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Cover:

Real Madrid's UEFA Super Cup victory was the second in a row for German midfielder Toni Kroos, who lifted the trophy last year with FC Bayern München

Photo: AFP

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THE BENEFITS OF DIVERSITY

UEFA can rightfully take pride in the fact that it has been the first major international sports organisation to systematically put respect for diversity and the fight against discrimination on the agenda.

I recently had the honour, in Rome, of chairing the fourth in a series of Respect Diversity conferences that began in 2003. Some might argue that 11 years on, despite the strict enforcement of a zero tolerance policy, TV awareness campaigns and hundreds of disciplinary sanctions, the fight for diversity has still not been won. They would, of course, be failing to see the scourge for what it really is – our society is as blighted by racism as it is by sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, discrimination against the Roma and other attacks on human dignity. As I have said time and time again, and I repeat it because there is no getting away from it, the problems we experience in our stadiums are no more or less than a reflection of the wider problems affecting society at large.

Does that mean football should simply look on and wait for others to do something about it? That is certainly not how I see it. At all levels – from the streets to the stadiums where the Champions League is played – football is

a shining example of human diversity and fraternity. We are in a privileged position from which to demonstrate all the benefits of amicable, harmonious and uplifting diversity. Skin colour, world outlook, gender, faith and so on have nothing to do with footballing ability or friendships off the field. I want football to fulfil its promise to the millions of young men and women who believe in its magic and believe that it is a force for positive change that can build a more tolerant and more peaceful society. Football welcomes, includes and integrates. It does not exclude anyone. It does not discriminate against anyone. It helps to make the world a better place. That is what I believe and what I stand for.

Michel Platini
UEFA President

RONALDO AND KESSLER CROWNED EUROPE'S FINEST

The traditional summer gathering in Monaco for the European football family celebrated the finest elements of the past year as well as paving the way for the new season of club competitions.

Representatives from across the continent took part in preparatory workshops ahead of the new season, for which they could plan after the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League draws. The winners of both the Best Player in Europe and the Best Women's Player in Europe awards were also announced during the Champions League draw ceremony, and the UEFA President spoke to the media and presented the UEFA Monaco Charity Award, in the presence of HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco, at the gala dinner. That rounded off a busy day that had started with a meeting of the UEFA member associations' presidents and general secretaries.

Best players in Europe

"I have a museum where I gather all of my trophies, so I will definitely show this beautiful one there," said Cristiano Ronaldo, reflecting proudly on being voted UEFA Best Player in Europe in the 2013/14 season, presented by UEFA in cooperation with European Sports Media (ESM). The Real Madrid CF forward won the award for the first time in a live vote by a panel of 54 journalists (one representing each of UEFA's member associations), staving off the challenge of FC Bayern München duo Arjen Robben and Manuel Neuer.

A jury of 12 journalists also selected by ESM voted Nadine Kessler UEFA Best Women's Player in Europe ahead of VfL Wolfsburg teammates Nilla Fischer and Martina Müller. Ever-present in both the UEFA Women's Champions League and Frauen Bundesliga campaigns of 2013/14, the Wolfsburg captain succeeded compatriot Nadine Angerer as she received her award from the

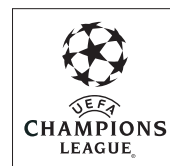


Cristiano Ronaldo



Nadine Kessler

UEFA President, Michel Platini. "It's something really special and, to be honest, I never even dreamt of it," Kessler said. "It's a surprise for me. I had some great team-mates alongside me but now, I'm over the moon!"



Competition draw

The six shortlisted players for the best player awards were not the only stars on the stage for the draw ceremony of the UEFA Champions League on 28 August. The running theme was a celebration of La Décima – the tenth European crown captured by Real Madrid CF when they beat Club Atlético de Madrid in the 2013/14 final in Lisbon. Francisco Gento represented the first six of those European Champion Clubs' Cup successes and was joined on stage by Manuel Sanchís, Fernando Hierro and Iker Casillas, the goalkeeper in Lisbon who helped Real Madrid's trophy tally move into double figures.

"It's a very special moment for us," said Sanchís. Every year, this rendezvous is very attractive because it reveals the groups of the Champions League. However, this year it is even more interesting because UEFA decided to pay homage to Real Madrid for winning La Décima. I was watching the match and commenting on it for Spanish television, and I said that we had to keep calm. When you are at home with your friends you can be happy and cheerful, but since I was on TV I had to keep calm. Our opponents were two minutes away from achieving the final victory, and after that goal they were about to lose it all. So I was really happy, but I cooled it down a bit too!"

The ambassador for the final in Berlin, Karl-Heinz Riedle, is also no stranger to winning the trophy in what he himself describes as "biggest event there is". Riedle was on stage to help conduct the draw 18 seasons after winning the UEFA Champions League in Germany with BV Borussia Dortmund.

Battle of 15 titles

One of Riedle's old clubs, Liverpool FC, return to the UEFA Champions League group stage this season, and when they do so they will face a battle of European football's heavyweights as they pit their five titles against the ten of Real Madrid in Group B, hoping for a repeat of the 1981 Champion Clubs' Cup final in Paris, which Liverpool won 1-0. They will be joined not only by FC Basel 1893 but also by PFC Ludogorets Razgrad, whose dramatic play-off success against



UEFA via Getty Images

Karl-Heinz Riedle, the ambassador for the final in Berlin, and Fernando Hierro helped UEFA General Secretary Gianni Infantino to perform the UEFA Champions League group stage draw

FC Steaua București earned them a maiden berth in the group stage.

The boost given to the Bulgarian football family was also felt in both Slovenia and Sweden: NK Maribor earned a place in the group stage for the first time in 15 seasons, while 1979 Champion Clubs' Cup finalists Malmö FF relied on local talent to make it through the play-offs and earn a first ever group stage appearance. The team that beat FC Salzburg boasted ten local players and their qualification means that the future of the club will get an extra lift through playing in the UEFA Youth League, which, as in the first season, will be played in the same groups as drawn for the UEFA Champions League. Malmö were placed into Group A along with Club Atlético de Madrid, Juventus and Olympiacos FC, meaning that four national champions grace one section.

As in 2013/14, 18 national associations are represented in the group stage, with England, Spain and Germany all succeeding in getting four of their clubs – the current maximum – into the draw. This is the 11th consecutive season that England has achieved the feat. Those three associations, along with Italy, France, the Netherlands, Greece and Turkey, maintain their record of being ever present in the group stage of Europe's flagship competition.

