



Including



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in Budapest 03**

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COVER

UEFA Champions League newcomers Villarreal achieved great things by qualifying for the semi-finals. Here, Inter Milan's Javier Zanetti outpaces Marco Senna, but Villarreal were to come out on top in the quarter-final return leg.

PHOTO: SORIANO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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Editorial

A timeless structure

It would be nice if the image of football could always be like the one portrayed by the recent UEFA Congress in Budapest, that of a united and supportive movement that shares the same values and is constantly seeking to improve and to live in harmony with FIFA and its fellow football confederations.

However, it has to be acknowledged that the unity expressed in Budapest was prompted above all by the dissident views of a number of renowned clubs that have grouped together to defend their own interests. Meanwhile, the lawsuits, complaints and criticism in the media present anything but a picture of unity to anyone who was not there to witness the unanimous show of solidarity from the UEFA Congress.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with having different ideas and opinions; it is not a negative influence and can even contribute to progress. But differences of interest can be detrimental; egoism prevails when vision is blinkered, which leaves no room for solidarity but, at best, charity.

The traditional structure of football is not outdated, as some would claim; on the contrary, it is the embodiment of a democratic structure in which each component can be heard and climb the rungs of the hierarchical ladder. Not only that, but it has equipped itself with instruments for dialogue, like the European Club Forum, the Elite Coaches' Forum and various conferences where groups of experts can express their points of view more directly and forcefully.

This representative system is also the only way to view the bigger picture, to distil the essence of different opinions and points of view, and to steer a long-term course.

To take just one example: some clubs wanted to keep – and would still like to bring back – a second group stage in the UEFA Champions League, mainly for financial reasons. The Executive Committee, however, looking at the situation from a wider perspective, realised that the format with two group stages was not to the liking of the television channels or the fans, and that it congested the calendar. It therefore decided to abolish the second group stage, and the competition found a new lease of life and even generated more revenue, for the good of football in general and the lasting interest of its competitions.

At the end of the day, only a balanced structure can be a sound one.

Lars-Christer Olsson
Chief Executive



Extending the knockout phase and abolishing the second group stage has increased the drama of the UEFA Champions League – as the recent quarter-final between AC Milan (Kaka) and Olympique Lyonnais (François Clerc) went on to show.

FLASH PRESS

WE CARE ABOUT FOOTBALL



30th UEFA Congress

Delegates stand united



ON 23 MARCH, UEFA HELD ITS CONGRESS IN BUDAPEST FOR THE FIRST TIME, MAKING HUNGARY THE TWENTIETH NATION TO HOST THE ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING OF EUROPE'S NATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS.

It was the tenth time that Lennart Johansson had presided over an ordinary UEFA congress since his election in 1990. The congress, which was attended by delegates from all 52 UEFA member associations, took three hours to complete its usual business, such as approving the reports of the Executive Committee and of the CEO, as well as the accounts and budget, and recognising long-serving committee/panel members for their dedication.

In addition, a number of other specific items were on the agenda this time, and the proceedings were dominated by a current issue and the unanimous adoption of a resolution on this subject (see page 4). In their opening

addresses, both the FIFA and the UEFA presidents reminded the congress of the need to adopt a united front and to show solidarity in the face of the attacks against football's world and European governing bodies, which posed a threat for national team football and consequently for the national associations themselves.

"Can you imagine football without the national associations?" the FIFA president, Joseph S. Blatter, asked. "The solidarity of football is at stake," he continued. He also condemned the lack of respect: "We supply the basic commodity, the players; we organise competitions, we provide stadiums and safety – and yet we come under attack!" The FIFA president pointed out that "everything

that happens in European football affects world football." Later on, after the adoption of the resolution, which had been tabled with the support of FIFA and the other continental confederations, Mr Blatter declared that "united we are strong."

Defending the European model

In his opening address, the UEFA president underlined the fact that the democratic structure of UEFA gave everyone the possibility to be heard. He also stressed the role of the national associations and international authorities: "Football, and even professional football, is not just about money. To avoid excesses, it needs regulatory bodies in the shape of the national associations and supranational sports authorities. In order to fulfil their role, they need to be competent and strong and also need to be given the tools for performing their tasks by the legislators."



Four honorary members of UEFA: Gerhard Aigner and Des Casey (left), Hans Bangarter and Egidius Braun (from right).



A unanimous resolution

The week of the congress began with the opening of proceedings at the court in Charleroi in Belgium being brought against football's authorities by the local club, which is challenging FIFA's rule on the release of players for their national teams. R. Charleroi SC are supported by a self-appointed group of 18 European clubs. The publication of this group's "vision" in the press added fuel to the discussions, and left the congress with no option but to respond to these threats to the stability of European football, which it did by unanimously adopting the following resolution.

1 Football is constantly changing and adapting to new challenges. It is a key function of UEFA to face these challenges and find solutions which fit the future but which also respect the historic ethos of our sport. It is crucial that, when we face the future, we never lose sight of our core principles and beliefs.

2 Football is about fairness, opportunity, excitement and variety. It is not a closed shop, where only the richest and most powerful are invited to the table. UEFA will not tolerate a structure or system where smaller clubs, smaller nations and all their supporters never have the chance to follow their dream. This is not what UEFA is about, this is not what Europe is about, this is not what football is about.

3 These principles reflect a reality. The reality is that football is not just a money-making exercise, not just a business. We have rules and principles that reflect our values and which protect the interests of our sport and, in particular, the millions of fans who follow football. Among these key principles is the rule that clubs must release players for the national team.

4 Why do we have the rule on player release? To ensure that national teams are composed of the best players that each and every country has to offer. Furthermore, the rule ensures that players will always have the opportunity of representing their country, which is, as any player will confirm, the greatest honour in the career of any footballer. This in turn means that all nations, particularly smaller nations, have a chance

to compete and maybe one day to even win a big event, like the World Cup or the European Championship. It may only be a small chance, but at least it is a chance.

5 A self-appointed group of clubs has challenged this rule. They are not interested in protecting competition, but only interested in protecting themselves and their economic interests and in dictating their conditions on others. This group of clubs does not care if there is less competition between nations and less competition between clubs. But UEFA does care, and that is why we will defend the rule and are working together with FIFA to do so.

6 UEFA will also defend the open nature and central marketing structure of the UEFA Champions League. Just like the player release rule, this is also an expression of solidarity in European football. We will leave the door open for clubs from smaller nations to play at the top level of European club football. We will not close the door, which seems to be what this self-appointed group of clubs wants to do.

7 UEFA will not stand in the way of those who want to leave the family (which also means the domestic competitions) and who do not share our sporting values. But you cannot "pick and choose". We will defend our beliefs and we will defend our rules. Our structures may evolve but our core beliefs are set in stone. All national associations stand together with UEFA on this fundamental issue.

Calling attention to the importance of the independent review of European football being conducted to analyse how to best implement the Nice declaration on the specific characteristics of sport, the UEFA president said: *"For us, the role is clear: we believe in the value of the existing European model of sport, with its open competitions based on the promotion and relegation system and the decisive role of sporting results; we uphold the traditional democratic structure of football, with representation within the leagues, regional and national associations, and international federations; we believe in the social value of football, in the role it can play in integration, in promoting fair play, and in tackling violence and racism. Above all, we are convinced that the wider public interest should always prevail over individual considerations."*

The congress also approved amendments to articles 59 to 63 of the UEFA statutes concerning recognition of the UEFA statutes, and disputes. The amendments in question remove any distinction between disputes of a sporting nature and those of a pecuniary nature, and aim to ensure that all persons concerned (associations, leagues, clubs, players and officials) are legally bound by UEFA's statutes, regulations and decisions.



The Executive Committee.



Guests from the other continental confederations.

Turning to another project, UEFA's HatTrick programme has been extremely successful for the national associations. The status report presented at the congress showed that the investment projects of 42 associations had already been approved, accounting for a global amount



The UEFA President, Lennart Johansson, in conversation with his counterpart from FIFA, Joseph S. Blatter, with Urs Linsi, FIFA General Secretary, looking on.

In another statutes-related decision, the congress approved an exceptional departure from the UEFA statutes regarding the terms of office of committee and panel members. This departure is the logical consequence of the exceptional one-year extension of the terms of office of the UEFA president and of the members of the UEFA Executive Committee approved by the UEFA Congress in Tallinn last year. For the sake of consistency, the terms of committee and panel members elected this year will therefore be extended by one year, to 2009. Similarly, the members of the organs for the administration of justice, who are normally appointed for four-year terms, will serve exceptionally from 2006 to 2011.

Changing the subject, CEO Lars-Christer Olsson presented the delegates with an offer – valid until the end of June – for the marketing of EURO 2008 qualifying matches whereby the associations could receive EUR 15,000 per televised match in exchange for making advertising boards available.

