at all levels. We look not just at who won, but also how each of our competitions can inspire generations of players up and down Europe's football pyramid.


**Women's Finalissima**
Host city: London
England – Brazil 1-1
(4-2 pens)
Winners: England

**Nations League**
Host city: Rotterdam
Croatia – Spain 0-0
(4-5 pens)
Winners: Spain

**Europa Conference League**
Host city: Prague
ACF Fiorentina – West Ham United FC 1-2
Winners: West Ham United FC


**Women's Champions League**
Host city: Eindhoven
FC Barcelona – VfL Wolfsburg 3-2
Winners: FC Barcelona

**Women's Under-17 Championship**
Host city: Tallinn
Spain – France 2-3
Winners: France

**Women's Under-19 Championship**
Host city: Leuven
Final: 30 July


**Women's Futsal EURO**
Host city: Debrecen
Ukraine – Spain 1-5
Winners: Spain

**Under-21 Championship**
Host city: Batumi
England – Spain 1-0
Winners: England

**Youth League**
Host city: Geneva
AZ Alkmaar – Hajduk Split 5-0
Winners: AZ Alkmaar


**Men's Under-17 Championship**
Host city: Budapest
Germany – France 0-0
(5-4 pens)
Winners: Germany

**Europa League**
Host city: Budapest
Sevilla FC – AS Roma 1-1
(4-1 pens)
Winners: Sevilla FC

**Regions' Cup**
Host city: Vilagarcia
Galicia – Belgrade 3-1
Winners: Galicia

**Futsal Champions League**
Host city: Palma
Mallorca Palma – Sporting CP 1-1
(5-3 pens)
Winners: Mallorca Palma

**Men's Champions League**
Host city: Istanbul
Manchester City FC – FC Internazionale Milano 1-0
Winners: Manchester City FC

**Men's Under-19 Championship**
Host city: Ta'Qali
Final: 16 July



CHAMPIONS THROUGHOUT

Attentions turned to the showpiece final-four contest in the Netherlands in June, but there were success stories to be told across all levels of the Nations League.



Nations League 2023
Host city: Rotterdam
Croatia – Spain 0-0
(4-5 pens)
Winners: Spain

Spain put their World Cup woes firmly behind them by winning the third edition of the UEFA Nations League against a Croatia side seeking their first international trophy.

After only three editions, the importance of the Nations League and the esteem in which fans and players alike hold the new competition is evident. “It would be amazing to lift the trophy... it would be a dream come true,” said Croatian talisman Luka Modrić ahead of the final four, which was contested by the two finalists along with hosts the Netherlands and Italy.

Sadly for Modrić and his team-mates, that dream didn’t become a reality, with Croatia being edged out on penalties after

neither side could find a breakthrough goal in the final. The closeness of the match was indicative of how the Nations League is benefitting the wider national team game in Europe.

Winning mindset

UEFA introduced the men’s Nations League in 2018 to boost the competitiveness of its member associations, especially those traditionally smaller or less successful footballing nations. While the first three names engraved on the trophy – Portugal, France and now Spain – undoubtedly represent the heavyweight division of European football, they are far from the only winners, thanks to the added drama,

competitive balance and interest introduced by the tournament.

Spain may have celebrated yet another international trophy, but the teams with the highest all-time winning percentage in the Nations League connect all levels of both UEFA’s and FIFA’s country rankings: first, Scotland, having won 10 of their 16 games, then Georgia, Portugal, Netherlands, Greece and Belgium, each with win percentages of 61.1%.

Georgia are one of multiple nations that have earned two promotions: like Kazakhstan, they started in League D in 2018/19, but will head into the 2024/25 edition in League B. Champions Spain will be joined in the top tier by Hungary, Israel, Scotland and Serbia – all of which played in League C in the inaugural Nations League. It’s a welcome chance for these teams to test themselves against some of the best sides in the world on a regular basis.

Competitive edge

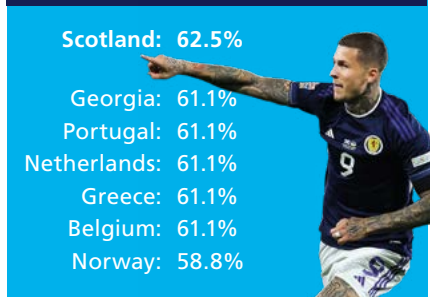
Of the 55 teams in the Nations League, 33 have earned at least one promotion and 37 have won a Nations League group. Equally, within the groups themselves, the competitive edge provided by the tiered league structure is reflected in the number of close games.

In replacing often meaningless or unbalanced friendlies with competitive fixtures – with the reward and jeopardy of promotion and relegation – the Nations League has succeeded in re-energising the European international calendar. UEFA is seeking to replicate that fresh impetus in the women’s game with a new national

team competitions structure, announced in November 2022 and starting in autumn 2023. The new format connects a women’s Nations League with European Qualifiers, plus introduces a three-tier league structure with promotion and relegation (see page 9). It will ultimately lead to qualification for the Women’s EURO and the Women’s World Cup. This new era promises improved competitiveness, gripping narratives and new paths for national associations to reach major international tournaments. ⚽

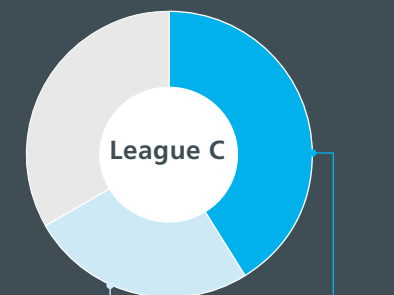
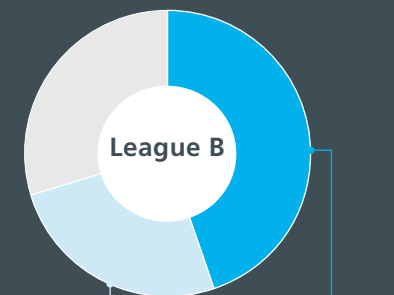
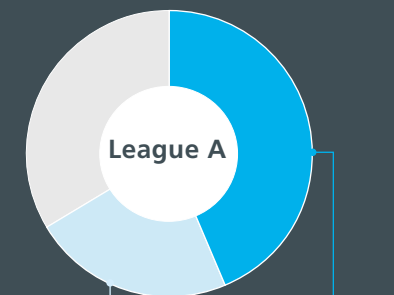
UEFA Nations League Highest win percentages

- Scotland: 62.5%
- Georgia: 61.1%
- Portugal: 61.1%
- Netherlands: 61.1%
- Greece: 61.1%
- Belgium: 61.1%
- Norway: 58.8%



Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma clears under pressure from the Netherlands’ Nathan Ake during the third-place match in Enschede.

Competitive edge





A header by Inter Milan's Federico Dimarco (obscured) beats the diving Manchester City goalkeeper Ederson and hits the crossbar during the recent UEFA Champions League final in Istanbul.

CHAMPIONS JUST ONE OF MANY WINNERS

Only one club can lay claim to the trophy each season, but the revenues, opportunities and experiences of the UEFA Champions League benefit teams at all levels.

A new name was etched into Champions League history in Istanbul as Manchester City claimed their maiden European title with a 1-0 victory over Inter, courtesy of Rodri's 68th-minute strike. The celebrations of players and fans alike spoke to the unrivalled prestige of European football's premier club competition, and Pep Guardiola's side will rightly relish their success. However, for most European clubs and players, the true value of the Champions League lies less in winning but more in the chance to take part.

Every participating team, from finalists to qualifiers, receives a share of the prize money. That includes clubs such as 2021 Icelandic champions Víkingur, who started their 2022/23 Champions League journey a year ago in the preliminary rounds along with the champions of Estonia, San Marino and Andorra. After successfully negotiating their group with a 1-0 victory over Andorra's Inter Club d'Escalades, they were eliminated by Sweden's Malmö in the first

qualifying round, subsequently reaching the third qualifying round of the Europa Conference League. Víkingur's prolonged European campaign earned a cumulative €1.21m in prize money, a boost of more than 50% to the club's annual budget.

UEFA is committed to sharing the benefits of the unrivalled interest in and visibility of its senior competitions: of the predicted €2.92bn net revenue from UEFA's 2022/23 men's club competitions, 93.5% will be distributed to participating clubs.

Game-changing opportunities

That kind of revenue and exposure can be a game changer for clubs lower down the footballing pyramid – and Víkingur's success also boosted the Iceland national association's UEFA coefficient. "It makes a huge difference," declared Víkingur coach Arnar Gunnlaugsson. "The money gets invested in infrastructure, players, bonuses for the players. It's not millions, but it is good money for a club like ours.

**Men's Champions League**

**Host city:** Istanbul
Manchester City FC –
FC Internazionale Milano 1-0

Winners: Manchester City FC

It's important both financially and for the respect of Icelandic football."

It's a huge opportunity not only for the club's development but also the players, as Kristall Máni Ingason, scorer of that vital goal against Inter Club, explained after the victory. "This is a whole new level for me – it's my first time in Europe. It's such an experience. I wouldn't have expected to be playing in the Champions League a year ago, and to have scored is such an amazing and unbelievable thing."

Gunnlaugsson is equally effusive. As a player, he won 32 international caps and a League Cup with Leicester City in England, but he says that Víkingur's journey was particularly special. "Even though we're playing against Inter Club, you still hear the (Champions League) anthem before kick-off," he says. "It's special. And for a team like us, that's important. You want more of that adventure."

Manchester City might be the name on the trophy, but they certainly weren't the only winners. 🏆

THRILLING FINAL CAPS ANOTHER RECORD-BREAKING SEASON

Rising attendances and a gripping showpiece game are sure signs that, just two years into its new cycle, the revamp of the Women's Champions League is delivering – on and off the pitch.

"The level of competition, getting to play champions from different countries. It's an amazing competition. You want to know who the best team in Europe is."

Barcelona's Asiat Oshoala had to deal with the disappointment of missing the Women's Champions League final through injury, but she can at least look back on her words from earlier in the season knowing she played her part in answering that question; her club's 3-2 comeback victory over Wolfsburg in Eindhoven confirmed that Barcelona can claim to be the best team in Europe for the second time in three years.