The draw followed the familiar procedure, allocating places in the eight groups to the 22 clubs that had entered the group stage directly and the 10 that qualified through either the champions or the league route. The first group matches were played on 16 and 17 September.

2014/15 UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Group A

Malmö FF
Olympiacos FC
Club Atlético de Madrid
Juventus

Group B

FC Basel 1893
Liverpool FC
PFC Ludogorets 1945
Real Madrid CF

Group C

FC Zenit
AS Monaco FC
Bayer 04 Leverkusen
SL Benfica

Group D

Arsenal FC
Galatasaray AŞ
RSC Anderlecht
Borussia Dortmund

Group E

Manchester City FC
AS Roma
PFC CSKA Moskva
FC Bayern München

Group F

Paris Saint-Germain FC
FC Barcelona
APOEL FC
AFC Ajax

Group G

Sporting Clube de Portugal
Chelsea FC
FC Schalke 04
NK Maribor

Group H

FC Shakhtar Donetsk
FC Porto
FC BATE Borisov
Athletic Club

Dates of matches in these four groups: 16 September, 1 and 22 October, 4 and 26 November and 9 December.

Dates of matches in these four groups: 17 and 30 September, 21 October, 5 and 25 November and 10 December.

2015 CALENDAR

Round of 16: 17/18 and 24/25 February (first legs) and 10/11 and 17/18 March (second legs)

Quarter-finals: 14/15 April (first legs) and 21/22 April (second legs)

Semi-finals: 5/6 May (first legs) and 12/13 May (second legs)

Final: 6 June in Berlin

Draw for the round of 16: 15 December 2014

Draw for the quarter-finals: 20 March

Draw for the semi-finals: 24 April

The full fixture list can be found on UEFA.com

UEFA Champions League distribution

The 2014/15 season is the third in a three-year commercial cycle and the fixed amounts paid to clubs participating in the UEFA Champions League will therefore follow the same pattern as last season:

- €8.6m for each club participating in the group stage;
- €1m for each win in the group stage and €500,000 for each draw;
- €3.5m for each club that reaches the round of 16;
- €3.9m for each club that reaches the quarter-finals;
- €4.9m for each of the four semi-finalists;
- €6.5m for the runners-up;
- €10.5m for the competition winners.

At its meeting in Monaco, the UEFA Club Competitions Committee noted that an additional estimated €409.6m would be available for distribution according to the proportional value of each TV market represented by the clubs taking part in the UEFA Champions League (group stage onwards) and be split among the clubs participating from a given association.



New format broadens UEFA Europa League appeal

Several changes to the format of the UEFA Europa League will add to the appeal of the competition in 2014/15, including the winners earning a place in the UEFA Champions League and more automatic qualifiers.

Sevilla FC were present at the draw as they prepare to defend their trophy in the coming season but the winners of final on 27 May 2015 will gain a place in the UEFA Champions League, as a minimum entering in the play-offs in 2015/16. If the UEFA Champions League winners qualify automatically through their domestic competition for the 2015/16 group stage, the UEFA Europa League winners will also go straight to the group stage.

The other changes will see more teams qualify automatically for the group stage (16, up from 7), with the cup winners of the 12 highest-ranking nations joining the fourth-placed finisher from the fourth-ranked nation and the fifth-placed finishers from the top three nations.

It was with that backdrop that there was a fresh sense of anticipation about the group stage draw conducted on 29 August in the Salle des Princes at Monte Carlo's Grimaldi Forum by the UEFA General Secretary, Gianni Infantino, with the assistance of Jerzy Dudek, the ambassador for the final in Warsaw, along with Youri Djorkaeff.

Seven former winners lined up among the 48 clubs in the group stage draw, with the holders Sevilla FC and Feyenoord the only previous victors to be paired in the same section. Tottenham Hotspur FC, SSC Napoli, PSV Eindhoven, FC Internazionale Milano and VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach also appear on the roll of honour for the UEFA Cup/UEFA Europa League.

A quarter of the participating clubs were group stage debutants, including HJK Helsinki, who told the media about the excitement in Finland after their dramatic qualification. "It's amazing for our club and for Finnish football in general," said former Finland international Aki Riihilahti, now HJK's CEO. "This is what we have worked really hard for and there could be a big knock-on effect in Finland. At our club, we have 2,500 youth players and we work a lot for their development. This [group stage campaign] will bring us a lot of attention in the media and people coming to watch matches."

UEFA MONACO CHARITY AWARD

The 2014 UEFA Monaco Charity Award was given in support of crucial work in child protection in sport as the €1m cheque was presented by the UEFA President, Michel Platini, to the Child Protection in Sport Unit (CPSU) of the United Kingdom National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC). The NSPCC's CPSU works to ensure that children understand their rights in sport. Their work with 200 national governing bodies in sport and sports partnerships provide services to 10 million children participating in sport in the UK. The UEFA Monaco Charity Award will be used to increase the availability and awareness of the services that the NSPCC's CPSU provides to children and parents in sport. It will also help to share the NSPCC's campaign with European and international sports organisations, and enable the CPSU to advise on good practice and effective approaches to keeping children safe in sport.

"We are immensely pleased to receive this award," said director Anne Tiivas as she accepted the cheque. "The UEFA Monaco Charity Award will allow us to build on the work we have done with children, parents and everybody involved in football to create the best possible football environment for our children." •



CPSU director Anne Tiivas with the UEFA President, Michel Platini, and HSH Prince Albert II of Monaco

UEFA via Getty Images

2014/15 UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE

Group A

FC Zürich
VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach
Villarreal CF
Apollon Limassol FC

Group B

HJK Helsinki
Club Brugge KV
Torino FC
FC København

Group C

Asteras Tripolis FC
FK Partizan
Tottenham Hotspur FC
Beşiktaş JK

Group D

FC Astra
FC Salzburg
Celtic FC
GNK Dinamo

Group E

FC Dinamo Moscow
PSV Eindhoven
Estoril Praia
Panathinaikos FC

Group F

AS Saint-Étienne
FC Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk
FC Internazionale Milano
Qarabağ FK

Group G

Feyenoord
R. Standard de Liège
HNK Rijeka
Sevilla FC

Group H

VfL Wolfsburg
LOSC Lille
FC Krasnodar
Everton FC

Group I

AC Sparta Praha
BSC Young Boys
ŠK Slovan Bratislava
SSC Napoli

Group J

FC Dynamo Kyiv
FC Steaua București
Aalborg BK
Rio Ave FC

Group K

EA Guingamp
PAOK FC
FC Dinamo Minsk
ACF Fiorentina

Group L

KSC Lokeren OV
FC Metalist Kharkiv
Trabzonspor AŞ
Legia Warszawa

2014/15 CALENDAR

Group matches:

18 September, 2 and
23 October, 6 and 27 November,
11 December

Draw for the rounds of 32 and 16: 15 December

Round of 32:
19 and 26 February

Round of 16: 12 and 19 March

Quarter-final draw: 20 March

Quarter-finals: 16 and 23 April

Semi-final draw: 24 April

Semi-finals: 7 and 14 May

Final: 27 May in Warsaw

UEFA Europa League distribution

The principles for the distribution of fixed amounts paid to the 48 clubs participating in the UEFA Europa League group stage are identical to those applied in 2013/14.