Refereeing convention

The delegates also supported the creation of a UEFA convention on referee education and organisation. Based on UEFA's existing coaching convention, the refereeing convention aims to strengthen the position of the referee and improve the standard

of refereeing at all levels. The convention consists of two modules: education, involving an observation and development system, and organisation, whereby refereeing must be independent of the leagues and clubs and under the direct responsibility of the national association. The scheme will take off this year with a group of pilot associations and will then be extended to the other associations at the beginning of next year. It also entails a financial incentive over six years consisting of a CHF 200,000 payment on signing the convention once the admission procedure has been completed and CHF 100,000 per year for five years, subject to the standards being maintained.

of over CHF 85 million. The projects approved concern mainly stadiums (40%), head offices (29%) and training courses (13%). As far as the mini-pitch projects are concerned, 47 projects of 40 associations had been approved for a total of CHF 37 million, corresponding to the financing of 2,200 mini-pitches. The HatTrick education programme is also in progress, in close cooperation with the Top Executive Programme.

144 years of service to UEFA

Twelve loyal committee or panel members were honoured in Budapest for having served UEFA in that capacity for twelve years:

- Vladimir Aleshin (Russia)
- Semen Andreev (Russia)
- Lars-Åke Björck (Sweden)
- Petr Fousek (Czech Republic)
- Michael Joseph Hyland (Rep. of Ireland)
- Dane Jost (Slovenia)
- Viacheslav Koloskov (Russia)
- Jozef Marko (Slovakia)
- Janis Mezeckis (Latvia)
- Mathieu Sprengers (Netherlands)
- Michel Vautrot (France)
- Michael Joseph Maessen (Netherlands)



After presenting the accounts and the budget, the treasurer, Mathieu Sprengers, went up on stage to receive an award from Lennart Johansson for his 12 years of service to UEFA.



Hansruedi Hasler of Switzerland.



Keld Bordinggaard of Denmark.



Grassroots Football Conference

Programmes of the member associations

THE SIXTH UEFA GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL CONFERENCE WAS HELD IN NYON (SWITZERLAND) FROM 14 TO 17 MARCH. AT THIS IMPORTANT EVENT, WHICH WAS ORGANISED BY UEFA'S FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, FOUR NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS PRESENTED THEIR RESPECTIVE GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES.

UEFA is strongly committed to grassroots sport. In 2005, it created a Grassroots Charter, under which the associations are invited to enter into certain obligations related to their philosophy, infrastructure and activities. It will soon organise six regional workshops, at which it will encourage the associations to sign the charter. The Summer of Grassroots Football, activities for the disabled, the Starball match linked to the UEFA Champions League final and the mini-pitch initiative are also projects that lie close to UEFA's heart.

The importance UEFA attaches to grassroots sport is illustrated simply by the fact that the conference was attended not only by representa-

tives of its 52 member associations, but also by delegates from the continental confederations of Africa (CAF), Asia (AFC) and North and Central America and the Caribbean (CONCACAF). CAF alone brought a seven-strong delegation, including its director of football development, to Nyon. The conference was designed to provide opportunities for the mutual exchange of experiences and opinions, while four European associations presented their own grassroots football programmes.

The examples of Switzerland...

Firstly, the technical director of the Swiss Football Association (SFV), Hansruedi Hasler, gave an insight into his association's grassroots football

activities. The SFV had adopted a two-track approach to youth football: on the one hand, the most talented players in the Under-14 to Under-21 categories were offered support, while on the other, recreational football was organised by clubs for various age groups, from children to veterans.

This strategy embraced three objectives: under the motto "Teaching Sport", participants were taught how to play football and, most importantly, how to enjoy it. The second motto "Teaching Through Sport" had an educational aspect, i.e. children should develop their personalities and their football club should act as a social networking "Socialisation", dealt with football as a cultural asset that should be looked after by its players. It was important to remember that, although these concepts certainly had an educational and social effect, their value should not be overstated. "Football is not the answer to all the problems of Swiss society," said Hasler.

The SFV also ran various other projects, some of which were designed to give parents a better understanding of children's football, for example. Other components of the SFV's grassroots football programme included a campaign for greater tolerance between players, referees, coaches and spectators and for less aggression on the pitch, as well as a special fair play trophy





which was based on observations made before, during and after matches and supplemented the fair play competition.

... Denmark...

The Danish Football Association (DBU) was represented by Thomas Slosarich, DBU grassroots football manager and member of the UEFA Grassroots Football Panel, and Keld Bordinggaard, assistant to Danish national coach Morten Olsen. They emphasised the important role played by children in football development. In Denmark, more and more young people were giving up football and the lack of local talent was resulting in the recruitment of foreign players. It was important to find ways of reversing this trend.

The DBU had studied children's football in great depth. Why did children play football? What was the ideal learning environment for children? What coaching methods should be used? It had been concluded that coaches and parents tended to impose too much control on children and did not give them enough freedom and opportunity to develop their creativity. Consequently, many children did not enjoy playing football and turned their back on the game. The Danish FA was using these findings in a new football development programme.

From a technical point of view, this meant, for example, that children under ten developed best if they played four-a-side football. A study had revealed that, compared to eight-a-side games, matches between two teams of four involved significantly more passes, shots, one-on-one encounters and dribbles, which were what children needed to practise. As Keld Bordinggaard aptly pointed out, *"Children are the future of football. Their needs are football's needs. They must be looked after and cared for."*

... Italy...

It was then the turn of Franco Ferrari, director of the research centre of the Italian Football Association (FIGC)

and member of the UEFA Technical Instructors Panel. He particularly focused on structural aspects of grassroots football and presented an overview of the organisational structure of Italian football. It became clear how many different elements had to fit together in order to ensure a perfect organisation: *"Grassroots football is more than just the sum total of the non-professional parts of the game. It is important to understand who the various protagonists are"*, said Ferrari.

The Italian football pyramid, in which the FIGC acted as a kind of coordinating body, was an impressive structure. Leaving the professional game to one side, "Serie D", with 162 teams, was the highest and functioned as the national amateur league. Five rungs below, the "Third Category Championship" contained no fewer than 3,377 teams. Women's football involved 30,000 players, around two thirds of whom were registered with the association, and 422 teams competing in FIGC competitions. In futsal, there were three divisions and national Under-21 and Under-18 championships. Finally, in children's football, the size of the teams increased as the players got older, i.e. five-a-side for the Under-8s, seven-a-side, nine-a-side and then eleven-a-side for 12- to 14-year olds.

... and France

The fourth grassroots programme to be presented was that of the French Football Federation (FFF). Jean-Pierre Morlans, deputy technical director, explained the FFF's youth strategy, which combined a number of special projects. These demonstrated that the French association was endeavouring to create an ideal environment for the stars of the future.

The FFF attempted to create a healthy balance between family, school, leisure time and football by trying to promote relations between parents, coaches and clubs. Clubs that developed such a positive environment were awarded an FFF stamp of quality. The association considered the 12-15 age group to be crucial to the development of young talent. It was at that stage that decisions were made about who would be given specific support and who would be directed into the amateur game. As part of the "1000 Collèges" programme, the FFF had signed agreements with schools, under which the school timetable for talented young players could be adapted so that they could attend more midweek training sessions. Between the ages of 15 and 20, they would then attend a professional training academy, where all coaches had to have an A licence as well as an additional coaching qualification.



A practical session to illustrate the theory.



The heads of the 16 centres and others involved in the programme launch ceremony.



From left to right: Wallace Browne, Jim Boyce, Howard Wells and Thomas Slosarich.

Primary school children admire the skills of Nam the Man.



PHOTOS: IFA

Irish Football Association Grassroots development programme launch

BELFAST'S CITY HALL WAS THE VENUE FOR THE LAUNCH OF THE IRISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION'S (IFA) GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2006.

The launch, chaired by the IFA director of coaching, Roy Millar, and hosted by The Right Honourable Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Wallace Browne, emphasised the need to give all young people the best possible start when learning to play football. The event brought together many influential representatives, including IFA chief executive Howard Wells, IFA grassroots managers Lee Carroll, Ian Stewart and Trevor Erskine, UEFA Grassroots Panel member Thomas Slosarich and IFA president Jim Boyce, who were all united in support of the new programme.

The packed programme for the event included fabulous entertainment from the Band A-Freek-A from the Belfast School of Music, and a display of freestyle soccer skills from Nam the Man, who put some of the children through their paces by holding

a brief coaching session on footwork, with the help of the former Northern Ireland international, Mal Donaghy, and the IFA disability football development manager, Alan Crooks.

Improve the quality of life

The launch highlighted the fact that grassroots football is the foundation on which the development of the game depends. It is here that people derive their love of the sport and go on to be future players, coaches or administrators. It is strongly believed that grassroots football in Northern Ireland should not only introduce more players to the game, but also be used as a tool to improve the health, well-being and quality of life of people in towns and cities throughout Northern Ireland.

Football can also serve as an educational platform for basic social and human values, such as tolerance and respect. Encouraging more youngsters to play the game enhances the possibility of nurturing and developing the stars of tomorrow. Involving more families in football can help us to discover more coaches, volunteers, administrators and even referees. Fostering this affinity for football within our families and communities will hopefully increase our future fan base, both at local and international level.