The Champions League's dramatic finale played to a sell-out crowd offered further evidence that the revamp of the

competition two years ago is quickly delivering on its ambitions: increased competitiveness on the field; greater visibility off it. The final's first-ever maximum capacity crowd capped a season of record attendances at stadiums across Europe. For top professionals, front and centre of the game's astonishing growth, the experience is inspirational.

"This competition is truly different for me. I am at a big club, where the Champions League means a lot. We simply have to give our best when we play in it," says Olympique Lyonnais's Melvine Malard. "It feels different, that's what makes it special," agrees Lina Magull of Bayern Munich. "The anthem with the trumpets is a spectacle. It really does something to you."

**Women's Champions League**

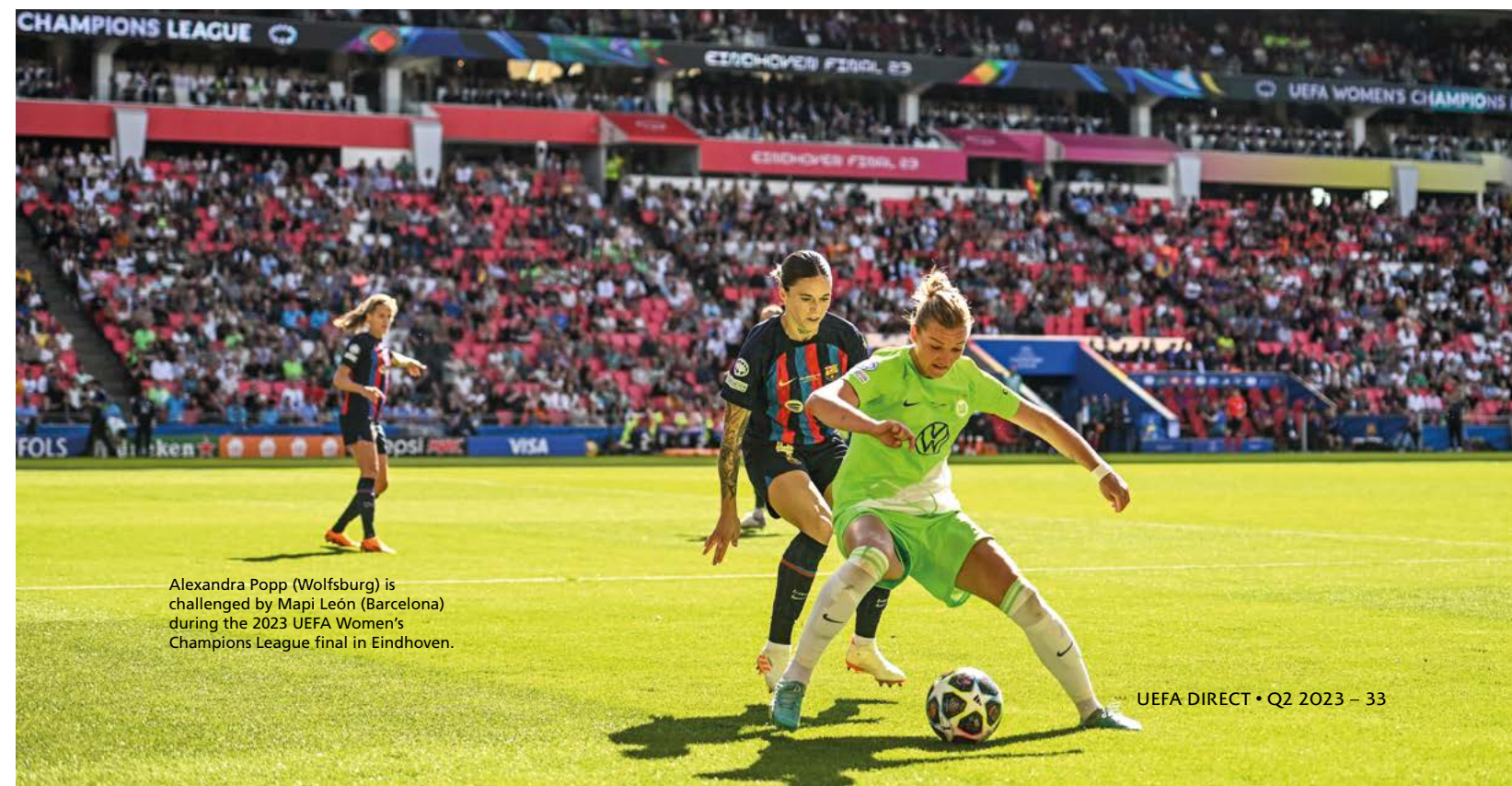
**Host city:** Eindhoven
FC Barcelona –
VfL Wolfsburg 3-2

Winners: FC Barcelona

"It's one of the greatest competitions in world football," says AS Roma right-back Elisa Bartoli. "I believe every child dreams about this tournament." It's a sentiment shared across the game, with players all over Europe relishing the opportunity to take part."

Coupled with rising media interest, the trend looks set to continue.

"You can imagine how it's going to be in five years' time," reflects Oshoala. "It's going to be so, so amazing. You're going to have amazing sponsorship, you're going to have such big media outlets who want to invest in this competition. This is just the beginning – there's so much more to come for women's football." 🏆



Alexandra Popp (Wolfsburg) is challenged by Mapi León (Barcelona) during the 2023 UEFA Women's Champions League final in Eindhoven.

SEVILLA'S SEVENTH HEAVEN

The unique value of the Europa League was apparent once again as the Spanish side claimed a record seventh title, one that was all the more remarkable for coming at the end of a long and difficult season.

Middlesbrough, Espanyol, Benfica, Dnipro, Liverpool, Inter and, now, AS Roma. This group of illustrious European clubs share an unwanted distinction: losing to Sevilla in a UEFA Cup or UEFA Europa League final.

In defeating José Mourinho's Roma side on penalties in Budapest, Sevilla confirmed what we really already knew: that this Spanish club can justifiably feel a sense of ownership over a trophy that they have won four times more than any other team. Not only have they now claimed seven titles: they've done so by winning all seven of their final appearances.

For all European clubs that struggle to consistently break into the Champions League qualifying spots, both finalists' journey to the final showed how the Europa League can offer an alternative path to shine on the biggest stage.

Roma fell one match short of completing a remarkable double in UEFA competitions – qualifying first for this season's Europa League by winning the 2021/22 Europa Conference League competition, then narrowly failing to secure the automatic Champions League slot that awaits all Europa League victors.

A special team in a special competition

Sevilla's triumph is especially remarkable considering their struggles domestically in LaLiga. The club dismissed both Jorge Sampaoli and Julen Lopetegui as coaches during a season in which they won just one of their first ten league games and finished 12th in the table. For much of the season they were engaged in a relegation battle, but there was no sense that Sevilla would opt to prioritise league survival.

Europa League

Host city: Budapest

Sevilla FC – AS Roma 1-1 (4-1 pens)

Winners: Sevilla FC

"Once again we've shown what this title means for the club, for us, for our fans," says Sevilla midfielder Ivan Rakitić.

"We say that there is no team who loves this competition as we do, and this saying is not just marketing; we feel it."

There is no doubting how much it means to the supporters. As the huge banner rolled out in the stands during their home semi-final leg against Juventus declared: "Nobody loves it like we do." 🏆



DARING TO DREAM

This season, teams from three countries that had never before featured in a UEFA club competition group stage took part in the Europa Conference League.

Europa Conference League

Host city: Prague

ACF Fiorentina – West Ham United FC 1-2

Winners: West Ham United FC

Thanks to the new men's club competition cycle that started in the 2021/22 season, more European clubs and nations than ever have the chance to experience a UEFA European match night. This was nowhere more apparent this season than in the second edition of the Europa Conference League.

Almost 12 months ago, eventual finalists Fiorentina and winners West Ham lined up alongside Žalgiris of Lithuania, Vaduz of Liechtenstein and Kosovan side Ballkani in the competition draw – all clubs breaking new ground by being the first team from their respective countries to reach the group stages of a UEFA club competition.

"Living the dream" was how lifelong Žalgiris fan Jokubas Plytnikas described watching his team in this season's Europa Conference League. "I'd dreamt of it since childhood. There were people flying in from different continents just to be there."

Plytnikas attended all six of Žalgiris's group games and, despite his team finishing bottom of their group, there was no sense of despair. "The recurring theme throughout those games was joy," he says. "We were just seizing the moment. Whatever happened on the pitch, we were super happy we'd get the chance to be there and be the first club from the country to break that barrier."

Expanding horizons

Tales like these reinforce UEFA's rationale behind launching the Europa Conference League: bringing excitement and glory to more teams and fans than ever before, and giving less-heralded football clubs and nations a platform on which to shine.

Aside from the pride and joy of playing on the continental stage, the enhanced exposure is valuable too. "A first-time qualification is a memorable event," says Žalgiris coach Vladimir Cheburin. "It was a present for the club and supporters. It's very important, it really is."

In order to move forward, we need to achieve something first."

Alongside that prestige, like all UEFA competition participants, the clubs benefit from the financial rewards. All 32 group-stage sides received €2.94m, with additional payments of €500,00 per win and €166,000 per draw. These sums help to boost the game at the lower levels of the football pyramid, increasing competitiveness and strengthening the game in many traditionally smaller footballing nations.

As well as Žalgiris, Ballkani and Vaduz, a further six clubs from six different countries made their debut in a European group stage this season: Djurgårdens (Sweden), Dnipro-1 (Ukraine), Pyunik (Armenia), RFS (Latvia), Silkeborg (Denmark) and Slovácko (Czechia). With the 2023/24 Europa Conference League qualifying rounds kicking off on 13 July, another chance for more clubs to carve their own slice of history awaits. 🏆

HIGH FIVES FOR FUTSAL

The Women’s Futsal EURO, the Futsal Finalissima and the Futsal Champions League demonstrate that the five-a-side game is riding the crest of a wave.

“These are exciting times for a sport that is flourishing as a popular attraction for fans across the continent.” UEFA president Aleksander Čeferin’s words point to the growing evidence that futsal’s future has never been brighter.