In addition to the gate receipts from their home matches and a variable sum that depends on the value of their domestic TV markets, the Europa League clubs will receive the following fixed amounts:

- € 1.3 million for each club participating in the group stage;
- € 200,000 for each win and € 100,000 for each draw during the group stage, i.e. up to € 1.2million;
- € 400,000 for each group winner and € 200,000 for each group runner-up;
- € 200,000 for each club that reaches the round of 32;
- € 350,000 for each club that reaches the round of 16;
- € 450,000 for each quarter-finalist;
- € 1 million for each semi-finalist;
- € 2.5 million for the runners-up;
- € 5 million for the competition winners.

As in the UEFA Champions League, the above-mentioned sums are subject to confirmation of payments linked to contracts concluded for the competition.



Catching up with the football community

Away from the draws, many of the coping stones were put in place to make sure the European club season runs smoothly and efficiently. There was a meeting of the UEFA Club Competitions Committee and workshops held for club representatives in the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA Youth League. The European Club Association (ECA) also convened for a meeting. ●

Jerzy Dudek, the ambassador for the final in Warsaw, joined Yuri Djorkaeff and Co. on stage for the UEFA Europa League group stage draw

MADRID STARS LIGHT UP CARDIFF

The 2014 UEFA Super Cup brought Real Madrid CF's Welshman Gareth Bale back to his home city of Cardiff but it ended with the biggest star of the Merengues' constellation shining the brightest.



from close range after some uncertain Madrid defending, and instead Ronaldo shot past his friend Beto for Madrid's decisive second goal soon after the restart.

Ronaldo's display earned him the man of the match trophy, handed to him by his former Manchester United FC manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, who said: "Normally in a big game like that it is difficult to choose a man of the match with so many good players, but Cristiano made it easy for me."

European champions take the lead

For Sevilla coach Unai Emery "the difference was Madrid's counterattacks". The UEFA Europa League holders were adjusting to life without playmaker Ivan Rakitić, while soon-to-leave full-back Alberto Moreno did not play and bade a tearful farewell to the magnificently noisy Sevilla supporters at the end. Despite a promising display from Denis Suárez, one of Sevilla's new boys, Emery admitted that "in attack we lacked something extra".

Nobody can say that of this multitiered Madrid side, whose visit to Cardiff generated considerable excitement. The South Wales Echo captured the mood beforehand with a back page featuring a photo of the returning Bale with the European Cup and the headline "Welcome to Wales... (and welcome home Gareth)".

The South Wales public certainly contributed to the success of the event, a Cardiff City Stadium packed with 30,854 spectators providing a record attendance for a single-leg UEFA Super Cup. This was the second year that the match had been played outside its erstwhile home of Monaco; it was Prague's turn in 2013 and next year the event will head east to the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. For the president of the Football Association of Wales, Trefor Lloyd Hughes, the opportunity to host the match cannot be underestimated. "It's one of the greatest honours ever bestowed on Wales," he said of an event preceded by a trophy tour around the principality, involving the UEFA Super Cup along with the UEFA Champions League and UEFA Europa League trophies.

Madrid's eventual success was the 20th by the European champion side in the 39 UEFA Super Cups to date and it brought them their 14th major European trophy. They can then set their sights on more silverware in December's FIFA Club World Cup in Morocco. ●

Real Madrid celebrate winning the UEFA Super Cup for the second time after a first triumph in 2002

Once again Cristiano Ronaldo emerged as Madrid's driving force by scoring the two goals that earned the reigning European champions a 2-0 win over compatriots Sevilla FC as they gave an impressive statement of intent for the season ahead.

This was a Madrid side featuring new faces Toni Kroos and James Rodríguez – both stars of the summer's FIFA World Cup – and coach Carlo Ancelotti admitted afterwards that the extra injection of class into a team already blessed with world-class talents had left him highly optimistic. "I think an important cycle can start here as we have a squad of real quality," said the Italian. "I am lucky to be the coach of a fantastic squad."

For Ancelotti, it was the third time he had won the UEFA Super Cup as a coach, equalling Pep Guardiola's record. It was also the third trophy of his Madrid tenure, after last term's UEFA Champions League and Copa del Rey triumphs, and it was a success seldom in doubt after Ronaldo's 30th minute conversion of Bale's back-post cross. Sevilla's Daniel Carriço might have equalised but failed to beat Iker Casillas

12 August 2014

Cardiff City Stadium – 30,854 spectators

Real Madrid CF v Sevilla FC 2-0 (1-0)

Goals: Ronaldo 30 (1-0), Ronaldo 49 (2-0)

Referee: Mark Clattenburg (England)

TOP CLUB COACHES SPEAK UP IN NYON

“Don’t hesitate to speak up and help to improve UEFA’s club competitions even further.” This was the invitation issued by Sir Alex Ferguson when, in his now familiar role as chairman at UEFA coaching events, he opened the 16th UEFA Elite Club Coaches Forum.

Having remarked that 10 of the 20 coaches who gathered in Nyon on 3 and 4 September were newcomers to the forum, he went on to urge them not to *“feel overawed by us older guys. We welcome the input from the younger coaches and the fresh ideas they bring in. So play an active role in discussing trends, how the game is changing and what we could do to fine-tune the European club competitions.”*

Some of the ‘older guys’ were undoubtedly happy to be saluted by their colleagues, with Rafael Benitez and Mircea Lucescu receiving plaques for reaching the milestone of 100 UEFA Champions League matches and Carlo Ancelotti rewarded for becoming only the second coach to have been champion of Europe three times.