16 grassroots centres

To implement and support the programme, 16 grassroots officers have been appointed and will be based at new grassroots centres throughout Northern Ireland. It will be their job to promote and develop football at the basic level through various programmes with local schools and community groups.

Development programmes initiated by the grassroots officers, alongside an efficient management, monitoring and evaluation framework, should constitute an overall programme that will not only modernise and improve grassroots football, but also have additional benefits for society as a whole.

The grassroots officers will liaise with the regional performance coordinators in nurturing talented young players throughout the country. This will hopefully put them on the pathway to future recognition, possibly at international level.

It is the aim of the association to develop all aspects of grassroots football in Northern Ireland. It is believed that the successful implementation of the development programme will play a major part in the promotion and development of football throughout Northern Ireland and reap benefits for years to come.

Caroline Menary



Two girls from the band A-Freek-A.



Eleven questions for the Executive Committee members

FOR THE SEVENTH PART IN THE SERIES DEDICATED TO UEFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, JOSEPH MIFSUD ANSWERS OUR ELEVEN QUESTIONS.

Joseph Mifsud

Your first contact with football?

On TV, thanks to RAI – an Italian channel that has always been very popular in Malta. Of course my first real contact with football was as a child, kitted out in football boots and on the pitch with my team, FC Qrendi.

First experience of UEFA?

1984. I was representing the Malta FA at the congress in Paris. That was also the year I was appointed to the Appeals Body and became a match delegate.

A player?

Pelé. He had it all: speed, imagination, technique. He was the greatest.

A memorable match?

That's a hard one. There've been so many. 1999, Manchester United v Bayern Munich in Barcelona – the last five minutes in particular.

A memory linked to a UEFA activity?

Two anecdotes. The first is about our president, at that Barcelona match. He had come down ready to hand Bayern the cup, then took the lift back up because extra time was looming, and was then promptly told to come back down and present it to Manchester United. The second is slightly more risqué. After a European Cup match in Belgrade about 20 years ago, the local team had quite innocently

invited me (I was the match delegate) to a show in a nightclub, together with the three referees. It was a nice evening and the referees were enjoying a joke with a young lady who, every now and again, would kiss all three of them. Everyone was laughing, right up until the point when the young lady got up to leave and lifted off her giant wig: she was a he!

Defender or attacker?

Defender. At the back – counsel for the defence!

We give you a ball, what do you do with it?

I shoot.

A town?

Rome. An amazing mix of the old and the new, artistically combined. And, well, it was the first big city I went to as a child.

Detective story or economic treatise?

Detective story.

Sea or mountains?

Sea. I have always been too scared to learn to ski, especially after seeing so many friends come back from playing winter sports with all kinds of broken bones.

A dream?

A united footballing family, that includes the big clubs, in which everyone works for the good of the sport.





Lively discussions on selected topics for the associations.

Top Executive Programme

Initial results announced at the UEFA Congress

UEFADIRECT FIRST REPORTED ON THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED TOP EXECUTIVE PROGRAMME (TEP), DESIGNED TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS AS DECISION-MAKERS AND AS THE GOVERNING BODIES OF FOOTBALL IN THEIR OWN COUNTRIES, BACK IN DECEMBER. THINGS HAVE ALREADY MOVED ON SINCE THE FIRST WAVE OF ROUND-TABLE DISCUSSIONS TOOK PLACE IN LATE AUTUMN 2005, DURING WHICH ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT WAS FOUND, IN PARTICULAR, IN THE AREAS OF MARKETING, YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNAL ORGANISATION.

The results of the first five round-table discussions, in which a total of 26 associations took part, have now been weighed up. Having identified the main needs of the associations, five different projects are now being developed, to be launched this summer. They will look at ways to increase associations' income in connection with commercial rights; establish models demonstrating associations' relationships with both leagues/clubs and with national governments; draw up a youth development checklist; and, finally, set up a national associations' database for benchmarking purposes.

At the congress, the associations were already presented with one of the discussions' outcomes, from the field of marketing. It concerns the EURO 2008 qualifying matches and, more specifically, the option for national associations to supply advertising boards at each of their

televised home games, which would earn them an extra EUR 15,000 per match.

Concrete proposal

Headed by the Executive Committee's National Associations Working Group and under the overall control of UEFA's National Associations Services unit, the second wave of round-table discussions will take place in September/October, for associations which already took part in the first round. Another 18 associations, to which first visits are currently being paid, will then be invited to their first series of round-table discussions in October/November, where they too will have the opportunity to set forth their needs.

It is very important to those coordinating the TEP to actually involve the national associations in shaping the programme. This will happen by means of the round-table discussions and, in some cases, through specially designed reference

groups that will take responsibility for specific projects. These groups will be made up of representatives from the national associations, chosen because of their knowledge of the relevant project areas.

Pilot scheme

The most recent development in the Top Executive Programme is a consultancy project, which has started working with four associations in a pilot scheme that will run until the end of 2006. UEFA has assigned four consultants, who to a certain extent will function as a link between UEFA and the pilot associations, to promote information sharing and to advise and support the associations on how such information can be put to use. Within the whole TEP service package, the consultancy side will become increasingly important as time goes on, as collective support gradually shifts towards more individual support and personalised advice.



PHOTOS: UEFA



The Portuguese Football Federation president, Gilberto Madail.



The representatives of the tournament organisers at the contract signing ceremony.



Lars-Åke Lagrell, chairman of the National Teams Committee, conducts the draw for the final round in the presence of the legendary Eusebio.

Under-21 Championship in Portugal Celebration time again in May!

ANOTHER FEAST OF EUROPEAN FOOTBALL IS DUE TO TAKE PLACE IN PORTUGAL. FOR 13 DAYS (23 MAY TO 4 JUNE), THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE WILL AGAIN GO THROUGH ALL THE EMOTIONS CONNECTED WITH HOSTING A MAJOR UEFA COMPETITION, FOLLOWING ON FROM THE OTHER BIG EVENTS ORGANISED BY THE PORTUGUESE FOOTBALL FEDERATION (FPF) IN THE LAST THREE YEARS, NAMELY THE 2003 EUROPEAN UNDER-17 CHAMPIONSHIP, EURO 2004 AND THE 2005 UEFA CUP FINAL.

The enthusiasm with which the European Under-21 Championship is being awaited is justified since some of the most talented players in this category from the "old continent" will be in Portugal representing the eight national teams – Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia and Montenegro and Ukraine. These teams have already come through a very demanding qualifying round, which started way back in September 2004.

"The way ticket sales are going both on the Internet and through the Portuguese post office (CTT) is a very encouraging indicator and undeniable proof that the Portuguese will give their full support to another great sporting event staged in our country," said the tournament director, João Morais.

Morais heads a team of 60 people, mainly FPF staff, who constitute the local organising committee (LOC). They have been hard at work since December 2005, when the host nation for the tournament was named.

All organisational aspects are being covered in detail, with the aim of involving municipalities, sponsors, schools and the media in this great competition, which will rely on the invaluable cooperation of 1,500 volunteers.



The final round of the European Under-21 Championship is divided, as usual, into two groups. Group A, composed of Portugal, Germany, France and Serbia and Montenegro, will be based in the district of Braga, with matches to be played at the magnificent municipal stadium of Braga, the modern Dom Afonso Henriques stadium in Guimarães, and the practical Cidade de Barcelos stadium in Barcelos.

Group B, consisting of Denmark, the Netherlands, Italy and Ukraine, will stay in the district of Aveiro, and their matches will take place at the colourful municipal stadium in Aveiro and the renovated municipal stadium in Águeda.

The final will be staged on 4 June at the "British-style" stadium of Bessa Século XXI in Porto.

Interestingly enough, four of the six stadiums which will host the tournament are a product of EURO 2004, having been specifically built or renovated for that competition, and this offers certain quality guarantees as regards the comfort of the teams, the spectators and representatives of the media, who will cover the event for worldwide audiences.

So everything is ready – the competition can start!

Filipe Félix

The schedule

Two former winners of the competition have qualified for this final round, the last to be played in an even-numbered year: Italy, five-times European champions (1992, 1994, 1996, 2000 and 2004) and France (1998). Serbia and Montenegro also counts in a sense, as the successor of Yugoslavia (1978). Only four of this year's finalists took part in the 2004 finals: Italy, Germany, Portugal and Serbia and Montenegro.



The Bessa Seculo XXI stadium.

Group A

23.5	Barcelos	Serbia and Montenegro v Germany
23.5	Braga	Portugal v France
25.5	Guimarães	France v Germany
25.5	Barcelos	Portugal v Serbia and Montenegro
28.5	Guimarães	Germany v Portugal
28.5	Braga	France v Serbia and Montenegro

Group B

24.5	Agueda	Ukraine v Netherlands
24.5	Aveiro	Italy v Denmark
26.5	Aveiro	Denmark v Netherlands
26.5	Agueda	Italy v Ukraine
29.5	Aveiro	Netherlands v Italy
29.5	Agueda	Denmark v Ukraine

Semi-finals

1.6	Braga	Winners Group A v Runners-up Group B
1.6	Aveiro	Winners Group B v Runners-up Group A

Final

4.6	Porto	
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The candidates to host EURO 2012 present their bids at the Congress in Budapest. From left to right: Italy, Poland and Ukraine, Croatia and Hungary.