The adage that top-level sport is driven by competitions and competition is certainly borne out by the indoor game. Although the sport is currently dominated by the Iberian rivalry between Portugal and Spain, there are clear indicators that European futsal is becoming increasingly competitive. During a memorable season, the buoyant mood has been fuelled by three hugely successful international events: the ground-breaking Futsal Finalissima, co-organised by UEFA and CONMEBOL in Argentina in September, the UEFA Women’s Futsal EURO in Hungary and the UEFA Futsal Champions League in Spain or, to be more precise, on the Mediterranean island of Majorca – all three staged as final-four tournaments.

An additional boost has been provided by FIFA’s confirmation that an inaugural Women’s Futsal World Cup will be staged in 2024, with longer-term plans also featuring a Women’s Futsal Club World Cup. The intercontinental competitions signify additional incentives for European teams, who currently dispute four UEFA trophies for clubs and national teams.

“Every Women’s EURO brings with it a change of attitude among supporters, media and sponsors. For sure it will increase female participation in our country and, hopefully, more clubs will want to have women’s futsal teams.”

Ana Azevedo
Portugal’s national team captain

Those additional incentives are especially welcomed by female futsal players, who were starved of international football until the Women’s EURO kicked off with qualifiers in 2018 and a first-ever final tournament the following year. In that short time span, the number of participating teams has more than tripled.

Women’s Futsal EURO

“We fought for many years to play in competitive matches and each one is very important for us,” says Spain captain Patricia González Mota, alias ‘Peque’, who was UEFA player of the tournament at the recent Women’s Futsal EURO – the third of its kind. “For us, the EURO is the most important tournament. Domestically, the Spanish league is growing. But international competitions are the ones that really help. If futsal doesn’t continue to develop internationally, the sport will not be taken seriously.”



Spain celebrate winning the 2023 UEFA Women’s Futsal EURO title.



Women’s Futsal EURO 2023
Host city: Debrecen
Ukraine – Spain 1-5
Winners: Spain

Peque lifted the trophy for the third time in the Hungarian city of Debrecen, where Spain’s men’s team had beaten Portugal in the final in 2010. This time, the Iberian derby was a semi-final that Spain won 3-2, going on to a 5-1 victory in the final over Ukraine, who highlighted the increasingly competitive nature of the competition by making a debut in the final, while host nation Hungary had qualified for the final tournament for the first time. Italy coach Francesca Salvatore, one of the UEFA technical observers at



Sporting Clube de Portugal’s Erick (left) is challenged by Palma’s Mancuso during the recent UEFA Futsal Champions League final in Mallorca.

the first EURO in 2019, said: “The EURO has contributed to changing the dynamics in the minds of the players and within the associations to which they belong. It has become a goal within the development of women’s futsal and, apart from my own country, I have seen other nations, like Finland and Sweden, who have increased their competitiveness. A World Cup will encourage this even more.”


Ana Azevedo, capped over 100 times by Portugal, added: “Every Women’s EURO brings with it a change of attitude among supporters, media and sponsors. For sure it will increase female participation in our country and, hopefully, more clubs will want to have women’s futsal teams.” As a testament to her comments and an illustration of a rapidly growing profile, nine sponsors were on board for the event in Hungary.

UEFA Futsal Champions League

The fans’ appetite for top-class club futsal was showcased during the final tournament of the men’s UEFA Futsal Champions League, the first UEFA event

in football or futsal to be staged on the island of Majorca. Host team Palma, making a debut in the competition, tore up the form book by winning it. The final against Portuguese favourites Sporting CP illustrated how the game has grown in athleticism and intensity – and tactically, as illustrated by Palma’s use of the goalkeeper as a fifth attacker. Luan Muller’s slalom past four opponents into a shooting position set up the hosts’ goal, while a series of stunning saves earned him UEFA’s player of the tournament award, including the decisive one in the penalty shoot-out that decided the title after extra time had failed to unlock a 1-1 draw – a low scoreline to end a campaign that yielded 878 goals at an average of 7.09 per game.

The presence of two debutants in Majorca underscored the advances of competitiveness in men’s futsal – the other being Belgium’s Sporting Anderlecht, who qualified by edging out defending champions FC Barcelona. As a measure of growth, there were 56 teams on the starting grid from 52 out of the 54 eligible nations – more than double



Futsal Champions League
Host city: Palma
Mallorca Palma – Sporting CP 1-1 (5-3 pens)
Winners: Mallorca Palma

the number of entries for the inaugural UEFA Futsal Cup in the 2001/02 season. Since then, development at grassroots level and the expansion of domestic leagues have been key elements in the growth of the game, supported by funding from UEFA’s HatTrick programme, with total payments to clubs topping €1m during the season, in addition to financial backing for men’s and women’s national teams.

At the same time, innovations such as home-and-away national team qualifiers instead of mini-tournaments are promoting growth and attracting players and supporters all over the continent. All of which supports the feeling that futsal’s future has never been brighter. ⚽

AN UNBEATABLE STAGE FOR YOUNG PLAYERS TO SHOWCASE THEIR TALENTS

The men’s and women’s European Under-17 Championships, along with the Under-21 Championship, the two Under-19 Championships and the UEFA Youth League, give young players outstanding opportunities to showcase their talents while inspiring and developing future generations across all levels of the European football pyramid.

Each season, the profits generated by UEFA’s senior competitions provide funding for UEFA’s six youth competitions, while a portion of the €2.4m available to each of UEFA’s 55 member associations under the HatTrick development programme also helps to cover the cost of entering those competitions. The result is not only competitive and high-quality football tournaments but unique events that provide

young players with opportunities to develop off the field as well as on it, while leaving strong participation legacies in the host countries. This impact was seen in both Hungary and Estonia this year as they successfully staged the men’s and women’s European Under-17 Championships respectively, and across the continent in the UEFA Youth League, which provided players with rich opportunities for development on and off the pitch.

UNDER-17 EURO: a launchpad for future stars

The men’s European Under-17 Championship has been providing a springboard to stardom since 2002, with players such as Spain’s Cesc Fàbregas, Belgium’s Eden Hazard and Portugal’s Cristiano Ronaldo all making an impact in the tournament and benefitting from the unique taste of national team football it provides. As an ambassador for the Under-17 EURO in his home country, former Hungary captain Balázs Dzsudzsák is in no doubt about the benefits young players gain from playing in the event. “Such tournaments teach you how to keep in shape every third day when there

is a match, and how consistent your performance can be during games that are played so close to each other. Besides the physical part, it also teaches you how to handle mental pressure,” explained Dzsudzsák, who represented his nation at the 2003 edition. “This tournament at such an age is a huge step in a player’s life. If you take into account that huge clubs are scouting at this tournament, it is even more demanding. So with a great performance you can create fantastic opportunities for yourself.” Germany’s Paris Brunner did just that in Hungary, winning the player of the



Men's Under-17 Championship
Host city: Budapest
Germany – France 0-0 (5-4 pens)
Winners: Germany

tournament award after inspiring his nation to their second men’s Under-17 EURO title, and their first for 14 years. The new champions defeated 2022 winners France in a penalty shoot-out at the Hidegkuti Nándor Stadium in Budapest following a goalless draw. This exciting crop of German youngsters, spearheaded by Dortmund forward Brunner, can now look forward to participating in the 2023 Under-17 World Cup in November and December. They will be joined by France, semi-finalists Poland and Spain, and England, who won a play-off against Switzerland. Wales became the 41st current UEFA member to participate in the Under-17 finals, and Cyprus will become the 42nd when they host next year’s edition, illustrating the increasing strength in depth of both the tournament and national team football in Europe. 🇪🇺



WOMEN’S UNDER-17 EURO: inspiring young girls in Estonia

Unlike their male counterparts, France’s Under-17 women’s side were able to go all the way, winning the European Women’s Under-17 Championship for the first time after a 3-2 victory against Spain at the Lilleküla Stadium in Tallinn. Spain’s player of the tournament, Vicky Lopez, and her fellow joint top scorers Liana Joseph and Maeline Mendy, both of France, were all on the scoresheet in the five-goal thriller.

The final was the climax to an uplifting 12 days during which the Estonian Football Association more than delivered on their vision of using the tournament as a catalyst to unleash a wave of interest in women’s football across the country. Throughout the event, the hosts ensured that action on the pitch was complemented by a myriad of activities to encourage youth and girls’ participation. These included school visits and matchday festivals featuring mascots and souvenirs, while more than 800 Estonian girls aged five to eight took part in the UEFA Playmakers programme.

The sporting ecosystem in Estonia is fiercely competitive, but some team sports, including women’s football, have in the past been overlooked or underfunded. For the Estonian FA’s secretary general, Anne Rei, who also chairs the UEFA Women’s Football Committee, the tournament represented a shift in perceptions and an opportunity to kick-start a lifelong passion for the game for girls in Estonia. Working with UEFA, Rei and her team developed a legacy programme covering the periods before, during and after the Under-17 EURO, with the aim of establishing new leagues and teams that will create more playing opportunities for women and girls. “In Estonia we still must focus on participation numbers, to encourage clubs to take up women’s football,” explains Rei, who is also building up a highly qualified workforce responsible for developing the women’s game in the country. Schools have been a key part of this drive, with teachers across the country receiving customised education on the benefits of playing football and the pivotal role they can play in promoting female participation,

Cristina Redondo (Spain) outpaces Wassia Sangare (France) during the UEFA European Women’s Under-17 Championship final in Tallinn in May.





Women's Under-17 Championship
Host city: Tallinn
Spain – France 2-3
Winners: France

inspiring girls who may then sign up for a local club. Some of those new players may one day feature themselves at a EURO and get the opportunity to take their game to the next level, with Rei eager to stress the value of these youth tournaments for the development of young female players. “At these tournaments, they can experience the demands of an international tournament at European level. The impact can be seen with the senior national teams, with many of today’s most prominent players starting their international careers at Under-17 level.” 🇪🇺

“At these tournaments, they can experience the demands of an international tournament at European level. The impact can be seen with the senior national teams, with many of today’s most prominent players starting their international careers at Under-17 level.” Anne Rei, Estonian FA’s secretary general





AZ Alkmaar goalkeeper Rome-Jayden Owusu-Oduro catches the ball under pressure from HNK Hajduk Split's Rokas Puktas during April's 2023 UEFA Youth League final in Geneva.