The remainder of the two-day event was dedicated entirely to talking football, with the UEFA President, Michel Platini, relishing the opportunity to join in. The discussions were *“energetic”*, as Sir Alex put it, and covered a range of topics from the specific gravity of away goals in knockout ties to the niceties of pitch-watering and the height of grass. In other words, the forum reflected the coaches’ legendary attention to every detail.

The starting point was an assessment of the differences in status between the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Europa League. Unai Emery, Europa League champion with Sevilla FC, reflected on this: *“Sevilla have won the Europa League three times in recent years and the competition has, without doubt, improved a lot. Clubs like ours always try to get into the Champions League but are happy to be in the Europa League, as the competition has reached a high level and gives us a lot. It adds to our season.”* Jorge Jesus, coach of silver-medallists

SL Benfica, maintained: *“Once you get to the quarter-finals, I believe that the Europa League ties can match the Champions League for quality and intensity.”*

Season review

The review of last season’s club competitions looked at goalscoring trends, the relevance of dedicating training-ground time to set plays, the value of ball possession (especially in the attacking third), the sustained trend towards a possession-based passing game and the question of whether the time has come to review the away-goals rule.

The second day kicked off with an in-depth discussion about the inaugural season in the UEFA Youth League and plans to expand the competition in the near future. AC Milan coach Filippo Inzaghi, who was in charge of the Italian club’s youth team in last season’s competition, expressed the widely supported view that it had generated lots of emotions, encouraged young players to face up to different styles of opposition, helped them to grow and been *“a very gratifying experience”* overall. The topic sparked debate about the compatibility of footballing and academic education at youth development levels and the risks endemic to focusing exclusively on football.

UEFA’s head of refereeing, Pierluigi Collina, then invited the coaches to question him on a wide range of issues such as the increasing use of the ‘technical foul’ to break up promising counterattacks or the possibility of a ‘sin bin’ formula whereby players could be punished by being sidelined for five to ten minutes. In bringing the forum to a close, Sir Alex underlined the value of an event which *“allows coaches to express ourselves, to exchange ideas and to make concrete proposals”*. ●

Front row, left to right: Michel (Olympiacos FC), Rafael Benitez (SSC Napoli), Carlo Ancelotti (Real Madrid CF), Filippo Inzaghi (AC Milan), Michel Platini (UEFA President), Sir Alex Ferguson (UEFA ambassador), Josep Guardiola (FC Bayern München), Luis Enrique (FC Barcelona) and Arsène Wenger (Arsenal FC). Second row: Pierluigi Collina (UEFA Chief Refereeing Officer), Laurent Blanc (Paris Saint-Germain), Manuel Pellegrini (Manchester City FC), Nuno Espirito Santo (Valencia CF), Jens Keller (FC Schalke 04), Mircea Lucescu (FC Shakhtar Donetsk), Jorge Jesus (SL Benfica), Unai Emery (Sevilla FC), Jürgen Klopp (Borussia Dortmund), Roger Schmidt (Bayer 04 Leverkusen), André Villas-Boas (FC Zenit), Gianni Infantino (UEFA General Secretary), Ioan Lupescu (UEFA Chief Technical Officer), Giorgio Marchetti (UEFA Competitions Director).



THIRD UEFA CLUB PRESS OFFICERS' FORUM

A venue thoroughly well-versed in hosting UEFA events, Wembley staged the third UEFA Club Press Officers' Forum in early September, with representatives of the UEFA Champions League group stage contenders and the clubs in this season's UEFA Europa League converging on the home of English football.

As with the first two workshops – which were held in Nyon – the aim of the event was to review organisational, operational, editorial and marketing activities from last season and plan for the future to reflect the evolving media landscape, while also giving club media representatives a chance to meet counterparts ahead of their group stage matches.

trebling to beyond the 35-million mark in the space of a year. *"The world has become a little bit closer due to social media and public figures have a really big opportunity to take their fans along on their journey,"* Miller explained.

The club representatives then split up into two working groups, according to competition, for separate workshops run by UEFA staff. For the content and marketing section members of the UEFA communications and marketing teams focused on the creation and sharing of content, the continuation of the No to Racism campaign and how the club competitions will be covered across UEFA's digital platforms.

New possibilities

Social media will again offer new and exciting possibilities on the road to the 2014/15 finals in Berlin (UEFA Champions League) and Warsaw (UEFA Europa League), and the clubs discussed fresh approaches and were generally receptive to the ideas put forward.

The UEFA Europa League press officers were treated to an additional presentation by Eintracht Frankfurt press officer Ruth Wagner, who talked over the German side's experiences of last term's competition – not least how they took a phenomenal 12,000 travelling fans to an away game against FC Girondins de Bordeaux.

Meanwhile, operational matters were central to the commercial and media operations workshop.

For Adrian Bevington, *"it was a privilege for The FA to play host to the clubs at Wembley. The spirit of cooperation among national federations is something UEFA has championed and this continued strengthening of relations and knowledge-sharing can only be beneficial at both national and club levels. The English FA experienced fantastic club support during our 150th anniversary year in 2013 and for us it was an excellent opportunity to reaffirm our positive relationship with both UEFA and club press officers."*

Sevilla FC's chief of press, Jesús Gómez, certainly felt it had been a positive experience: *"It was very interesting for me to meet colleagues and to exchange impressions and work procedures. This – linked to the fact that many interesting subjects were touched upon during the meetings – makes this workshop very important."* The fruits of the event should be clear to see over the course of the new campaign. ●



A full programme of presentations and working groups was organised for the press officers



Ruth Wagner, Eintracht Frankfurt

As an exciting preamble to the one-day workshop, delegates assembled at Wembley on the Wednesday to attend England's international friendly victory against Norway. The main programme then began in earnest on the Thursday, when the participants were welcomed by UEFA's head of communications, David Farrelly, and The Football Association's Club England managing director, Adrian Bevington.

Already involved in the UEFA Europa League, BT Sport will also become a UEFA Champions League rights holder next summer and its representatives, Stephen Cook and Jamie Hindhaugh, promised innovative coverage of both competitions when the new 2015–18 cycle starts.

Facebook's Glenn Miller then spoke about how the social networking site can give clubs unprecedented access to 500 million football fans, throwing a spotlight on UEFA's efforts in the field, which have led to the audience for the official UEFA Champions League Facebook page

A PRE-SEASON GATHERING

UEFA is dedicated to nurturing its referees and ensures that all match officials are fully primed for their assignments each season. The latest UEFA pre-season gathering in Nyon from 13 to 15 August prepared the referees for the months ahead and highlighted the key instructions for 2014/15.