Meetings and other activities

Adoption of numerous regulations

BEFORE THE 30TH ORDINARY UEFA CONGRESS, THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE HELD ITS SECOND MEETING OF THE YEAR IN BUDAPEST ON 21 AND 22 MARCH.

Current events, particularly the Charleroi court case, were clearly a topic of discussion for the Executive Committee and drew a response which was backed up by the Congress in the form of a resolution (see page 4). Fortunately, however, the life of European football is not confined to the courtroom and the Executive Committee also discussed next season's UEFA competitions. The regulations for these competitions had been submitted for the committee's approval following the usual consultation procedures, which this year included examination by an Executive Committee working group chaired by UEFA vice-president Geoffrey Thompson.

The regulations of the following competitions were approved for next season:

- *UEFA Champions League*, where the main innovation is the obligation for

participating clubs to include at least four "homegrown" players in their squad of 25. These players should have been trained by the club itself or within its national association (no more than two of the four should belong to the latter category). The participation of the trophy holders is also now guaranteed under the regulations, which explain the consequences that this might have for the overall representation of the national association concerned. Another innovation is the use of the UEFA-supplied official ball in all matches.

- *UEFA Cup*, where the trophy holders are also guaranteed a place if they have not qualified for the UEFA Champions League. The clause on "homegrown" players

is also added and a further important innovation is the centralised marketing of the TV and sponsorship rights from the quarter-final stage onwards, a move supported by the majority of European Club Forum members.

- *UEFA Intertoto Cup*, whose regulations confirm the new formula adopted for this competition, with just three rounds, 49 participants and, in principle, only one representative from each national association. The rule on homegrown players also applies.
- *UEFA Women's Cup*, where there are no significant changes compared with the previous edition.
- *UEFA Futsal Cup*, which has a new formula, with a preliminary round, the main round, an elite round and a final phase, including the semi-finals, third-place play-off and final, played in the same city over three days.

A wish granted

The Executive Committee also approved a new UEFA Champions League revenue distribution model for the 2006-09 period. Although the principle remains the same (75% of revenue goes to the participating clubs and 25% to UEFA up to an amount of EUR 530 million, at which point the proportions change to 82% and 18% respectively), the surplus over projected revenue (EUR 750 million) will be used to increase by more than EUR 10 million the payments to clubs eliminated in the Champions League and UEFA Cup qualifying rounds. These sums, which have remained unchanged since the Champions League was launched, were increased at the request of the European Club Forum.

Clubs participating in the Champions League will also enjoy an increase in prize money, which will still be split into a participation premium, a performance-related bonus and a



A palatial setting for the Executive Committee discussions.

PHOTOS: UEFA



José Luis Arnaut in conversation with the UEFA president.



The Josy Barthel stadium will host the final.

The Luxembourg Under-17 team.

share of the market pool, depending on the value of the relevant domestic commercial market. The exact distribution chart will be confirmed by the Executive Committee in May. All sums will in future be given in euros.

The centralised marketing of the UEFA Cup will follow the same distribution principles as those that apply in the Champions League (75%/25%). The clubs' share will be split as follows: 60% in the form of fixed sums distributed to the 40 teams competing in the group stage and 40% as market shares for the eight quarter-finalists. Meanwhile, in the UEFA Intertoto Cup, the sums paid to the 49 participants will rise from CHF 50,000 to EUR 50,000 per round.

As well as reviewing the activities of the UEFA committees and its own working groups, the Executive Committee discussed a number of topical issues concerning the national associations or European football as a whole. In particular, it was addressed by José Luis Arnaut, who is heading up the independent review of European football. The former Portuguese minister summarised the efforts already made and outlined the timetable of work to come, with the report expected at the end of May, i.e. before the World Cup and the EU Summit in Vienna on 15 June. The report will then be presented to the parliaments and governments of all the EU member states.

The Executive Committee also:

- approved the measures necessary for the creation and development of a documentation centre within the UEFA administration;
- adopted the new Anti-Doping Regulations, which include the out-of-competition testing procedure and conform with the relevant WADA and FIFA regulations;
- amended the rules concerning the use of synthetic pitches in the 2006-08 European Championship, the 2006-07 European Under-21 Champ-



ionship and the qualifying competition for the 5th Women's World Cup. Associations wishing to use such pitches will have to announce their intention before the deadline for communicating match venues rather than when they enter a competition.

European Under-17 Championship final round in Luxembourg

The Luxembourg Football Federation has chosen to stage the final round matches at six venues.



Because of its history, its role in the European Union, its multilingual character and its position as a major banking centre, the capital,

Luxembourg-Ville (85,000 inhabitants, 138,000 with the outlying districts), seemed ideally qualified to be a key venue for this European youth competition. Some matches will be played at the Josy Barthel stadium, with a seating capacity of more than 8,000. The other centres are Hespérange (Alphonse Theis stadium, 4,100 seats), Mondorf-les-Bains (John Grün stadium, 3,600), Grevenmacher (Flohr stadium, 4,000), Ettelbruck (Deich sports centre, 3,100), and Dudelange (Jos Nosbaum stadium, 3,500+).

Apart from Luxembourg, who qualified automatically, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro and Spain will contest the final round. One thing all the teams have in common is that none of them took part in the final round last year, which shows

clearly that things are evenly balanced in this age group, largely due to the excellent youth development work done by the national associations.

The draw to decide the composition of the groups, which took place in Luxembourg on 6 April, was conducted by Jim Boyce, chairman of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee, and Michel Platini, member of the Executive Committee.

The group line-up is as follows:

Group A: Luxembourg, Spain, Hungary, Russia.

Group B: Belgium, Germany, Serbia and Montenegro, Czech Republic.

The tournament will be held from 3 to 14 May.



Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany congratulates Lennart Johansson, standing beside Joseph S. Blatter.

Distinctions for presidents

During their stay in Budapest, FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter and UEFA President Lennart Johansson were received by the Hungarian Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsany, at the Parliament in Budapest, where they were presented with the Cross of the Order of Merit of the Hungarian Republic.



The UEFA Regions' Cup kicks off with the draw, conducted by Jim Boyce and Paulo Sousa.



Last year, Dinamo Moscow (Sergey Malyshev, in white) lost out in the final to Action 21 Charleroi.

UEFA Regions' Cup

The draw for the qualifying rounds marks the launch of the 5th UEFA Regions' Cup, a competition which is exclusively for amateur players.



The draw in Nyon on 15 March was conducted by Jim Boyce, chairman of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee, and former Portuguese international Paulo Sousa. A total of 37 national associations have entered the competition. The preliminary round will be played between 1 August and 30 September, while the intermediary round will take place between 1 August and 31 December (for groups without

teams from the preliminary round) or between 1 October and 30 April 2007 (the other groups).

Preliminary round

Group Central-West: Northern Ireland, Finland, Latvia, Scotland.

Group Central-East: Greece, Russia, Belarus, Moldova.

Intermediary round

Group 1: France, Republic of Ireland, Spain, Lithuania.

Group 2: Netherlands, Portugal, Estonia, Sweden.

Group 3: Bosnia and Herzegovina, best preliminary round runners-up, Hungary, Croatia.

Group 4: Czech Republic, winner Group Central-West, England, Slovakia.

Group 5: Ukraine, Belgium, Slovenia, Liechtenstein.

Group 6: Georgia, Switzerland, Azerbaijan, Serbia and Montenegro.

Group 7: Bulgaria, Romania, winner Group Central-East, San Marino.

Group 8: Malta, Germany, Poland, Italy.

5th UEFA Women's Cup

FFC Turbine Potsdam – FFC Frankfurt



Both teams are German and both have already won the UEFA Women's Cup, apart from dominating European women's

club football this year. They have already faced each other in the Bundesliga and the German Cup, and will meet again on 20 and 27 May in the two-leg final of the UEFA Women's Cup.

In 2005, FFC Turbine Potsdam beat Djurgården/Älvsjö in the final (2-0 and 3-1). One year on, the team coached by Bernd Schröder is dreaming of a second title.

They will come up against FFC Frankfurt, who have also qualified for their third final in five years. Having beaten Montpellier in the semi-final, the Frankfurt women and their coach, Hans-Jürgen Tritschoks, will be relying on their experience.

The all-German final will be contested at the Karl Liebknecht stadium in Potsdam on 20 May and at the Bornheimer Hang stadium in Frankfurt on 27 May. Eva Oedlund from Sweden will referee the first match and Czech official Dagmar Damkova will be in charge of the second.



WAGNER/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Joy for the Turbine Potsdam players on reaching the final of the UEFA Women's Cup.



LEFOUR/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



Report from Brussels

UEFA is supporting the government of the Brussels region in its plans to celebrate, in 2007, the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome, the founding text of the European Union.