UEFA YOUTH LEAGUE: development on and off the pitch


By reaching the final of the UEFA Youth League, Hajduk Split made history as the first-ever Croatian finalists of a UEFA club competition. In a sign of the competition's growing prestige, a 10,000-strong fanbase travelled to Switzerland to support them, necessitating a switch to the bigger-capacity Stade de Genève from the competition's usual final venue in nearby Nyon.

Unfortunately for the travelling fans, their opponents AZ Alkmaar were also chasing a slice of history, and braces from Ernest Poku and Mexx Meerdink led the Dutch club to a 5-0 victory and their landmark first European trophy at any level.

Beyond making history for their clubs, the players also created lasting memories for local children thanks to a social initiative organised by the UEFA Foundation for Children. Twenty-two young players with learning disabilities from local associations had the chance to train on UEFA's home pitch in Nyon alongside the Youth League finalists. It was a powerful demonstration of how, in addition to providing a stage for young players to test themselves against their European peers, the Youth League provides other meaningful development opportunities off the pitch.

To further support this mission, UEFA integrity experts had earlier briefed all four semi-finalists on anti-doping and match-fixing. Players could also continue this education throughout the tournament via the UEFA for Players mobile app. This helps young footballers dreaming of a professional football career prepare for the future by offering 15 hours of educational content on diverse aspects of career management. Incentives to take part include monthly prizes such as a Champions League ball.

"I think [UEFA for Players] is a very useful tool for young people to learn about the environment surrounding the world of



Youth League

Host city: Geneva
AZ Alkmaar – Hajduk Split 5-0

Winners: AZ Alkmaar

football, so that they can be prepared for any situation that might happen to them," said Atlético de Madrid youngster Javier Diaz, just one of the young talents making their mark in UEFA competitions across the continent this year. 🌱



Twenty-two young players with learning disabilities trained in Nyon with players from the two UEFA Youth League finalists.

BREAKING NEW GROUND AT WEMBLEY

England and Brazil produced a magnificent spectacle in the first Women's Finalissima in London on 6 April.

The champions of Europe and South America played out the proverbial game of two halves, scoring a goal apiece before a dramatic penalty shoot-out gave England the honour of becoming the first team to win the UEFA-CONMEBOL Women's Finalissima. A great team attack was rounded off by Ella Toone to put England a goal ahead in a first half they dominated, only for Andressa Alves to equalise in added time at the end of a second half where dominance had changed hands.

"Brazil played two different formations," England coach Sarina Wiegman commented afterwards. "In the first half, we played very well. They weren't able to get on the ball and we should have scored a couple more goals. We said at half-time they might switch back to 4-4-2, and they did. They pressed a lot higher. We had a lot of problems getting out of their press and lost the ball a lot. That was a struggle for us, but that's good for us; it gives us a lot to learn."

As well as showcasing the popularity of women's football – 83,132 fans attended the match – the game underlined the strong spirit of cooperation between UEFA and CONMEBOL. The Women's Finalissima is merely the latest in a series of continental showdowns pitching European against South American national team

champions at senior and youth levels as well as in futsal.

England midfielder Keira Walsh, named player of the match commented: "For women's football to have this for the first time and for England to be a part of it is a very special feeling for us and for the fans. It's a massive step for women's football." 🌱

CPR training

Ahead of the Women's Finalissima, staff and players from both teams, along with the match officials, received cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training, marking the launch of a major initiative by UEFA and the European Resuscitation Council to offer CPR training to over 12,000 people.

The project, set in motion at the UEFA Medical Symposium earlier this year, aims to raise awareness that rapid and effective resuscitation in the event of sudden cardiac arrest doubles the chances of survival and could save over 100,000 lives in Europe every year.

The training has been extended to teams competing in this year's men's UEFA Nations League finals, the European Under-21 Championship final tournament and various youth and futsal competitions in addition to staff at UEFA, its 55 member associations and volunteers working at UEFA EURO 2024 in Germany.

At the Finalissima, England and Brazil players expressed their support. England goalkeeper Hannah Hampton said: "I recommend CPR training to everyone, it's so important and easy to learn and it can save lives."



Women's Finalissima

Host city: London
England – Brazil 1-1
(4-2 pens)

Winners: England



Left: England's Lauren James outpaces Brazil's Rafaelle Souza during the Women's Finalissima at Wembley. **Above:** England player Alex Greenwood undertakes CPR training at the St George's Park national training centre.

EUROPE'S PREMIER GRASSROOTS COMPETITION RETURNS

After a four-year hiatus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the UEFA Regions' Cup returned in 2023, providing a unique opportunity for lesser-known regions and amateur players to shine on the European stage.

Open only to players who have never featured at any professional level in the European football pyramid, the Regions' Cup is a unique contest capturing the essence of the grassroots game. In its 24-year history, more than 6,500 players have appeared in the competition, which is contested by regional-team winners of national amateur tournaments, along with national amateur teams from smaller associations.

Some 595 teams started out in this year's edition, with the final stage held in the northwestern Spanish region of Galicia between 9 and 17 June. Usually held every two years, this was the first edition of the Regions' Cup since its cancellation in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hosts with the most

Galicia represented Spanish football by both hosting and playing in the final phase. Spain has now had a team in a record nine of the 12 Regions' Cup final tournaments and, since 1999, where Veneto claimed the first Regions' Cup title on Italian soil, 27 different nations have produced final tournament contenders. The other teams in the final stage of this year's competition ventured from across Europe: Bavaria (Germany), Zlín (Czechia), Zenica-Doboj (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Rep. of Ireland Amateur (Republic of Ireland), Lisboa (Portugal), Belgrade (Serbia), and Dolnośląski Region (Poland).

None were able to overcome the hosts, however, who became Spain's third Regions' Cup winners in front of a finals record crowd of more than 4,000 in Vilagarcía de Arousa by beating Belgrade 3-1. Alongside the unprecedented crowds, the remarks of Ivan Cancela, Galicia's coach, summed up the value of the Regions' Cup to both fans and teams. "There are no words to describe this moment. This is the best day in the history of Galician football."



Regions' Cup 2023

Host city: Vilagarcía

Galicia – Belgrade 3-1

Winners: Galicia

"Being in the finals of this tournament means a lot to me," added Galicia's captain, civil engineer Aarón Rama. "It's the culmination of a long career with my regional squad. For us players, this might be the most important tournament of our lives."

'The Champions League for amateur players'

Bavaria's captain, Sebastian Brey, will take a bronze medal back to his watch and jewellery business after his team finished runners-up in Group A behind Galicia. Amateur though the players might be, the competition on the pitch remains full of quality. "The standard of matches at the Regions' Cup is very high," remarked Brey. "You have to be at your limit to be successful. As a player, you really want to experience international football, and to have been part of the German team in Bavaria in 2019 was a career highlight for me.

"At the Regions' Cup, players from small clubs represent their countries, which shows that the efforts of grassroot teams are recognised in the football world.

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**"For us players, this might be the most important tournament of our lives."**

**Aarón Rama**  
 Galicia's captain



No matter what league you play in, you have to work hard to help your team. You have to respect each other and be sporting in victory and defeat."

Jim Boyce, who as the chairman of the UEFA Youth and Amateur Football Committee attended the first nine editions of the tournament before his retirement, has seen first-hand the competition's unique appeal. "UEFA have got to be congratulated for introducing a tournament like this. This is the Champions League for amateur players. These are lads who play at the weekend and play mainly for fun, but they have an opportunity to play in a European competition, come to new countries and make new friends."

It's an opportunity that some Regions' Cup alumni have used as a springboard to go on to make their mark in the professional game. One recent graduate is Croatian international right-back Josip Juranović, who made six appearances for Celtic in the Champions League group stage in 2022/23, before joining Bundesliga side Union Berlin in January and going on to appear four times in the Europa League knockout phase. Add to that leagues titles in Poland with Legia Warszawa and in Scotland with Celtic and it's clear that his appearances for Zagreb Region in 2014/15 Regions' Cup qualifying have paid dividends. 🇪🇺



Zlín Region's Patrik Siska (left) and Lisboa's Vitor Manuel Barros Martins challenge for the ball during their group encounter in Galicia.

The Regions' Cup has produced ten different winners in its first 12 editions

- 2022/23 Galicia (ESP)\*
- 2020/21 edition cancelled
- 2018/19 Dolnośląski (POL)
- 2016/17 Zagreb (CRO)
- 2014/15 Eastern Region (IRL)\*
- 2012/13 Veneto (ITA)\*
- 2010/11 Braga (POR)\*
- 2008/09 Castilla y León (ESP)
- 2006/07 Dolnośląski (POL)
- 2004/05 Basque Country (ESP)
- 2002/03 Piemonte Valle d'Aosta (ITA)
- 2000/01 Central Moravia (CZE)\*
- 1999 Veneto (ITA)\*

\*winners as hosts



# ACADEMIC PAPERS INFORM FOOTBALL DECISION-MAKING

The UEFA Research Grant Programme funds valuable research into football – with a recent focus on the grassroots producing studies on both children’s participation and volunteering.

“From UEFA’s perspective, it is about the fight against dropout.” The words belong to Laura Finnegan, an academic reflecting on her research project on children’s participation in grassroots football, produced under the aegis of the UEFA Research Grant Programme.

Each year the research grant jury awards as many as five grants – of up to €15,000 for an individual project or up to €20,000 for a joint project – to academics working on research to support strategic decision-making in European football.

Finnegan – a lecturer at the South East Technological University in Waterford, Ireland – undertook in 2021/22 her research project titled ‘Football Club Environments And Their Impact On Participation, Performance And Personal Development (Age 6-12)’.

This involved a survey of more than 2,000 clubs catering for over 300,000 children from seven countries – the Republic of Ireland, Germany, Italy, Malta, Norway, Portugal and Wales – and it

sought to investigate how the environment at clubs affected their ability to achieve positive outcomes regarding participation, personal development and performance. Finnegan’s findings suggest a lack of resources and organisational capacity had a detrimental effect on playing opportunities in over half of the clubs. Meanwhile, 13% of clubs said their physical environment did not meet children’s needs.

Youngsters dropping out is a problem and her study called on stakeholders to “proactively address the football environment provided to children”.