Matches in the UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europa League and UEFA EURO 2016 qualifiers are on the cards for the referees in the men's game, while the women will be taking charge of UEFA Women's Champions League matches, with some also travelling to Canada for the FIFA Women's World Cup next summer.

The Nyon meeting gave the 91 men and 16 women, all elite and first-category referees, an ideal opportunity to review the 2013/14 season and look ahead to the future, under the guidance of members of the UEFA Referees Committee. With top physical condition required from modern-day referees, their fitness was also tested by UEFA training expert Werner Helsen and his team.

This year's pre-season referees meeting was brought forward from the start of September. UEFA's chief refereeing officer, Pierluigi Collina, was joined by deputies Hugh Dallas and Marc Batta and Referees Committee member Vladimir Sajn to give presentations, video sessions and expert advice. Fellow Referees Committee members Dagmar Damková and Bo Karlsson had the specific task of guiding the female referees through their sessions.

"We ascertained that our previous pre-season courses were taking place after the season had actually started," said Hugh Dallas. "The play-off matches in UEFA's two major club competitions are extremely important, so moving the seminar into August allows us to give all the guidelines to our match officials prior to these matches taking place."

Everyone was reminded that the protection of players and the game's image were crucial. Appropriate disciplinary sanctions should be taken, for example against players whose actions might endanger the safety of their opponents, such as through serious foul play or violent conduct. Reckless challenges must also be identified and punished accordingly. The referees were advised that they should not be afraid to take unpopular decisions. "We are not interested in referees being liked," Pierluigi Collina told them. "We want referees to take correct decisions when necessary."

Passing on experience

UEFA is also turning to recently retired top-level referees to act as 'coaches' to a group of talented officials just outside the elite category. "We have chosen a select group of referees, and they will be carefully monitored over the coming

months," said Dallas. "The former referees that we've appointed are passing on their vast experience down the line to the young referees, in an attempt to give them every opportunity to make the next step in their already promising careers."

With women's football flourishing, the participation of leading female referees alongside the men at UEFA courses is a natural step. "The women's game has become even faster, and we place high demands on the women referees," Dagmar Damková explained. "We analyse their performances, and we measure their fitness. The women referees look after their fitness because they want to be top referees. In general, we are happy with the women referees, and we asked them at the course to continue this season like they finished the last one."

The UEFA Referees Committee is determined to ensure that Europe's referees make constant progress. "Overall we are very happy with the referees' performances last season, particularly at the highest level," Hugh Dallas concluded. "But we never rest on our laurels and always try to find areas where we think improvements can be made." ●

Holding the referees' attention in the UEFA auditorium



TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

With UEFA celebrating its 60th birthday this year, we continue our look back over the last six decades with a review of the 1980s – when UEFA guided European football through an era of great development, and reacted to events that left a serious mark on the game.

On the field, England ruled the European club scene as the decade got underway. The 1980s opened with a second successive Champion Clubs' Cup win for Nottingham Forest FC, who in just three remarkable years had emerged from the English second division and flourished under their mercurial manager Brian Clough. This time around, a single goal was enough to see off Germans Hamburger SV in Madrid. Clough's stance on his team's rise was typically forthright: *"When I won the European Cup, I didn't bankrupt Nottingham Forest,"* he said. *"I did it by being a good manager, not waving the cheque-book round."*

Liverpool FC overcame Real Madrid CF 1-0 in Paris in 1981 and another surprise package, Aston Villa FC, made it six English triumphs in a row. Shrewd disciplinarian Ron Saunders managed them to domestic glory before leaving, and his relatively unknown successor, Tony Barton, produced the goods – Villa marched to the 1982 final in Rotterdam and beat favourites FC Bayern München. England's seemingly unbreakable grip on the trophy was interrupted by durable Hamburger SV, with Felix Magath's long-range strike enough to see off Juventus in Athens, but the English were back in business in 1984, Liverpool FC defeating AS Roma on penalties

and, into the bargain, doing it on Roman soil at the great city's Olympic Stadium.

The 1985 final brought a deeply dark hour for European football. Thirty-nine fans lost their lives after they were charged by hooligans and a retaining wall gave way before kick-off in the match between Juventus and Liverpool FC at the Heysel Stadium in Brussels. The game itself eventually went ahead, a penalty for Juventus taking the trophy to Italy, but it paled into insignificance alongside the evening's tragic events. The disaster led to security and spectator-related issues becoming a major priority for the football authorities over the ensuing years, with UEFA pursuing intense cooperation with the European political institutions in particular.

Eastern Europe's hour of glory arrived in 1986 – FC Steaua București goalkeeper Helmuth Duckadam saved all four FC Barcelona penalties in a shoot-out in Seville to bring the European Champion Clubs' Cup to Romania. One of football's great goals – an audacious back-heel from Rabah Madjer – sealed FC Porto's success over FC Bayern München a year later. 1988 was certainly a boom football year for the Dutch, and at club level PSV Eindhoven won a dramatic penalty shoot-out against SL Benfica in Stuttgart to capture the precious silverware.



The Steaua București goalkeeper, Helmuth Duckadam, was the hero of the 1986 final

Empics Sport

A memorable team closed the decade in style. The talented Dutch triumvirate of Marco van Basten, Ruud Gullit and Frank Rijkaard were part of an irresistible AC Milan team that thrashed Steaua București 4-0 in Barcelona in 1989. Their mentor was Arrigo Sacchi, a coach who had never played professional football and had worked for some years as a shoe salesman. Sacchi repelled his doubters with a splendid response: *"I never realised that in order to become a jockey you have to have been a horse first!"*

Final round with eight teams

Meanwhile, on the national-team stage, the opening European Championship of the 1980s was the first to feature eight teams. Germany triumphed in Italy, two goals from giant spearhead Horst Hrubesch finally subduing resilient Belgium, the tournament's dark horses. *"We had a good side, one of the best in Europe,"* said Hrubesch. *"It was a team that was strong in every position, but it was also a team where the players fit together and we played some beautiful football."* Four years later, a hugely entertaining final round in France saw the flamboyant host team, led by the talismanic Michel Platini, set the tournament alight. Platini scored nine goals, including a left-foot/right-foot/header hat-trick against Yugoslavia. The Frenchmen were too strong for Spain in the final in Paris. *"It was an overwhelming joy to become champions,"* said the future UEFA President. *"To do that in front of our own fans was the icing on the cake."*

Orange was the brightest colour in West Germany in 1988. The Netherlands welcomed back the legendary Rinus Michels as coach, 14 years after his great team's exploits in the FIFA World Cup, also on German soil. Michels and Milan stars Van Basten, Gullit and Rijkaard drove an exceptional new generation to the EURO title. The Dutchmen's preparations were not always orthodox, as Gullit recalls: *"The day before the final [against the USSR], we went to a Whitney Houston concert – can you imagine? So on the day of the final we said, 'Look, we had a party, we had Whitney Houston; now we are here we can have this trophy!'"* Gullit's opener and a stunning Van Basten volley from an acute angle in the Munich final made sure they did.