The Brussels region has teamed up with UEFA and a local designer to prepare a public exhibition around the theme of Europe and football. The exhibition will run from spring to autumn 2007, probably in the Cinquanteaire area of the city, close to the institutions of the EU.



First meeting to prepare the exhibition.

The goal of the project will be to create an accessible, popular exhibition that allows people of all backgrounds to see Europe through football. By focusing on the human side of the game – the players, the fans and their clubs – the exhibition will show that football continues to offer a unique microcosm of our societies.

A central theme of the exhibition will be players' lives: the stories behind their careers and their personal journey across Europe. By playing for different clubs in a variety of countries, the players offer a powerful symbol of Europe's cultural diversity. And yet football also demonstrates that those cities and nations have something vital in common: the values of sport and fair play, and a shared set of rules.

UEFA Futsal Cup

Another Spanish-Russian duel

In this year's UEFA Futsal Cup final, Boomerang Interviù, the winners of the 2003/04 edition, face Dinamo Moscow, last year's beaten finalists.



Both teams won their semi-final matches convincingly. The Spaniards beat Shakhtar Donetsk of Ukraine by an aggregate score of 11-4

(6-1 and 5-3), while the Russians beat unfancied Kairat Almaty from Kazakhstan 8-2 (3-0 and 5-2) over two legs.

The pairing for the final is all the more dramatic in that Spain and Russia have already met twice in the final of the European Futsal Champ-

ionship, achieving one win apiece. The first leg of the 2005/06 Futsal Cup final will take place on 26 April in Madrid, and the return leg will be played in Moscow on 7 May.

Blind futsal seminars a resounding success

Fifty-five coaches and referees from five countries gathered at the beginning of March to take part in blind futsal seminars in Thessaloniki, Greece.

Held as part of the International Blind Sports Association's Futsal Development Project Europe with sponsorship from UEFA, the seminars were a great success, giving participants from Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, Cyprus and Israel the chance to learn about blind futsal.

National coaches from three countries conducted the coaching seminars, which included both theoretical sessions on working with blind players on individual and team skills and hands-on sessions on a blind futsal pitch. Thirty coaches attended.

For the refereeing seminars, an international IBSA blind futsal referee was on hand to explain the rules of the game to 26 participants. The referees were tested on their knowledge of the rules at the end of the weekend.

These seminars are one of the key parts of the development project. Work will now focus on producing a blind futsal coaching and refereeing DVD.

IBSA hopes to organise similar seminars all over Europe in the coming years.



IBSA

A blind futsal European Championship match between Spain and Russia last November in Malaga.

→ The local designer, Olivier Guilbaud, will create an exhibition that is modern and accessible. The event should avoid becoming a nostalgic look to the past, and instead explore how football reflects today's society. Mr Guilbaud has already secured the participation of Sony, who will provide Playstations that will allow the public to interact directly with the exhibition.



Raymond Kopa (left) in discussion with Evelyne Huytebroeck, William Gaillard, UEFA's director of communications and public affairs, and Olivier Guilbaud.

On 27 March, an 18-strong expert committee met in Brussels to discuss the content of the exhibition. Evelyne Huytebroeck, minister of the Brussels region, opened the meeting and pledged her government's support for the project. The committee comprised sports journalists, museum directors, representatives from national associations and the European Commission, and a special former player: Raymond Kopa. Mr Kopa, himself the son of a miner, worked in the coal mines of Belgium before becoming a professional footballer – and the only player to finish in the top three of the European Golden Ball four seasons in a row, between 1956 and 1959. Mr Kopa won the award in 1958.

For UEFA, the exhibition is an opportunity to reach all of our EU stakeholders – the Commission, Parliament and member states – in an entirely new way. The exhibition will emphasise the social and cultural aspects of what we do, and present UEFA as a modern organisation, close to supporters and clubs, and aware of our place in society.



As in previous years, UEFA staff will take part in the Special Olympics European Football Week by playing a local Special Olympics team.

Special Olympics Football Week

The sixth annual Special Olympics European Football Week will be held from 24 April to 3 May. A record 50,000 players with intellectual disabilities will participate in football events in more than 50 countries throughout Europe/Eurasia.

"The Special Olympics European Football Week continues to expand each year with the outstanding support of the European football family. There is no doubt that it leads to greater understanding and acceptance of the abilities of people with intellectual disabilities throughout Europe," said Michael Smith, managing director of the Brussels-based office of Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia.

This year, events will include the application of SO Get Into It, the Special Olympics school curriculum that encourages understanding, tolerance and acceptance among young people, and "Unified Football", in which players with and without disabilities play on the same team. Many of these teams will compete

in the Special Olympics European Youth Games that will be held from 30 September to 5 October in Rome. Unified Football will be one of seven sports in the games that focuses on young people between the ages of 12 and 21.

In addition, Football Week will continue to emphasise grassroots football development, particularly in eastern Europe, again with a focus on involving school-age children with intellectual disabilities.

Football Week is one of the highlights of the Special Olympics football development project which is supported by UEFA.

"Football Week has developed into a highly inclusive initiative that brings many new opportunities to players with intellectual disabilities. UEFA is pleased that clubs and associations continue to play an active role to ensure that UEFA's partnership with Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia underlines the broader benefits football can offer within society," said Lars-Christer Olsson, UEFA Chief Executive.



The UEFA club competitions are approaching their climax. In the quarter-finals, AC Milan had to wait until the dying minutes of their match against Olympique Lyonnais to qualify once again for the semi-finals. Andriy Shevchenko's power proves too much for Caçapa.



News

from member associations

ARMENIA



2006 Armenia Cup gets under way

The headquarters of the Football Federation of Armenia (FFA) was the setting for the draw for the 2006 Armenia Cup, which was attended by FFA executive committee members, the media and club representatives, conducted by Slava Sargsyan, a well-known football commentator, and kicked off by Armenian player of the year Aram Hakobyan.

A total of 12 teams are participating in the cup competition, namely Pyunik, Mika, Banants, Kilikia, Ararat, Ararat-2, Shirak, Gandzasar, Pyunik-2, Mika-2, Banants-2 and Hay Ari. The first games were played on 25 March.



Draw ceremony for the Armenia Cup.

The FFA has organised a number of training camps for the Armenian youth teams. The Under-17 national team has held its training camp in Tsakhkadzor under new coach Arsen Chilingaryan, who took charge in 2006. In the coming weeks the Under-17s are scheduled to play several friendly games.

The Under-19 national side has also had an intensive training camp. Coached by Armen Gyulbudaghyants, the side will take part in the Hunan Avetisyan memorial competition in Armavir.

The Under-21s have also started their preparations for the European Under-21 Championship qualifying match against San Marino. The first leg will be played on 17 May in San Marino,

with the return leg scheduled for 9 June in Yerevan. In their first friendly game, Samvel Petrosyan's players inflicted a 3-0 defeat on Armenian championship third-place holders Banants.

Arayik Manukyan

BELGIUM



A special meeting for a special matter

On 20 March the president of the Belgian Football Association, Jan Peeters, invited the presidents of Belgium's 18 first-division clubs to come together and discuss the issue of match-fixing in the national championship. After four hours of deliberations, there was no denying that progress had been made. It seems that everyone's willingness to cooperate and their genuine desire to restore public faith in football won through and made all the difference at this special meeting.

The presidents of Belgium's footballing elite all agreed to sign a charter promising to comply with the regulations laid down by the FA and to not legally challenge any of the results from the 2005/06 season. They approved other measures too but these are to be fleshed out by a working group set up by the Belgian Professional Football League and it is this group that will be responsible for the precise form the measures take.

As you can see, however, their impact will be far from negligible.

From now on, in order to get their licences, first-division clubs (who will all be given the same status) will have to undergo not one, but three financial audits. What's more, Belgian football's licensing commission will be made up of people from outside the clubs' membership, the aim being to increase its impartiality.

Other changes include informing the Belgian FA of clubs' capital structures, meaning, in turn, that the identities of all investors will have to be made known and that members of the same family will no longer be allowed to hold shares in two different clubs.

In future, any transfer money collected by players' agents will have to pass through the Belgian FA first.

An additional clause will be included in players' and coaches' contracts, barring them from betting on matches they are involved in.



Jan Peeters announces the measures taken at the assembly.

Any players, coaches or managers who notice any unlawful activity (such as attempted bribery, for example) will be able to tell someone specially designated by the FA.

Finally, anyone found guilty of bribery will have to pay a fine equal to two or three years' wages.

Pierre Cornez

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Proposal for a new constitution

A delegation from UEFA and FIFA visited the Football Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FF BHZ) in mid-March for talks with the FF BHZ president, Iljo Dominkovic, national executive members and regional association members in Sarajevo and Banja Luka. The reason for the visit was to discuss a proposal for a new FF BHZ constitution, which has to be drawn up in line with UEFA and FIFA regulations.

On the first working day, the delegation officials visited the Office of the High Representative of the International Community in Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR) for talks with associates of the High



Work with the delegation from FIFA and UEFA.