“People are generally concerned, and for me it speaks to a need for flexible formats and offering football in a different way,” she adds, citing the “autonomy” found in video games as one possible remedy.

## Medical research grants also available

The research grant programme has now expanded to include a medical research

grant programme (MRGP), which means that academics wishing to analyse football from a medical and health point of view can apply for a separate grant.

All grant recipients have nine months to complete their work and they benefit from UEFA’s support in “opening doors in national associations,” as Finnegan puts it. It is a point echoed by two other research grant programme participants – Pamela Wicker from Germany’s Bielefeld University and Larissa Davies from Sheffield Hallam University in the United Kingdom – who delivered a research paper on ‘The value of volunteering in grassroots football: Practical outcomes’.

## Understanding the impact and frustrations of volunteering

This joint project assesses the impact and value of volunteering in grassroots football across England, Germany, Norway, Poland and Switzerland. UEFA used its social media accounts to publicise the survey, which explored both the effects of volunteering on European clubs and individuals (including social capital, human capital and well-being) and the monetary value of volunteering in different roles.

According to Davies, data gathered from over 20,000 respondents gives an understanding of the positive well-being impacts of volunteering but also the frustrations of volunteers. She elaborates: “What’s unchanged in grassroots football is the need for and importance of volunteering at grassroots clubs. However, a key challenge is not necessarily having less people volunteering but clubs across Europe increasingly struggling to retain volunteers. That could be because motivations have changed over time.

“Having insights through our work around well-being impacts and frustrations should help support clubs to retain and grow their volunteer base.”

# SOUND FINANCES AND TALENTED PEOPLE TO GROW EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

In May, UEFA, in partnership with the Royal Belgian Football Association (RBFA), hosted the first-ever UEFA Grow conference on finance and HR management.

There is no way to ensure a competitive, prosperous and trusted European football ecosystem without sound financial management and a skilled workforce invested in its development. This is why UEFA brought together finance and human resource directors from its 55 member associations at a two-day event at the home of Belgian football in Tubize.

“It’s quite clever to combine HR and finance, so that they get an understanding of each other’s area of expertise: you need both the money and the people,” said Graham Fitzgerald, chief operating officer at the Irish Football Association.

Participants discussed specific case studies as well as the results of a UEFA Grow survey assessing associations’ relative performances across both disciplines. The latter showed that, on average, UEFA member associations’ revenue increased by 89% between 2010 and 2021.



Figures also revealed a 220% rise in investment in women’s football over the same period. “We are glad to see national associations recovering well after the severe hit of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Josef Koller, UEFA’s finance director, who presented an insight into UEFA’s financial results and key EURO 2024 budget figures.

The conference placed a strong emphasis on group work, with participants

engaging in discussions on both topics, mainly concerning the survey results. Association representatives working in finance and HR committed to increased cooperation.

“It was very interesting to see the data on where other associations stand,” said Rita Galvão, HR director at the Portuguese Football Federation. “But we work with people and we want to go beyond the data and the numbers and continue sharing our experiences of working from home, investment in staff education, performance appraisals and many other issues.”

After listening to an inspiring speech from author, speaker and former BBC HR director Lucy Adams on the future role of HR departments, UEFA’s own HR team underlined the importance of keeping pace with constant change while ensuring staff policies serve the needs of employees and their organisations.



The UEFA Grow conference on finance and HR management gathered representatives from all 55 UEFA member associations at the home of Belgian football in Tubize.

Photos: Sportpix



# CELEBRATING TEN YEARS OF UEFA MEMBERSHIP

Wednesday 24 May 2023 may have seemed like any other Wednesday to most footballing fans around the world, everywhere except in Gibraltar that is, where the day marked the tenth anniversary of the Gibraltar Football Association (GFA) being admitted as a UEFA member.

By Steven Gonzalez



Tenth anniversary dinner held at the top of the Rock of Gibraltar

It was on 24 May 2013, at UEFA's 37th Ordinary Congress in London that Gibraltar was finally admitted as UEFA's 54th member association, a journey that had taken more than 20 years, since May 1991, when the then GFA president, Andrew Perera, had first written to FIFA seeking membership.

When FIFA referred former GFA president Joseph Nuñez to UEFA in 1999, a long and arduous legal process began, which ended up with Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) rulings in favour of the Gibraltar FA and, finally, UEFA membership being accepted at the UEFA Congress in 2013. The Gibraltar FA president at that time, Gareth Latin, said in his acceptance speech: "What matters most for us has prevailed."

Becoming a member of UEFA on 24 May 2013 was the most significant day in the long history of the Gibraltar FA, which began way back in 1895 when the association was founded. One of the ten

oldest football associations in the world had finally gained international recognition. Instantly, Gibraltarians at home and abroad could start dreaming of supporting their own national teams, in all age groups, in officially sanctioned matches (both friendlies and competitive matches) instead of having to adopt another national team to follow.

Gibraltar clubs were now able to compete in UEFA competitions and the gateway to their professionalisation was well and truly opened. Their performances in UEFA Champions League qualifiers, Europa League qualifiers and, latterly, in the Europa Conference League, right through to the group stages of the main competition, have been nothing short of sensational.

On the pitch, the past ten years have been filled with historic moments. The association continues to work hard in developing grassroots, youth and

women's football, as well as futsal – and its coaching and refereeing departments are all developing rapidly – while simultaneously using football as a force for good within the local community with its school programmes and charity events.

That watershed moment ten years ago changed Gibraltar football forever and signalled the dawn of a new professional era for Gibraltar football. Rounded off by FIFA membership in 2016, the GFA has revolutionised all its operational, administrative and sporting structures to rapidly develop into a young, modern and forward-thinking organisation.

As with all associations, there are challenges ahead, but in the words of our current president, Michael Llamas: "The one thing that unites Gibraltarians is their passion for Gibraltar football and that uniting factor is what will drive us forward into the next decade of UEFA membership." 🇮🇪

ALBANIA

www.fshf.org

## THREE BRAND-NEW STADIUMS TO BOOST THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOOTBALL

ANDI VERCANI



The construction of three new modern stadiums will boost the development of football and sports infrastructure in Albania. The building process will begin shortly, with the Football Association of Albania and the Albanian government cooperating in the investment. The new stadiums will be built in the cities of Durrës, Korça and Vlorë, providing not only sports development but economic development as well. After international competitions in which prestigious design studios took part, the projects for the three stadiums have been selected and everything is set to get going.

"By building these three new stadiums, Albania will become the best country in

the region in terms of football infrastructure. Based on the investments made, the new projects we are starting, and also the experience gained in organising important international events, the Albanian FA has applied to host the finals of a European youth championship in our country. I am convinced that, in cooperation with the government and taking all other factors into consideration, we will win this bid and bring this important tournament to Albania," said the president of the Albanian FA, Armand Duka.

The Football Association of Albania has done a massive job in terms of infrastructure, building four new stadiums in the last eight years in cooperation with



the government, in the cities of Elbasan, Shkodra and Kukës and, recently, the masterpiece Air Albania stadium in Tirana. Thanks to this investment, Albania hosted the historic first final of the UEFA Europa Conference League in Tirana in May 2022, making this event a success story in perfect organisation.

In addition to these new-build stadiums, the Albanian FA has invested in many other stadiums in the country and built dozens of new training grounds. These investments have helped to put Albania on the map of countries with developed infrastructure and persuaded UEFA to entrust it with hosting international youth tournaments.

AUSTRIA

www.oefb.at

## 18TH UGOTCHI SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

MICHAEL GRASWALD



UGOTCHI is a four-week programme designed to promote physical activity in Austrian primary schools. Organised by SPORTUNION in cooperation with the Austrian Football Association (ÖFB), the school association Simply Strong and insurance company UNIQA, it introduces six-to-ten-year-olds to healthy lifestyles through games and other fun activities.

This year's activities kicked off in May, with more than 59,000 children taking part. One in three primary schools nationwide entered at least one class.

Former Austrian international Jasmin Eder, who now works for the ÖFB's girls' and women's football department, and the head coach of the Austrian women's U17 team, Patrick Haidbauer, set the ball rolling, together with SPORTUNION

president Peter McDonald and Simply Strong founder Werner Schwarz.

Exercise videos were released daily, including dance moves every Friday, and ÖFB mascot Ostar-Richi gave the children weekly nutrition tips. The programme culminated in a creativity competition with great

prizes up for grabs. A new website was set up to host the content, much of which has been revamped for 2023.

The UGOTCHI programme is designed to boost children's self-confidence and strengthen each class's sense of community. Activities focused on speed for the first week, followed by coordination, strength and endurance. Bonus points could be earned for doing sport and eating healthily at home. "Early childhood experiences have a significant impact on athletic and cognitive development," Patrick Haidbauer explained. "That's why it's important to playfully encourage children to exercise."

"This is an excellent and incredibly important programme for the ÖFB," said Jasmin Eder. "Every year we see how much fun and excitement it brings our schoolchildren. There's nothing more valuable than that."





AZERBAIJAN

www.affa.az

# TOURNAMENT DEDICATED TO THE CENTENARY OF HEYDAR ALIYEV

FIRUZ ABDULLA

Ten teams competed in a tournament held at the Baku Olympic Stadium to mark what would have been the 100th birthday of Azerbaijan's leader and third president, Heydar Aliyev.

The teams represented the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan (AFFA), the Azerbaijan premier league, clubs, referees, veterans, media, volunteers, SOCAR, BOS and partners.

The games were played in two groups of five teams, with the two group winners – the premier league and the veterans teams – going through to the final, which the veterans won 6-2. Medals were presented to the tournament winners and runners-up by the AFFA president, Rovnag Abdullayev; the minister of youth and sports, Farid Gaibov; and the AFFA secretary general, Sarkhan Hajiye. The event was attended by representatives of the sports community, including media, volunteers and fans.



BELGIUM

www.rbfa.be

# STAMPING OUT RACISM TAKES PRIORITY

MARIE VERBEKE

Through its action plan Come Together, the Royal Belgian Football Association puts a lot of work into combatting racism. Its objective is to make football pitches a place where people can truly come together, and where the golden rule is respect.

Come Together is also a hard-hitting publicity campaign that presents insults as face tattoos: a powerful image of the indelible suffering experienced by people who are discriminated against.