A first for women's football

Women's football forged an identity in the 1980s with the creation of the European Competition for Representative Women's Teams. The inaugural event was played between 1982 and 1984, when 16 teams competed for the right to contest a two-legged play-off final, Sweden emerging victorious. Norway won the second edition in 1987, and West Germany powered to the title in 1989. The fledgling competition struck a positive chord and was given European Championship status for the following edition.



Marco van Basten, having sealed the Netherlands' 2-0 victory in the final of EURO '88

As football became more commercially driven, UEFA placed vital emphasis on reinvesting funds generated by its activities back into the game. From 1987 UEFA also experienced significant growth in terms of staff and budget, in order to deal with the game's overall expansion. There were the effects, particularly from a legal point of view, of a Europe without borders, plus TV rights matters and the rise of sophisticated sports marketing techniques. UEFA continued to organise technical and refereeing courses to educate and exchange expertise. It created a Medical Committee in 1986, allowed sponsor advertising on players' shirts in the club competitions from 1982/83, admitted San Marino as the body's 35th member in 1988, and began embracing new technology by starting to set up a European football data bank within the Berne secretariat.

Tragedy struck in August 1983, when UEFA President Artemio Franchi died in a car accident. A brilliant administrator, European football mourned his loss. His successor was the respected Frenchman Jacques Georges, who steered UEFA through the recovery period in the wake of the Heysel tragedy and was a commanding figure for the European body in the face of new challenges.

Within the UEFA secretariat, a distinguished career ended with the retirement of general secretary Hans Bangerter at the end of 1988, after three eventful decades at the helm. Bangerter handed over the reins to German Gerhard Aigner, who had joined UEFA in 1969 and collected a vast wealth of experience across the body's activities. Gerhard Aigner was to be a crucial UEFA figure in the coming years as European football underwent even more explosive growth... ●

PREPARING YOUNG TALENT FOR WORLD CUP SUCCESS

UEFA has been supporting football-related academic research projects through its Research Grant Programme since 2010. To give you a taste of the interesting work undertaken, UEFA•direct is showcasing a selection of research projects funded by the programme. This month, Julian North presents his research into effective player development.

Do the most successful football nations have player development secrets? Or do they just take it seriously?

As the curtain falls on a very successful and entertaining World Cup in Brazil, it is inevitable that the footballing establishment, the media and spectators begin to dissect both the successes and failures of their particular countries (after all, only one team can win). One area which emerges consistently in these discussions is the quality of the players, with attention focused, in particular, on youth player development and player development systems. Barcelona's youth academy, La Masia, and recent system improvements in Belgium and Germany are often hailed as providing the foundations for their respective national teams' performance and successes.

In early 2014 researchers at Leeds Beckett University studied player development systems in seven of Europe's most successful football nations.

Interviews were conducted with 41 of Europe's leading national and club player development experts in Belgium, England, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain.

The research highlighted many similarities in the principles and components underpinning effective player development.

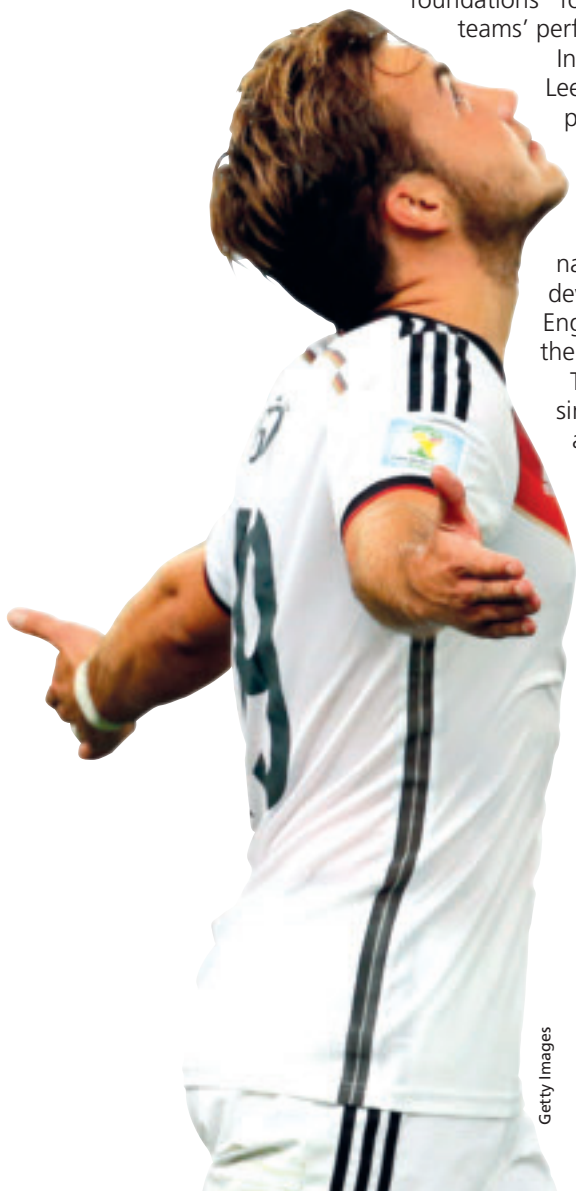
The experts noted the importance of having a clear philosophy and plan, for example, concerning

the development of player characteristics that would give them a better chance of eventual success. They adopted a systematic, long-term approach that was patient with players, noting differences between age and stage. They also noted the importance of addressing players' development needs holistically – psychological and social as well as physical, technical and tactical – and recognised the importance of a high-quality and valued coaching and support workforce.