Representative, Dr Christian Schwarz-Schilling. Together with the FF BHZ president, they issued the following statement to the press:

"Initial meetings were held with OHR representatives in Bosnia and Herzegovina to consider the legal aspects of matters relating to the constitution. It is very important that the constitution is drawn up in accordance with the laws and regulations in force in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that sporting organisations have autonomy. We have strong support from most national association delegates for this proposal on the constitution, which will already come into force next season if the proposal is adopted by the assembly at its next meeting. These were important meetings for the future development of football in Bosnia and Herzegovina."

Iljo Dominkovic added, *"After all the meetings, I can say that I am very satisfied. I would like to thank the UEFA and FIFA representatives for their great support and help with the proposed changes to the constitution, which are intended to allow the FF BHZ to function smoothly without any obstacles to the decision-making process."*

Out on the pitch, the focus at the start of spring has been on the youth teams. The national Under-21 team played Slovenia in a friendly match in Modrica. At the Lukavica and Vogosca stadiums in Sarajevo, the Under-16 and Under-18 sides played their counterparts from FYR Macedonia. Bosnia and Herzegovina also played Croatia in these two categories as part of the qualifying campaign for the European Under-17 and Under-19 championships.

The senior national women's team's perseverance was rewarded with a 1-0 victory against Malta after two defeats against Slovenia and Croatia in qualifying matches for the 2007 Women's World Cup.

Fuad Krvac

ENGLAND



Anti-racism initiative in Israel

It was the third visit to Israel by The Football Association in just over two years in response to a cry for help in tackling the racism and violence which blight Israeli football.

Former Liverpool and England winger John Barnes, who was the victim of racial abuse as a player in the 1980s and has played a major part in England's anti-racism campaign, joined forces with



John Barnes does his bit for the campaign against all forms of violence.

The FA. He said that the Israeli players had a key role to play.

Speaking at the launch of Israeli football's new campaign, inspired by The FA's Football for All strategy and England's Kick it Out campaign, he said: *"Before laws and legislation are put in place, it is the players that the fans will listen to – they provide the momentum for change."*

Another former Liverpool player, Avi Cohen, now chair of the Israeli PFA, reinforced this view.

"Instinctively I have always wanted to shut my eyes to this problem but I will keep them open and talk to our players," said Cohen. *"It is important that they understand the role they have to play – first of all as human beings rather than just as footballers."*

The delegation visited Bnei Sakhnin, the only Arab club in the Israeli first division, to better understand the problems they face. Arabs make up only 18% of the population of Israel and suffer consistently from racist abuse in the football arena.

The Israeli anti-racism campaign is being led and coordinated by the New Israel Fund, which promotes democracy and social equality in Israeli society. The campaign is also supported by the Israel FA.

Jane Bateman

GEORGIA



A new youth tournament

A new youth football tournament, informally called "Skolburti" (literally: "school ball"), has been launched in Georgia. The official name of the competition is the 2006 Pepsi Cup, named after its general sponsor. After being initiated by the Georgian Football Federation (GFF), the event has been organised by the Georgian Street Football Association and is widely supported by the municipality of Tbilisi, the Ministry of Culture and Sport and the Ministry of Education. Matches

in the "Skolburti" competition, which began on 25 March and will finish in late May, are being played on 20 football pitches in ten districts of Tbilisi city, with the participation of all 204 Tbilisi schools. The organisers hope this will be an unforgettable fun-filled event for the children, bringing them a lot of joy and happiness. There will be many prizes and surprises for the winners, with the best players of the tournament receiving special awards from the Ministry of Culture and Sport. The Ministry of Education will also provide a high-quality artificial pitch for the winning school. Apart from that, the mayor of Tbilisi is planning to renovate 70 schools in the Georgian capital, with the construction of football mini-pitches a part of the programme. The GFF will make every effort to promote this wonderful event throughout the country in the very near future.

Bakar Jordania

GERMANY



"Paule" the eagle is new DFB mascot

"Paule" is the new mascot who will be supporting all the German national teams from now on. The black eagle in the DFB strip made his debut at the senior national team's friendly match against the USA in Dortmund. "Paule" was the name chosen by the readers of Sport-Bild, who were given four names to pick from at the start of the year: Horst, Knipsi, Butzi and Paule, which received 42.5% of the votes. DFB executive president Theo Zwanziger thought it a good choice. *"The name really suits him. Apart from that,*



Paule is a smash hit.



there have been plenty of footballers called Paul in the history of German football.”

“Paule” made a successful debut in Dortmund. Apart from going down well with the fans in the stadium (where he did a walkabout), the mascot has already been a hit with the general public too and will be on sale in the shops from the end of April. The national-team players themselves are happy that their self-appointed “greatest fan” will be running up and down the touchline, urging them on and cranking up the crowd’s support even further. No wonder national coach Jürgen Klinsmann named the DFB mascot at an early stage for the World Cup on home turf. *“He’s clever, cunning and always in a good mood. There’s no question about it: Paule’s place in my World Cup squad is safe.”*

Stephan Brause

HUNGARY



New influences for the national team

In March, the Hungarian Football Federation (MLSZ) announced that Péter Bozsik and Lajos Détári were to be the duo responsible for leading Hungary’s EURO 2008 qualifying campaign: Bozsik as head coach and Détári his assistant.

Péter Bozsik enjoyed his greatest coaching achievement at Zalaegerszegi TE in 2002, when he helped the western Hungarian club win its first ever championship title. They also managed to beat Manchester United in the first leg of the UEFA Champions League qualifiers, although they failed to get through after the second leg.

Bozsik’s father, József, was one of the Magical Magyars’ key players back in the fifties and he went on to head the Hungarian national team as caretaker coach, so Péter is clearly following in the right footsteps.

As for Lajos Détári, the Hungarian international was capped 61 times in ten years – he was a footballing star in Germany, Italy and Greece and, having coached at Budapest Honvéd FC and Nyíregyházi FC, is well placed to provide Bozsik with some valuable support.

Hungary’s road to EURO 2008 starts in September with a difficult match against Norway in Budapest. Expectations are high, as always, but Bozsik’s job is to build a Hungarian national team that is capable of going on in future years.

“We would like to build a national team in which it is an honour to play. We will base the squad on experienced

players and on young talents mainly from the Under-21s. We don’t plan to change the composition of the squad all the time – we will only take someone off if he is in really bad form. But the door is open to the younger players, even to those in the Under-17s,” Bozsik declared at his initial press conference.

Márton Dinnyés

LATVIA



Premier league becomes LMT Virsliga

Just like the Barclays Premiership, the T-Mobile Bundesliga and the Carnegie Premier League, Latvian football’s top division has acquired a sponsor, in the form of mobile communications operator Latvijas Mobilais Telefons (LMT) – hence the new name, LMT Virsliga.



The LMT president, Juris Binde, and his LFF counterpart, Guntis Indriksons, shake on the contract.

The contract provides clubs playing in the LMT Virsliga with significant material support, which will hopefully, in turn, improve the overall standard of football in Latvia. There are eight clubs in the 2006/07 LMT Virsliga – FHK Liepajas Metalurgs, Skonto FC, FK Ventpils, FC Dinaburg, FK Jurmala, FK Riga and two new clubs – BSK Dizvanagi and SK Ditton.

Having agreed a sponsorship deal with LMT, the Latvian Football Federation (LFF) now has the chance to buy prime-time slots on LTV7 for 28 matches this season, which would represent the widest football coverage on Latvian TV.

Two weeks after signing the contract with LMT, the LFF’s general sponsor, the Latvian branch of Nordea Bank Finland plc, also signed a deal with the LMT Virsliga for this year, and Guntis Indriksons, the LFF president, and Valdis Siksnis, the president of the bank’s Latvian branch, confirmed that the next four years were also under discussion. This long-term cooperation could focus not only on the Latvian

national championship, but also on the national team, youth football and all other areas of the game as well. Nordea has already been backing the LFF for three years. As Siksnis himself pointed out, *“the bank has had great financial results after supporting football for these last few years.”*

In early April, FIFA held a three-day Com-Unity seminar with the LFF in Riga, with discussions and debates about more cooperation between the LFF and Latvia’s government, media and clubs. Michel Platini came along to open the seminar and attended a mini-tournament that pitted football teams from the government, the media, the LFF and its sponsors against each other.

Martins Hartmanis

LIECHTENSTEIN



Three changes to the board

At the general meeting of the Liechtenstein Football Association, held on 27 March, three changes were made to the board. There was, however, no change at the top, with Reinhard Walser re-elected president for a further term. Rolf Eggenberger (head of finance) was replaced by Urs Gerner, while Manfred Beck (head of professional football) was succeeded by Rudolf Marxer. The duties of general secretary will be assumed by chief administrative officer Roland Ospelt, replacing Oliver Gerstgrasser, who was stepping down. Since the general secretary will no longer have a seat on the board, a new position, head of marketing, has been created. It is occupied by Georges Lühinger.