In addition to its awareness-raising and educational work, the Belgian FA has developed an online reporting tool to enable victims or witnesses of racist

acts to report them in complete confidence. An investigation is then conducted, and action taken if necessary. Last year, 139 rulings were issued, with sanctions ranging from fines and suspensions to matches being played behind closed doors.

Samia Ahrouch, head of inclusion at the Belgian FA, said: "Unfortunately, discrimination is still a reality that we face every week on and around football pitches. Only the systematic reporting of every incident, mass condemnation and targeted action will enable us to put an end to discrimination in Belgian football."



BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

www.nfsbih.ba

# LEAGUE AND CUP DOUBLES FOR SFK 2000 SARAJEVO AND HŠK ZRINJSKI

SLAVICA PECKOZA

Two clubs dominated the women's and men's premier leagues in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the 2022/23 season: SFK 2000 Sarajevo in the women's league and HŠK Zrinjski in the men's competition.

SFK 2000 Sarajevo continued their dominance of women's football by winning the premier league for the 21st time. The only way to describe SFK 2000 Sarajevo is – unstoppable.

After lifting the championship trophy, SFK 2000 Sarajevo went on to win the

women's cup as well, beating Emina 1-0 in the final in Zenica.

"We've won another trophy and we're happy. Emina played very well, so this was a real final and I believe that the fans enjoyed it. Congratulations to the players, my staff and the Bosnia and Herzegovina Football Federation for the excellent organisation of the final match. The crowd created a wonderful atmosphere, which gave a special charm to this final," said head coach Samira Hurem.



In the men's competition, Mostar club HŠK Zrinjski also clocked up a most impressive season. Under head coach Krunoslav Rendulić, they also won the league and cup double, for the first time in their history.

CROATIA

www.hns-cff.hr

# PLANS TO BUILD A NATIONAL TEAM TRAINING CAMP ANNOUNCED

NIKA BAHTIJAREVIĆ

After continued investments in club infrastructure during the past several years, the Croatian Football Federation's (HNS) top management has recently announced that the federation will soon begin working on the construction of a national team training camp near Zagreb.

Representatives of the HNS have met multiple times with the Croatian prime minister, Andrej Plenković, and other government figures to discuss this large infrastructure project, and in late May, the government formally adopted the decision to gift a large plot of land to the HNS for the purpose of building the football camp.

"I want to thank the government of the Republic of Croatia for recognising the importance of sports and for demonstrating that it truly recognises the value of the international successes of our national team and the role of football in Croatian society.



This project is a strategically vital one for the Croatian Football Federation and we're approaching it with a lot of resolve and with all of our resources behind it," said the HNS president, Marijan Kustić.

The facility will be located in Velika Gorica, a satellite town near the Croatian

capital, Zagreb. In addition to meeting with the Croatian government, the HNS president has also met with the mayor of Velika Gorica, Krešimir Ačkar, multiple times and expressed his gratitude for the local government's collaborative approach.



ENGLAND

www.thefa.com

# THE GREATER GAME

MARIA DE LEON

In May, The Football Association announced The Greater Game, a programme focused on inspiring 12-16-year-olds, and their families, to improve their health and well-being by making at least one extra healthier action per week. These actions will centre on four key pillars: moving well, eating well, sleeping well and thinking well.

The Greater Game launches at a time when less than half of 10-16-year-olds in the UK regularly exercise for an hour a day.

A fundamental part of The Greater Game programme is a grassroots initiative co-created with healthcare

charity Nuffield Health, which is currently in a pilot stage before being rolled out nationally in 2024.

Delivered in the form of educational workshops, the initiative will give parents and guardians, coaches and young people practical tips and techniques to support making healthier choices under the pillars of Move, Eat, Sleep and Think. These can be taken away and put into practice on the pitch and at home.

Mark Bullingham, chief executive officer of The FA, said: "The Greater Game aims to harness the power of football to improve the health of young people throughout the country. The campaign will evolve over time, with the



long-term ambition of inspiring healthier, happier lives while tackling the underlying problems that lead to poor physical and mental health. We are working with some great brand partners who understand and care about health and young people, and we are all committed to doing our best to drive positive change."

The FA will look to add new partners and further initiatives to The Greater Game programme as it expands over the coming years.

ESTONIA

www.jalgpall.ee

# EUROPEAN WOMEN'S UNDER-17 CHAMPIONSHIP BREAKS RECORDS AND BUILDS A LEGACY

EVA-MARIA KRIISA

In May, Estonia hosted the European Women's Under-17 Championship final tournament, which ended with France winning the title for the first time. Not only was it

the biggest event in the history of Estonian women's football but it also broke records in the history of the tournament.

The spectacular tournament attracted a total of 10,756 spectators. The most popular match was the final at Lilleküla Stadium, where 3,179 spectators set a record for any women's match in Estonia as well as being the second largest attendance in the tournament's history.

With a capacity of 14,336, Lilleküla Stadium became the largest stadium to have ever hosted a European Women's Under-17 Championship match. The tournament was broadcast on TV in 32 countries and was also available worldwide via UEFA.tv.

The organising team of over 120 people from UEFA and the Estonian Football Association successfully managed all aspects of the tournament and were supported by about 30 partners and 100 volunteers. The tournament also boosted Estonian tourism and the economy as it brought people to the country for more than 4,000 overnight stays.

An important part of the tournament was its legacy, with a mission to increase participation and the number of qualified coaches in Estonian women's football. Some 287 girls between the ages of 5 and 12 participated in festivals in Tallinn, Tartu and Võru, where football was introduced to them through fun-based exercises. On the coaching side, 37 coaches took part in a national D licence course and UEFA experts shared their knowledge of women's football.



FAROE ISLANDS

www.fsf.fo

# WOMEN'S FOOTBALL ON THE AGENDA

TERJI NIELSEN

In mid-May, the Faroe Islands Football Association hosted a UEFA Share conference, where participants from Andorra, Croatia, England, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, Moldova, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Sweden and Switzerland joined local participants and UEFA representatives to share knowledge and experience on various aspects of women's football.

The main questions addressed by the conference were how to get more young girls to play football and how to increase the number of female coaches. The conference included training sessions and presentations from, among others, Gemma Grainger, head coach of the women's national team of Wales. "Our main focus was to have a programme with inputs from many different sides, and I think that was a success. The participating countries were different both in terms of



size and sporting performance, but we all often face the same challenges," said

Pætur Smith Clementsen, technical director of the Faroese FA.

FINLAND

www.palloliitto.fi

# REVAMPED FINNISH CUP A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

TARU NYHOLM

Only a few years ago, the Finnish men's and women's cup competitions were down in the dumps, with participation levels lower than ever – even in the once popular

men's competition, only 45 teams took part in 2021. The competition format introduced in the 2010s, which involved a winter group stage that was mostly played indoors before the final knockout

stage began, served the top teams' interests but seemed to make it an unattractive competition for lower league teams.

In 2021, the FA set up a working group tasked with returning the competition to its former glory.

Having listened to representatives from clubs, players and supporters, they received a clear message: the vast majority of the Finnish football community wanted the competition to return to its roots.

Rapidly, the working group proposed a reform, with the men's cup competition returning to the traditional knockout format in 2022 and the women's cup competition following suit this year. The number of participants shot back up immediately. This year, 333 teams signed up for the men's competition and 64 for the women's competition – an all-time record.

With additional resources invested in the cups' marketing, which have resulted in a fivefold increase in visibility, the revamped competitions have met with nearly unanimous acclaim, especially from the smaller clubs all over Finland. Having been drawn against big teams, many have broken their cup attendance records and are now able to dream of their own David versus Goliath stories again.





HUNGARY

www.mlsz.hu

# NO MORE HATE ON THE FOOTBALL PITCH

DOROTTYA LÁZÁR

A new anti-discrimination campaign has been launched in Hungary aimed at promoting a positive attitude and respectful behaviour among football fans.

The Hungarian Football Federation has been campaigning against all forms of discrimination since 2013, always with the same message: that hate is not acceptable. In the case of the new campaign, the message is that hate is not acceptable anywhere at a football stadium.

A new video has been released to accompany the campaign, launched this spring. Football fans are invited to watch the video at every single league and national team match. In the video, Hungarian football players, including Dominik Szoboszlai and Roland Sallai, speak out against discrimination. Marco Rossi, coach of the men's national team, also appears in the video delivering the same message.

The primary purpose of the redesigned campaign is to further raise



the awareness of football fans that fair play also applies in the stands and ensure that all cheering is done in a spirit of fair play and anti-discrimination. In

addition to the video, public service announcements and billboards highlight the anti-discrimination message at football matches.

ICELAND

www.ksi.is

# YOUTH COUNCIL MEETS FOR THE FIRST TIME

SÓLEY GUDMUNDSÓTTIR

The first youth council of the Football Association of Iceland was established on 27 April this



year. The youth council is a result of a youth congress hosted by the association for young people aged between 12 and 18 years playing for any club in Iceland. For this first congress, the association decided to invite every club to send four delegates. In total, 60 delegates took part from 20 clubs from all around the country. Everyone interested could apply for a seat on the new council,

which currently consists of 18 members, who all have equal power and rights within the council. The council members will work together for one year at a time and their final duty will be to host the annual youth congress, before handing over to the next council. The current council's emphasis will be on referee matters, mental health and parents' behaviour during and after games. The main goal of the council is to protect the interests of young players in Iceland and be their voice within Icelandic football. In the future, we hope to be able to host youth congresses without limiting the number of participants per club so that everyone can have an impact and speak their mind.

ITALY

www.figc.it

# EDUCATION MINISTRY SALUTES FIGC SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

DIEGO ANTENZIO

In May, the Italian Football Federation (FIGC) and the education ministry presented the results of the first year of Valori in Rete (Values in the net), a large-scale education project that encourages schoolchildren to be physically active and promotes the values of sport: respect, teamwork and inclusion.

The programme is aimed at all types of school, offering a range of projects for different age groups: Uno, Due, Calcio! (One, two, shoot!) for preschools; GiocoCalciando (Play and kick) for primary schools; Un calcio al bullismo (Kick out bullying) for primary and secondary schools; Ragazze in gioco (Girls in the game) and Tutti in Goal (All in goal) for lower secondary level; Un Goal per la Salute (A goal for health) for upper secondary level; and L'Arbitro scolastico (The school referee) for pupils aged 14 and up.