Comprehensive and consistent

The coaches used a wide range of methods in training sessions and competition to build the characteristics and skills that players require to perform. It was the difference between systems that was most interesting, however. The most successful nations in senior and youth competition – Spain, the Netherlands and Germany – appeared to share common characteristics that the others were learning from or did not exhibit. They not only adopted a comprehensive approach to player development, addressing all of the issues highlighted above, but also ensured that their application was consistent. For example, if a country had a clear view of the player characteristics it wanted to produce (e.g. highly technical or physical), training and coaching activities should be geared towards encouraging the development of these characteristics. Successful nations also developed systems which reflected their social, cultural and institutional histories and arrangements. They did not steal 'good practice' ideas from others and apply them uncritically; they thought about how these ideas worked in their systems and contexts. Finally, successful nations ensured that all the important stakeholders understood and bought into the player development system. Federations, clubs, coaches, players and parents knew how the system worked and what was expected of them to make it a success. ●

Mario Götze, world champion at 22, is an excellent example of the youth development work undertaken in Germany



Getty Images

Julian North is a senior research fellow at the Institute of Sport, Physical Activity and Leisure at Leeds Beckett University, UK. This project was undertaken with LBU colleagues Sergio Lara-Bercial, Gareth Morgan and Fieke Rongen, who share an interest in effective player development and sports coaching across a range of settings and sports. ●

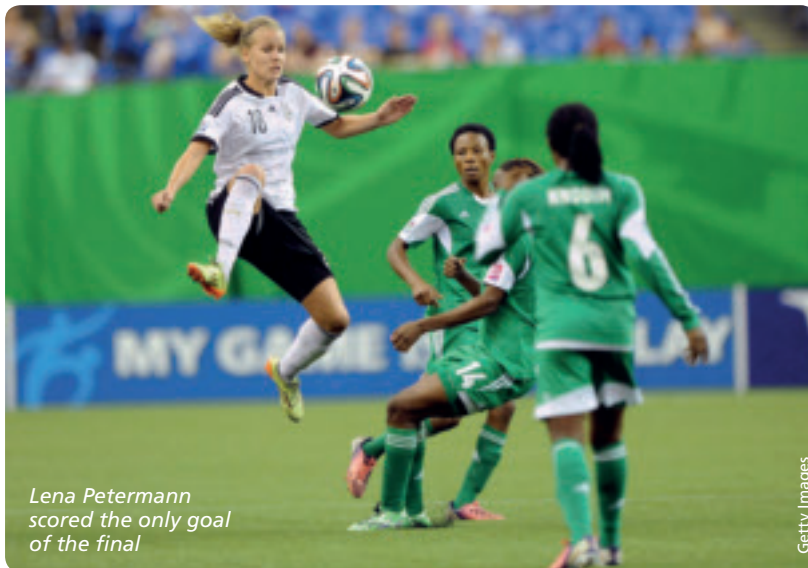


ANOTHER WORLD TITLE FOR GERMANY

Germany claimed another crown by beating Nigeria 1-0 after extra time in the final of the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup, which took place in Canada from 5 to 24 August.

The only goal of the final was scored in the 98th minute by Lena Petermann. It was Germany's third victory in this competition following previous titles in 2004 and 2010, a record equalled only by the USA. France took the remaining spot on the podium by beating North Korea 3-2 in the play-off for third place.

The two other European teams who had qualified for the tournament, England and Finland, did not make it passed the group stage. ●



Lena Petermann scored the only goal of the final

Getty Images

ALL SET FOR KNOCKOUT MATCHES

The draws for the UEFA Women's Champions League round of 32 and round of 16 took place at the House of European Football in Nyon on 22 August.



The 22 teams who qualified automatically for the round of 32 were joined by the eight qualifying group winners and the two best runners-up. The draw produced the following pairings:

KKPK Medyk Konin v Glasgow City LFC
 Ryazan-VDV v FC Rosengård
 ACF Brescia v Olympique Lyonnais
 Clube Atlético Ourense v Fortuna Hjørring
 SK Slavia Praha v FC Barcelona
 Raheny United v Bristol Academy WFC
 FC BIIK-Kazygurt v 1. FFC Frankfurt
 Gintra Universitetas v AC Sparta Praha
 ŽNK Pomurje v ASD Torres Calcio
 Stabæk FK v VfL Wolfsburg
 Apollon LFC v Brøndby IF

MTK Hungária FC v SV Neulengbach
 ŽNK Osijek v FC Zürich Frauen
 Liverpool LFC v Linköpings FC
 FC Twente v Paris Saint-Germain FC
 Stjarnan v WFC Zvezda-2005 Perm

The first leg of these ties will be played on 8/9 October and the second leg on 15/16 October.

The winners will advance to the round of 16, which will take place on 8/9 and 12/13 November (see UEFA.com for the results of the draw). The quarter-finals will then be played on 21/22 and 28/29 March and the semi-finals on 18/19 and 25/26 April. The final will be staged at the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn-Sportpark in Berlin on 14 May. The match has been brought forward due to the FIFA Women's World Cup in Canada from 6 June to 5 July 2015. ●

YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES IN CHINA

In the Girl's Youth Olympic Football Tournament in Nanjing last month, Slovakia took fourth place after losing to Mexico in the match for third place. In the semi-finals they came close to victory, losing out in a penalty shoot-out (2-4) at the

end of a 0-0 draw with the People's Republic of China. Their opponents went on to claim gold by beating Venezuela 5-0 in the final.

As for the boys, Iceland finished third in a tournament won by Peru.

The Icelanders also went out on penalties (1-3) after drawing 1-1 in their semi-final against South Korea. The blow was softened somewhat by their 4-0 victory over the Cape Verde Islands to secure a bronze-medal finish. ●

MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS



Albania
www.fshf.org

A ceremonial start to the new season

The penultimate weekend of August marked the start of Albania's 2014/15 football season. A beautiful, very impressive ceremony was organised ahead of the match between KS Elbasani and KS Skënderbeu, the first in the new season's Super League, an exciting title race which will dominate the Albanian football landscape for the next nine months.

It is traditional in Albania for the official Super League opening ceremony to be held ahead of the first game, which always involves the previous season's champions (in this case Skënderbeu, who have won four titles in a row). This year's ceremony was held at Qemal Stafa national stadium. Around 180 players and teams from Tirana Region, representing children aged 8 to 18, were involved in its organisation.

With their movements and choreography, they created a great festival for everyone present. Albanian football clubs, the Albanian Football Federation, UEFA and FIFA all featured in the ceremony, which lasted several minutes.

The participation of female players also made a strong impression. For several years now, it has been a priority for the Albanian Football Federation to involve women and girls in its ceremonial activities, in order to encourage more women to play the most popular game in the world.