As well as amendments to the statutes, introduced to comply with certain UEFA and FIFA requirements, a change was made to the cup regulations. Semi-finalists will in future be given a bye in the first round of the following season’s competition.



The general meeting in Liechtenstein.



Looking to the future, Reinhard Walsler explained his main objectives for 2006. The creation of a technical committee was particularly targeted at children's football. He also thought some catching up was needed in the areas of coach education and refereeing.

Judith Frommelt

LITHUANIA



Ekranas winners of the Super Cup

This year, Panevezys-based FK Ekranas were crowned champions of the Lithuanian Super Cup, after beating FBK Kaunas 2-1 in the final.

Goalkeeper Eduardas Kurskis was voted FBK Kaunas' man of the match, while Arunas Klimavicius was singled out for the opposition.



FC Ekranas, winners of the Super Cup.

Virginijus Liubsys, head coach at FK Ekranas, was more than satisfied with his team's victory. As he says, it will be great for them to go into the new season on top. *"We have just proved that our team, FK Ekranas, are champions worthy of the name. I hope the team does equally well in the coming season."*

The Lithuanian Super Cup was set up in 1995 and the first team to win it was Kaunas-based Inkaras Grifas. Their head coach at the time was the Lithuanian Football Federation's current general secretary, Julius Kvedaras.

Vaiva Zizaitė

MALTA



Referees in demand

The total number of referees in Malta is quite small in relation to the number of matches in domestic competitions. Despite this constraint, the Malta FA Referees Board invariably copes with the demand and officials control matches on a regular basis throughout the season.

However sustainable the current situation is, recruiting new blood to take up the whistle is an ongoing process. Courses are run on a regular basis and the response from young people is never lacking.

These aspirants are encouraged by the fact that the young crop of Maltese officials from the top level right down to the lower ranks are performing very well, even given the peculiar conditions on the island where referees and their assistants often have to officiate matches between the same teams and in front of the same crowds.

According to a member of the Referees Board, the high level of refereeing in Malta has been constant and one should not generalise when a referee or an assistant has an off day. After all, players are not immune to having a poor match on a particular day.

Prospective referees and assistant referees are constantly reminded of the incentives there are in such a career. Having officials on the FIFA list is the ultimate goal and Malta can boast of being well represented in this regard.

The way to the top is open once these recruits have the ability and willingness to learn. An MFA Referees Board sub-committee for recruitment and training and another sub-committee for coaching and schooling of referees are doing sterling work.

New ground was broken some time ago when a woman referee made it to the top echelons of Maltese officials. The total number of women officials has now expanded and a new drive to recruit more women is in line with the policy being adopted by all federations.

It is pleasing to note that history was made on 22 February when three Maltese women – referee Esther Farrugia and assistants Sadia Mizzi and Ivana Salerno – officiated at the Malta v Italy Under-19 women's friendly international. The fact that they acquitted themselves well should be an extra source of encouragement for more women, in particular, to take up a career in this vital sector of the game.

Alex Vella



Maltese referees do a good job.

NETHERLANDS



A century of schools' football

The Football Association of the Netherlands (KNVB) is proud to celebrate a century of schools' football this year.



Schools' football for girls and boys.

More than 7,000 primary schools from all over the country will compete in this year's competition, which will be concluded with the national finals at KNVB headquarters in Zeist on 21 June. Before then, 140,000 pupils aged 10-12 will play for their local schools in the preliminary competition, which will be succeeded by 49 regional finals. Each of the six KNVB districts will have an ultimate winner in both the boys' and the girls' category.

Way back in 1906, schools were encouraged to play football in order to improve the physical fitness of their pupils. At that time, the organisers insisted that part of the pupils' education should take place on the football pitch. Boys were to receive physical training and schools' football was part of the curriculum. The children learned not only to cope with defeat but also to show respect to their defeated opponents in victory. On the pitch, they learned that perseverance and commitment could sometimes produce unexpected results. These experiences on the pitch were intended to help children approach the challenges of arithmetic and writing in the same manner.

Schools' football also helped children to be more disciplined. A leaflet from 1949 endorsing schools' football said that the police had fewer problems with children at the time of their annual school tournaments. Children were wholeheartedly defending the honour of their school and had no time or opportunity to cause trouble elsewhere.

Over the years, schools' football has undergone major changes. After starting off as an activity exclusively for



boys, girls became involved in the 1970s and 1980s. Nowadays there are separate competitions for boys and girls. Sometimes a boys' team is happy to include the most talented girls of the school as welcome reinforcements for the side.

Circumstances may have changed but the idea behind schools' football remains the same.

Rob de Leede

NORWAY



Player development in professional clubs

In 2004, nine of Norway's professional football clubs took part in a new project aimed at developing young talent. The Norwegian Football Association (NFF) and the country's professional football league (NTF) joined forces to subsidise the scheme, which involved each club hiring a special coach who would be responsible for the most talented of their 17 to 21 year olds. The NFF and the NTF agreed to cover half the cost, provided the clubs would fund the rest.

Former head coach of the Norwegian national team, Nils Johan Semb, now works for the NFF as coordinator for the project.

The pilot scheme has proved so successful that, as of this year, all 30 professional clubs from the top two Norwegian football leagues, Tippeligaen and Adeccoligaen, have been encouraged to follow suit. As with the original nine clubs, the NFF and the NTF will contribute to the cost of hiring an experienced coach for their up-and-coming players.

The president of the NFF, Sondre Kåfjord, has emphasised the importance of such a project as part of an overall strategy for developing young talent. *"It is important that young players are given the best possible opportunities to fulfil their potential within the professional clubs. In order to achieve that, the young players must have special training programmes as well as match experience and education. Some even need to learn how to organise their free time so they are in the best possible shape for training sessions and matches."*

The current project also involves seminars and observing international youth tournaments, with Nils Johan Semb working in close collaboration with coaches from the Under-21 to Under-16 national teams.

The project will last for three years, until the end of 2008.

Roger Solheim

REPUBLIC OF IRELAND



First "club of the month" awards announced

The Football Association of Ireland (FAI) has announced the "club of the month" award winners for January and February in association with the Irish Daily Star and Citywest Hotel.

The inaugural award for January went to Abbey United FC of Sligo, who play in the Sligo/Leitrim league. The club was formed with the aim of not only providing an outlet for young people in the Cranmore Estate/Abbeyquarter area of Sligo city to play football, but also of helping them in their own personal development.

The club's youth and junior teams have been successful down through the years and the quality of their coaching has meant that a number of their players have progressed to under-age and junior international teams, as well as to "eircom" league and cross-channel football.

Apart from that, Abbey United have just won the Sligo/Leitrim super league for the fourth time in a row.

The February award went to Murroe AFC, a Limerick district league club from the village of Murroe in east Limerick, about 12 miles from Limerick city. With a membership of 200, it provides football from Under-10s to juniors and caters for women's football as well.

Although only formed in 1968, Murroe has managed to raise EUR 330,000 to provide its own facilities, including a clubhouse with dressing rooms, two full-sized playing pitches and a 54-space car park. Last month the club completed the final piece in the jigsaw with the opening of their new all-weather, floodlit training pitch.

The awards were presented by David Blood, the president of the FAI, Paul Cooke, managing director of the Irish Daily Star, and Phil Jones, general manager of Citywest Hotel, at a function which was attended by FAI officials, club representatives and representatives of the provincial associations. Each "club of the month" award winner will be eligible for consideration for the "club of the year" award, which will be presented on 21 July.

In addition to the above, the FAI is also introducing a "service to football" award, which will recognise and honour the significant and valued contributions of volunteers at all levels of the game who devote time and effort to fostering and developing the game of football in Ireland. These awards will also be presented on

21 July this year. Commenting on the volunteers, FAI chief executive officer John Delaney said, *"Volunteers are the backbone of our game and without them we would not have the strong sport enjoyed by over 450,000 people throughout the country. There is, however, a huge challenge facing the family of football. In order to sustain the development of our game, we need more volunteers, we need more people to become involved in training, managing, coaching and mentoring. We hope this need will be met through our technical development plan."*

Pat Costello

ROMANIA



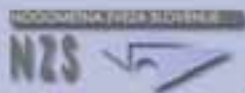
The fight against racism

While racism is not a problem in Romanian football, a few violent incidents have taken place between fans at some of our domestic championship matches. In view of this and the fact that two Romanian teams were drawn against each other for the first time in the UEFA Cup quarter-finals (AFC Rapid Bucuresti v FC Steaua Bucuresti), the Romanian FA took action to ensure that both the first and return legs would go ahead without a hitch.

A few days before the first leg, a meeting chaired by sports director Daniel Prodan was held at FA headquarters between association officials and



Bucharest derby between Rapid and Steaua.



senior officials from both clubs, the heads of both fan groups and senior officers from the police and private security company who were responsible for public order in connection with the matches. Also attending were top officials from the Romanian Council against Discrimination, the Romanian Committee against Violence in Sport and the National Youth Authority (all of them government bodies). All necessary measures were taken and a campaign with the slogan "Show the offside flag to racism!" was launched. Before the first-leg match, young police officers walked on the pitch carrying a huge banner with the slogan, and the clubs themselves launched campaigns against violence and racism. Everything went off smoothly.