"Valori in Rete has played an important role in boosting physical education in schools, encouraging children to participate in activities relating to

schoolwork, teamwork and the use of new technologies," said education minister Giuseppe Valditara. "Sport is fundamental to the development of our children and teenagers: it supports healthy lifestyles, encourages participation, teaches them to respect their opponents and the rules, and is an effective tool in the fight against school dropout and bullying. It also promotes values such as social cohesion, integration and inclusion."

"Culture, education and training are the three pillars on which school and sport are based," said FIGC president Gabriele Gravina. "Football, in particular, is an exceptional vehicle for communication because it is direct and it speaks the children's language. The FIGC and its youth and schools football department have everything they need to convey positive messages to pupils and help them to develop a genuine social conscience." Gravina also announced plans to host a football camp at a school in Emilia-Romagna, a region devastated by floods in May.



The Valori in Rete programme consists of weekly activities organised by region or province, under the guidance of local FIGC staff. For the 2022/23 season that has just ended, the projects aimed at lower secondary school pupils (Ragazze in gioco, Tutti in Goal, and girls' and mixed futsal activities) also comprised a national phase involving more than 400 students.

A total of 2,100 schools took part across the seven projects during the season. The regions with the highest take-up were Sicily (425 schools), Calabria (209), Emilia-Romagna (166), Puglia (141), Abruzzo (114), Piedmont (137) and Veneto (91).

The closing event in Rome was attended by men's national team coach Roberto Mancini and world champions Marco Tardelli and Simone Perrotta.

LATVIA

www.lff.lv

# WORK ON NEW STRATEGY BEGINS

TOMS ĀRMANIS

The Latvian Football Federation (LFF), in cooperation with the UEFA Grow team, has started the process of creating a new development strategy document defining the federation's long-term goals from 2025.

The first LFF development strategy was introduced in 2017 and concludes next year. For its strategy beyond 2025, the federation has already started analysing the current situation, setting up working groups and determining priority areas. Various stakeholders are involved in the

process of creating the new strategy, including members, clubs, fans, the state and the municipalities, so that Latvian football develops based on the suggestions and opinions of the parties involved.

"Currently, we are streamlining LFF processes in several areas within the UEFA Grow programme, and one of the projects is the preparation and implementation of the new strategy. To start with, we have created a working group within the LFF administration, which, together with UEFA and its partners, is carrying out analyses

to define, together with the football community, how we want to see Latvian football in the future," said the LFF president, Vadims Ļašenko.

"The implementation of the new strategy is an important process for the long-term development of the federation, as well as for Latvian football as a whole. We will create focus groups in different areas, so that everyone is heard and everyone finds a place in the future direction of Latvian football," added secretary general Arturs Gaidels.





# A NEW HOME OF FOOTBALL – FUTBOLAS.TV

VAIDOTAS KAZLAUSKAS

The Lithuanian Football Federation (LFF) took another step forward at the end of the last year when it launched its new digital platform, futbolas.tv.

This new platform has become the home for all the federation’s video production content – starting with live streaming of dozens of games at all levels, including youth competitions and the men’s second division.

“We consider this new platform as another significant step forward in terms of our digital content. With this platform, we are now fully independent of any other platforms and we can develop it anyway we wish,” said the LFF president, Edgaras Stankevičius.

The transition from previous video platforms has been going smoothly

and the football community is becoming familiar with the new platform, where they know they will find all the video content they need. The platform has also received positive feedback from other national football associations, who find it useful and easy to use.

And the numbers back it up – the platform generates 10,000 viewers each month.

With lots of exclusive content from national teams, top-flight competitions, behind-the-scenes coverage and other

inclusive content, the LFF is really satisfied with how the platform has kicked off in its first year and hopes to develop it even more.



# NEW GOALKEEPING COACHING PATHWAY LAUNCHED

NIGEL TILSON

The Irish Football Association’s coach education department has introduced a new pathway for goalkeeping coaches.

The pathway aims to develop goalkeeping coaching from grassroots through to senior professional level.

Sean-Paul Murray, head of coach education at the Irish FA, said: “The development and introduction of our first-ever goalkeeping coaching pathway has provided courses for those working at grassroots level through to those working at senior

professional level. This is an exciting challenge and we are looking forward to rolling out the courses across the country.

“Alongside the new pathway, we have also developed and embedded goalkeeping modules within all UEFA outfield courses. We are confident

that the combination of these developments will have a positive impact on the standard of goalkeeping coaching at all levels of the game within Northern Ireland.”

Former Northern Ireland goalkeeper Alan Mannus, who was appointed as the Irish FA’s goalkeeping coach educator earlier this year, is keen to support goalkeeping coaches at all levels of the game within Northern Ireland. He said: “The new coaching pathway has been developed with the aim of helping to prepare coaches working with goalkeepers from grassroots up to senior international level, with the goal of increasing goalkeeper participation, progression and performance. Each course has a specific focus on coaching goalkeepers of a certain age and development level.”



# FURTHER INVESTMENT IN WOMEN’S FOOTBALL

ZUZANNA WALCZAK

Prize money amounting to PLN 889,000 (approximately €200,000) every season is to be awarded in total to the clubs of the two highest women’s divisions in Poland (Women’s Orlen Ekstraliga and the Women’s Orlen 1 Liga). The money will be distributed based on final positions in the league tables. This is more than half a million Polish zloty (approximately €112,000) more than before.

“This decision aims to make sporting competition more attractive and, at the same time, it is evidence of a gradual improvement in standards in club competitions. The introduction of a similar mechanism at the second level will, in turn, intensify the rivalry for promotion to the top league, while enabling clubs to adapt to the licensing requirements,” said Łukasz Wachowski,

secretary general of the Polish Football Association.

In addition, all 24 clubs in the Ekstraliga and 1 Liga receive participation grants amounting to a total of PLN 1,800,000 (approximately €400,000) per season. The Polish FA also covers in full the refereeing fees for all the clubs’ league matches. They can also benefit from other forms of support, such as from the women’s club bonus programme, under which they receive financial bonuses for the participation of their players in Polish national team camps – both senior and youth team camps. Each season, PLN 1 million (approximately €224,000) is available for sharing between the clubs.

Further joint initiatives are currently being developed to help implement the Polish FA’s women’s football strategy for 2022–26 in the four key development areas defined therein.



# FIRST-EVER REPUBLIC OF IRELAND WOMEN’S TEAM REUNITED

GARETH MAHER

The first women to pull on the Ireland jersey to represent the women’s national team in official games were reunited at a special event on 4 May.

As part of the Football Association of Ireland’s (FAI) 50th anniversary celebrations of women’s and girls’ football, the trailblazing women who first played for Ireland in 1973 were honoured in Dublin.

Representing eight different counties, the women who helped the Republic of Ireland defeat Wales 3-2 on 13 May 1973 and Northern Ireland 4-1 on 30 June 1973 in Dublin were reunited for the first time in five decades.

At a lunch event, each player received a special gift to mark the occasion, which was attended by the minister of state at the department of tourism, culture, arts,



Gaeltacht, sport and media, Thomas Byrne; the lord mayor of Dublin, Caroline Conroy; the FAI president, Gerry McAnaney; and the FAI CEO, Jonathan Hill.

Along with the players, a number of key personnel who helped to create the early foundations of women’s and girls’ football at both domestic and international level in

the Republic of Ireland were also present at the event.

The players will be special guests of the current Ireland women’s national team at their international friendly against France on 6 July at Tallaght Stadium – their final home game before the 2023 Women’s World Cup.




ROMANIA

www.frf.ro

# EDUCATION HIGH ON THE AGENDA

PAUL ZAHARIA

 Education is a concept that has a most high and important value for the Romanian Football Federation (FRF), being a significant chapter and part of its overall development strategy.

Several projects form this concept and even if they are distinct, they are interdependent. For example, creating the FRF national football academy offered various opportunities to educate members of the Romanian football family in several areas and domains, while the classification of the clubs' academies represents a tool to stimulate the improvement of the activity at the youth level of each affiliated member.

Meanwhile, the recently launched FRF football implementation project is strongly linked to the two aforementioned projects as well as being an extension of the first edition of the football academies project. It is designed to provide mentoring to clubs and is set to run until the end of 2023.

The FRF selected six club academies (CSA Steaua București, FC Rapid 1923 București, Universitatea Craiova, FC UTA Arad, FC CFR 1907 Cluj and FC Universitatea Cluj) to be part of the

football implementation project, based on certain principles: previous participation in the football academies project, a final assessment of each academy director at the end of the project and their results in the final exam, the academy's ranking, the number of players selected for the youth national teams and last, but not least, the academy's desire to be part of this new project.

Three-quarters of the costs of the new project are financed by the FRF since it entails four two-day visits to each of the six selected academies. The visits are conducted by Lucian Burchel, director of the FRF coaching school; Ilie Alexe, sports director of the youth national teams; and Vlad Munteanu, national team project manager and operational manager; together with specialists with vast international experience in this area of expertise from top academies abroad or from other national associations. During these visits, various discussions take place with the staff members and with the coaches working in the academies, as well as training sessions on the pitch.

The participants discuss, among other topics, the management and the strategic role of an academy, staff management and the links created between all departments, the development of a philosophy at the level of each club, talent scouting and player selection, individual development, transition towards the senior team and practice on the pitch.

The aim is for all these discussions to produce concrete results, meaning that at the end of the project each academy will have a well-defined development strategy with results at both local and national level, but also, through the youth national teams, results at international level and improvements in the overall level of Romanian youth football.


The FRF has an external partner for this project, the Belgian company Double Pass, which has gained global experience in this area in the last 20 years, having worked with more than 1,000 clubs, national associations and professional leagues from Belgium, England, Germany, Denmark, Japan, Scotland, the USA and many other countries besides. Since 2020, the company has also been a partner for the FIFA talent development programme.