A day before the second leg, another event was staged. The biggest sports hall in Bucharest, "Ioan Kunst Ghermanescu", was the setting for a match against racism with the motto "Free kick against racism!". Organised by the Civic Alliance of the Romanian Roma in partnership with the Romanian FA, the Romanian Council against Discrimination, the Romanian Foundation for an Open Society, the National Youth Authority and the United Nations Development Programme, the match was played between two teams composed of officials of all the parties involved and a number of journalists. The FA president, Mircea Sandu, who also attended the match, said: "The fight against racism and violence is a duty that falls not only to everyone involved in football but also to society as a whole. I want to congratulate the Steaua and Rapid players, officials and fans on their sporting behaviour and I am happy that the entire campaign has been a success."

Paul Zaharia

SCOTLAND



A cap for former international players

The Scottish FA is awarding a commemorative cap to former international players who were denied a souvenir



Eddie Turnbull gets a cap at last!

of their appearances for Scotland under the rules of the day.

It has been a tradition in Scotland – as well as the other British countries – to award a cap to international players, but there have been exceptions to the rule. David Taylor, SFA Chief Executive, said: "It may surprise many people to know that not all internationals received caps, but different criteria were applied in days gone by."

Until 1975, the distinctive tasselled caps were only awarded to players who took part in the British International Championship. That meant about 80 players who played for Scotland between 1929 – the date of the first 'foreign' international – and 1975 did not receive a cap.

David Taylor explained: "Times have changed, and although the British Championship was once seen as the highlight of the season, playing for Scotland in any match is a great honour. We will award a commemorative Scotland cap to any pre-1975 internationals who did not receive one under the previous system, in recognition of their achievement at being selected to represent their country. International football is rightly regarded as the pinnacle of a football player's career and we can now celebrate the achievements of some famous names in Scottish football."

The player with the most international appearances to miss out on a cap was Eddie Turnbull, who played nine times for Scotland between 1948 and 1958. He was presented with his commemorative cap at the Scotland v Switzerland match at Hampden Park on 1 March.

Andy Mitchell

TURKEY



Financial audit

The Turkish FA has reached an agreement with top financial services firm Deloitte concerning an audit of the association's finances. The agreement was signed on 15 March by Kemal Kapuluoglu, the Turkish FA vice-president, and Huseyin Gurer, a Deloitte Turkey partner. In his speech at the signing ceremony, Kemal Kapulluoglu said, "Our financial structure will be audited by independent auditors on a three-month, six-month and yearly basis. Deloitte is a very important firm which works in close cooperation with FIFA and UEFA."



Signature of the auditing agreement.

By this agreement, the Turkish FA will gain greater financial transparency, and that is an undertaking we made at our general assembly."

In other news, the Turkish national "B" team has once again lifted the Future Cup. Germany, Austria, Scotland, Poland and Turkey participated in this tournament, with Turkey finishing first on ten points from three wins and a draw. Germany were runners-up and Poland finished third.

Ilker Ugur

UKRAINE



Promoting grassroots football

In March, a delegation from the Football Federation of Ukraine, headed by its vice-president, Borys Voskresenskiy, attended the UEFA Grassroots Conference in Nyon. For three days, all those present had an opportunity to examine the various aspects of grassroots football and the main features of UEFA's Grassroots Charter.

"Grassroots is the foundation of professional football," said Borys Voskresenskiy. "All great players came from the grassroots. There are many sides to grassroots football and it needs our protection and support. Ukraine is making progress in this area, having made the promotion and development of grassroots, children's and youth football a priority within our national federation. We are currently making every effort to sign up to the UEFA Grassroots Charter."

In January, an expert from the UEFA Grassroots Football Panel visited Ukraine and spoke highly of the FFU's work. So far, six national associations have been made party to the charter, but UEFA is planning to increase that number soon. Ukraine is a contender because of the real efforts put in by the FFU and its partner organisations in this area, and because of the Ukrainian national team's successful performances recently.

Valeriy Nykonenko



UEFA

Communications

Birthdays – Calendar

Birthdays

Gudmundur Petursson (Iceland), member of the Match Delegates Panel, celebrates his 60th birthday on 6 May. Jozef Marko (Slovakia), member of the Referees Committee, follows suit on 19 May. On 4 May, Selami Özdemir (Turkey), member of the Youth and Amateur Football Committee, reaches the half-century mark, as do Costakis Koutsokoumnis (Cyprus), member of the Assistance Programmes Committee, on 5 May; Nikolay Levnikov (Russia), member of the Referees Committee, on 15 May; Helmut Krug (Germany), member of the Referee Observers Panel, on 19 May; Marco Tura (San Marino), member of the Match Delegates Panel, on 26 May; and Jacques Antenen (Switzerland), vice-chairman of the Control & Disciplinary Body, on 29 May.

UEFA would like to wish them all a happy birthday and also extends birthday greetings to:

- Mircea-Lucian Salomir (Romania, 1.5)
- R. Campbell Ogilvie (Scotland, 1.5)
- Peter Mikkelsen (Denmark, 1.5)
- Johann Hantschk (Austria, 3.5)
- Anghel Iordanescu (Romania, 4.5)
- Eleonora Gambillara (Switzerland, 4.5)
- Peter Gilliéron (Switzerland, 5.5)
- Kenneth Ridder (England, 6.5)
- Karl-Erik Nilsson (Sweden, 6.5)
- Pekka Luhtanen (Finland, 8.5)
- Michel Pralong (Switzerland, 8.5)
- Marc Dobbela (Belgium, 8.5)
- Franco Baresi (Italy, 8.5)
- Haim Zimmer (Israel, 9.5)
- Robert B. Valentine (Scotland, 10.5)
- Arie Frost (Israel, 11.5)
- Ernst-Peter Radziwill (Germany, 11.5)
- Timo Huttunen (Finland, 11.5)
- Jean-Marie Gantenbein (Luxembourg, 12.5)
- Henrik Ravnild (Denmark, 13.5)
- Carlos Manuel Ferreira Matos (Portugal, 14.5)
- Hans-Jörg Eissmann (Germany, 15.5)
- Piotr Maranda (Poland, 15.5)
- Hakan Nyberg (Sweden, 15.5)
- Evzen Amler (Czech Republic, 15.5)
- Svein Johannessen (Norway, 17.5)
- Lars Appelqvist (Sweden, 18.5)
- Andreas Morisbak (Norway, 19.5)
- Rune Pedersen (Norway, 19.5)
- Michal Listkiewicz (Poland, 20.5)
- Serge Muhmenthaler (Switzerland, 20.5)
- Fred Ernst (Switzerland, 21.5)
- Natalina Ceraso Levati (Italy, 21.5)
- Nicolai Cebotari (Moldova, 21.5)
- Theo van Seggelen (Netherlands, 22.5)
- Mathieu Sprengers (Netherlands, 24.5)
- Semen Andreev (Russia, 25.5)
- Suheil Daoud (Israel, 25.5)
- Robert Jeurissen (Belgium, 27.5)
- Zdenek Sivek (Czech Republic, 28.5)
- Patrick A. Daly (Republic of Ireland, 28.5)
- David Davies (England, 28.5)
- Maria Rosario Garcia (Spain, 28.5)
- Jim Stjerne Hansen (Denmark, 28.5)
- Jean-Pierre Escalettes (France, 29.5)
- István Huszár (Hungary, 31.5)

Upcoming events

Meetings

9.5.2006, Eindhoven

Jira Panel

9-11.5.2006, Nyon

6th Seminar for Referee Mentors and Talents

10.5.2006, Eindhoven

Players Panel

14.5.2006, Luxembourg

Youth & Amateur Football Committee

17.5.2006, Paris

Technical Development Committee
Club Competitions Committee

22-23.5.2006, Glasgow

Executive Committee

26.5.2006, Frankfurt

Women's Football Committee

Competitions

3-14.5.2006, Luxembourg

Final round of the European
Under-17 Championship

7.5.2006, Moscow

UEFA Futsal Cup: final (return leg)

10.5.2006, Eindhoven

UEFA Cup: final

17.5.2006, Paris

UEFA Champions League: final

20.5.2006, Potsdam

UEFA Women's Cup: final (first leg)

23.5-4.6.2006, Portugal

Final round of the European
Under-21 Championship

27.5.2006, Frankfurt

UEFA Women's Cup: final (return leg)

Notice

The 31st Ordinary UEFA Congress will take place in Düsseldorf on 25 and 26 January 2007.

Obituary

Gérard Rousselot (France), who served on the Stadia Committee from 1994 to 1998, died on 21 March aged 64. He was a member of the executive committee of the French Football Federation, of which he was first vice-president from 1995 to 2000.

Match agents

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Meanwhile, licensed agent

Joao Paulo Rodrigues has moved from Luxembourg to Portugal.

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Finally, the licence of

Richard Wey (Switzerland) has been renewed until 15 March 2014.

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