SAN MARINO

www.fsgc.sm

# THOUSANDS SUBSCRIBE TO WATCH SAN MARINO FOOTBALL STREAMED LIVE

LUCA PELLICIONI

 The football season has just come to an end in San Marino and it featured an exciting new development introduced in September 2022.

For the first time ever, every match in San Marino's domestic championship and its cup competition – the Coppa Titano – was streamed live. The TITANI.TV platform launched by the San Marino

Football Federation (FSGC) gave the country's football fans the opportunity to follow the season from start to finish.

The FSGC is confident about the value of this investment, which involved installing smart cameras that follow the action and transmit the signal to TITANI.TV, with commentary in Italian. Subscribers were able to stream every single

domestic match in San Marino's 2022/23 season free of charge.

The number of subscribers reached almost 10,000 in just a few months, which is a testament to the huge following of San Marino's football leagues all over the world. It is particularly popular in Argentina, but also in North America, Asia and, of course, Europe, where it is best known.

SERBIA

www.fss.rs

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE SETS STRATEGIC GOALS

MIRKO VRBICA

 The Football Association of Serbia's sports centre in Stara Pazova was the venue for the executive committee meeting, chaired by the association's president, Dragan Džajić, where the committee adopted the Serbian FA's eight strategic goals for the next four years.

## 1. Qualification of the national team for UEFA EURO 2024

The success of the senior men's national team and their qualification for the final tournament in Germany would not only be a result on the field but would also bring significant financial benefits to Serbian football.

## 2. Infrastructure

Cooperation with the government in infrastructure development, construction of the national stadium and other stadiums throughout the country. There is an idea for the senior men's national team to play some of their EURO qualifiers outside of Belgrade, in one of

the new stadiums, with the aim of increasing the popularity of football and support for the national team.

## 3. Pitches

Renovation and maintenance of pitches modelled on the best European leagues. UEFA support is expected for this project and FA of Serbia senior management already held several important meetings with UEFA at the UEFA Congress in Lisbon in April.

## 4. Work with youth categories

Recalling the great results and titles won by Serbia's men's Under-19 and Under-20 teams at the 2013 European Championship and 2015 World Cup, one of the association's important goals is to do more work with the youth teams, on which the future of the senior national teams depends.

## 5. Houses of football in the regions

Construction and modernisation of premises for the regional football associations.



## 6. Administrative centre

With the FA of Serbia sports centre in Stara Pazova, which is one of the most modern and functional centres in Europe, a national house of football would form a unit of capital importance for football development in the country.

## 7. Hosting a European youth championship

Hosting one of the UEFA youth final tournaments in 2027 would be a historic event for Serbian football. Serbian FA representatives have already met with UEFA on this topic and there is support from all relevant national structures for Serbia to host the best European teams in the coming period.

## 8. FA of Serbia academy


By establishing this academy, the Football Association of Serbia would ensure the education of staff at all levels and significantly improve and regenerate the activities of all units within the system.

SLOVAKIA

www.futbalsfz.sk

# MFK BYTČA WIN THE PRESIDENT'S CUP

PETER SURIN

 The second edition of the President's Cup, which is contested by the winners of the highest competitions in the different regional football associations, has crowned its champions, essentially the amateur cup champions of Slovakia. The competition, designed for amateur teams, had not been played since the COVID-19 pandemic, which had forced the first edition to be abandoned before completion.

In all, 38 competition winners from the regional football associations had the right to participate in the President's Cup. If the winners themselves were not interested in taking part, the regional competition runners-up were allowed



to take their place. This season, 32 teams eventually entered the competition, which follows the traditional knockout system.

After beating TJ ŠM Dúľova Ves 4-1 in the final, MFK Bytča lifted the President's Cup. In addition to the trophy and title, the winners also received €5,000 in prize money, with the runners-up receiving €2,500.

"Winning this competition is important, even though it's a competition for amateurs. I appreciate all of my trophies," said the winning captain, former Slovak national team player Viktor Pečovský, who was capped 35 times and scored one goal for the national team. He also won two Slovak league titles with MŠK Žilina and one Slovak Cup title during his playing career.

In the first full season of the President's Cup, 138 goals were scored in 31 matches, with over 5,200 spectators watching in the stadiums. The final match at NTC Poprad was attended by 800 fans. The top scorer of the tournament was Martin Dupkala from the finalist team with seven goals.



SWEDEN

www.svenskfotboll.se

## PERIOD INITIATIVE FOR GRASSROOTS CLUBS

ANDREAS NILSSON



The menstrual cycle and its effect on athletes needs more attention. The Swedish FA now runs an initiative called 'Alla dagar' (All days) to spread knowledge and initiate discussion on periods. In recent years, some national teams and top clubs have been tracking players' menstrual cycles and adapted nutrition and training to individual needs, with good results that should now benefit more players.

'Alla dagar' wants to break the taboos around periods and make sure that progress made on the issue makes it all the way down to grassroots level. The goal is for players to understand their cycles and perform better, and for coaches to adapt and support their players. Four pilot clubs are already receiving the training programme produced for 'Alla dagar'.



"Young women should have the same opportunities to participate in football as men, all days and not just some. Understanding and discussing the menstrual cycle can give coaches tremendous insight on how to adapt

to players' individual needs. Some clubs are already there but with this project we can spread the knowledge to where it is needed – which is everywhere," says Pär Widén, head of education and development at the Swedish FA.

The project started out with a broad survey of female players, asking them how their period affects their football. Relevant research was then gathered, best practice established and the education programme was then compiled. The education programme comes with a menstruation kit for every team (containing pads, tampons, wipes, spare shorts) that should become as essential as their medical kit.

The pilot phase of the project is about to conclude and 'Alla dagar' will be made available to every Swedish football club this summer.

SWITZERLAND

www.football.ch

## DORIS KELLER IN CHARGE OF WOMEN'S EURO 2025

MARTINA KÜPFER



On 11 May 2023, the Swiss Football Association appointed Doris Keller to head the operational management of UEFA Women's EURO 2025, Europe's largest women's sports event.

Keller has been involved in international football for 20 years and has worked on the organisation of matches, tournaments and other major events for FIFA, UEFA and CONMEBOL. She also ran projects associated with the 2016 UEFA Europa League final in Basel, and most recently worked as a venue director on UEFA club competitions.

"I consider it a great responsibility for us to organise a tournament that is sustainable and environmentally friendly yet also profitable and a sporting success, especially for women's football," said Keller. "We want as many girls and

women as possible to play football in Switzerland in the future. That's why we will seize this opportunity – before, during and after the tournament – to raise the profile of women's football in our country once and for all, and make lasting improvements to the conditions in which women play, in particular the infrastructure."

The Swiss FA and UEFA will establish the organisational structure behind the tournament together. The president of the Swiss FA, Dominique Blanc, the general secretary, Robert Breiter, and the director of women's football,

Dominique Blanc, Doris Keller and Robert Breiter



Marion Daube, will take leading roles alongside Keller.

UEFA Women's EURO 2025 will be hosted by Switzerland in summer 2025. When the curtain is raised, the best women's national teams in Europe, including Switzerland, will play in Geneva, Basel, Zurich, Thun, St Gallen, Sion, Berne and Lucerne.



## JULY

**3–16 July, Malta**

European Under-19 Championship: final tournament

**5 July, Nyon**

UEFA Futsal Champions League: preliminary and main round draws

**11/12 and 18/19 July**

UEFA Champions League: first qualifying round

**13 and 20 July**

UEFA Europa Conference League: first qualifying round

**18–30 July, Belgium**

European Women's Under-19 Championship: final tournament

**20 July – 20 August, Australia and New Zealand**

Women's World Cup

**24 July, Nyon**

UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: third qualifying round draws

**25/26 July**

UEFA Champions League: second qualifying round (first legs)

**26/27 July**

UEFA Women's Champions League: preliminary round (first legs)

**27 July**

UEFA Europa Conference League: second qualifying round (first legs)

## AUGUST

**1/2 August**

UEFA Champions League: second qualifying round (return legs)

**2/3 August**

UEFA Women's Champions League: preliminary round (return legs)

**3 August**

UEFA Europa Conference League: second qualifying round (return legs)

**7 August, Nyon**

UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: play-off draws

**8/9 and 15 August**

UEFA Champions League: third qualifying round

**10 and 17 August**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: third qualifying round

**16 August, Athens**

UEFA Super Cup

**22/23 and 29/30 August**

UEFA Champions League: play-offs

**22–27 August**

UEFA Futsal Champions League: preliminary round

**24 and 31 August**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: play-offs

**31 August, Monaco**

UEFA Champions League: group stage draw

## SEPTEMBER

**1 September, Monaco**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: group stage draws

**3–10 September, Poreč**

Under-19 Futsal EURO: final tournament

**5 September, Nyon**

UEFA Youth League – domestic champions path: first and second round draws

**6 September**

UEFA Women's Champions League: round 1 semi-finals

**7–9 September**

EURO 2024: European Qualifiers: matchday 5

**7–12 September**

2023–25 European Under-21 Championship: qualifying matches

**9 September**

UEFA Women's Champions League: round 1 finals and third-place matches

**10–12 September**

EURO 2024: European Qualifiers: matchday 6

**11–20 September**

Futsal World Cup: European elite round qualifying matches

**15 September, Nyon**

UEFA Women's Champions League: round 2 draw

**19/20 September**

UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 1)  
UEFA Youth League – Champions League path: group matches (matchday 1)

**21/22 September**

UEFA Women's Nations League: matchday 1

**21 September**

UEFA Europa League and UEFA Europa Conference League: group matches (matchday 1)

**26 September**

UEFA Women's Nations League: matchday 2

**26 September, Limassol**

Executive Committee meeting

## NOTICES

- **Dominique Blanc** has been re-elected as president of the Swiss Football Association.
- **Mehmet Büyükekşi** has been re-elected as president of the Turkish Football Federation.
- **Philippe Diallo** has been elected as the new president of the French Football Federation.
- **Mike Mulraney** has been elected as the new president of the Scottish Football Association.
- **Fredrik Reinfeldt** has been elected as the new president of the Swedish Football Association.
- **Nikolai Sherstnev** has been elected as the new president of the Football Federation of Belarus.
- **Pascale Van Damme** has been appointed as the new president of the Royal Belgian Football Association.





**WELCOME *ALL***



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