This season's Super League, the country's 76th national championship, involves ten teams, who will all play each other four times



Kicking off the new season at Qemal Stafa national stadium

in total. Based on the system of promotion and relegation, the two teams that finish the season bottom of the table will be relegated to the Albanian First Division.

● **Gazmend Malo**



Austria
www.oefb.at

U21s train with disability national team

The head coach of the Under-21 national team, Werner Gregoritsch, recently invited the Austrian cerebral palsy national team to join in one of his side's training sessions. Cerebral palsy, or CP for short, is a condition that affects muscle control and movement usually caused by damage to the brain before or during birth. The main symptoms relate to muscle tone, be it stiffness or floppiness.

CP football is a Paralympic discipline played in over 30 countries. The Austrian CP national team has been in existence for a year and is trained on a voluntary basis by Wolfgang Hartweger, the U21 national team's psychology coach. The team is made up of players between the ages of 15 and 58, including a schoolboy, a lawyer and everything in between.

"It is an excellent experience for my players. Being able to train with professionals gives them huge motivation. That motivation is especially important if they are to keep playing, because regular training helps the players to



The Under-21 and cerebral palsy players at training together

cope better with the impairment," said Hartweger. "We also want to demonstrate that CP footballers can undoubtedly play for lower-league teams. It's a good way of breaking down the fear of contact with the so-called disabled."

The joint training session meant a lot to the U21 coach. *"It's a pleasure to see how much enthusiasm and heart these players put into their football. For my lads, it's an extremely valuable experience to see this side of the*

game," Werner Gregoritsch said enthusiastically. The U21 captain, Patrick Farkas, had a similar view: "For us as professionals, performance is always paramount. For CP footballers, simply being able to play football is the most important thing of all. Football makes them happy and that is something we all have in common. We can learn from them, just as they could hopefully also learn a little from us today. In any event, both of our teams had a lot of fun."

● **Iris Stöckelmayr**



Azerbaijan
www.affa.az

European Beach Soccer Cup in Baku

The 2014 European Beach Soccer Cup was held from 28 to 31 August on the beach soccer pitch at Jumeirah Bilgah Beach Hotel in Baku. The national teams of Azerbaijan, Switzerland, Greece, Russia, Spain and Hungary all participated in the tournament. Based on the results of the group stage, the fifth-place match was between Azerbaijan and Hungary. The match ended 3-3 after extra time and the winners had to be decided in a penalty shoot-out, which Hungary won 2-1.

In the match for third place Russia beat Greece 7-4 to take the bottom step on the podium, while the final was between Spain and

Switzerland. The Spanish team won that game 8-6 to claim first place in the 2014 European Beach Soccer Cup.

After the final came the awards ceremony. The award for best goalkeeper was presented to the Hungarian keeper, David Fiskor, by the vice-president of the Azerbaijan Beach Soccer Federation, Farid Akhundov, while the president of the Azerbaijan Beach Soccer Federation, Farid Novruzi, presented the top scorer award to Switzerland's Noel Ott. The overall best player award went to Spanish player Juanma and was presented by Joan Custo, executive vice-president of Beach Soccer Worldwide and member of the FIFA Beach Soccer Committee. Finally, the European Beach Soccer Cup itself was presented to the Spanish team by the



Some spectacular moves in the Spain v Switzerland final

general secretary of the Association of Football Federations of Azerbaijan, Elkhan Mammadov.

● **Narmina Zulfugarova**

A new captain

After performing in Brazil three players have said goodbye to the national team. First it was Senijad Ibričić (29), then captain Emir Spahić (35) and finally Zvezdan Misimović (32), who with 83 caps was the most experienced player on the national team. All three had played for a decade on the national team, notching up a total of 204 matches. *"I respect their decision. It will be difficult to find replacements but we have young players who can move their feet. It was nice to work with them for these past few years,"* the Dragons' head coach, Safet Sušić, said. The new captain is Edin Džeko, who now has the most appearances (65 caps) and is the team's top scorer (36 goals).

The champions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, HŠK Zrinjski, were knocked out of the UEFA Champions League second qualifying round by NK Maribor after a goalless first game in Mostar and a 2-0 defeat in Maribor.

In the UEFA Europa League, NK Široki Brijeg beat Qəbälə FK from Azerbaijan in the first qualifying round (2-0, 3-0), only to be knocked out in the second qualifying round by Czech side FK Mladá Boleslav (1-2, 4-0). Meanwhile, FK Željezničar overcame FK Lovćen of Montenegro (0-0, 1-0) in the first qualifying round but succumbed to FK Metalurg Skopje (FYR Macedonia) in the second, after drawing 0-0 in Skopje and 2-2 in Sarajevo.

FK Sarajevo were the most successful this season, having reached the Europa League play-offs. They lost at home in both the second and third qualifying rounds – 1-0 against FK Haugesund of Norway and 2-1 against Atromitos FC of Greece – but won both away legs 3-1 to stay in the competition. In the play-offs they lost to VfL Borussia Mönchengladbach, 3-2 in the first leg and 7-0 in the second.

Bosnia and Herzegovina's futsal champions, MNK Centar Sarajevo, have been knocked out



A well-contested match

of the UEFA Futsal Cup preliminary round. Their fate was sealed when they lost 6-3 to Baku United FC. They beat Malmö City FC (7-1) and Gibraltar Scorpions FC (10-7) to finish second in Group B, just missing out on a place in the next round.

In the qualifying competition for the Women's World Cup in Canada 2015, the Bosnia and Herzegovina national team celebrated a second victory in Group 4. Samira Hurem's team beat the Faroe Islands 2-0 in Zenica.

SFK 2000 Sarajevo, the women's champions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, hosted Group 7 in qualifying for the Women's Champions League. They were beaten 3-0 by Polish team KKPK Medyk Konin and then won against ZFK Kocani of FYR Macedonia (7-0) and Finland's Åland United (1-0). The winners of the group, with three straight victories, were KKPK Medyk Konin. SFK 2000 Sarajevo finished second.

Finally, the Bosnia and Herzegovina U17s came third in a UEFA development tournament in Stara Pazova in Serbia. They finished 3-3 against FYR Macedonia, who won 5-3 on penalties, and were then beaten 9-2 by Serbia, who went on to win the tournament.

The new season has started in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with FK Sloboda Tuzla and FK Drina Zvornik the new arrivals in the Premier League.

● Fuad Kravac

The FA Cup extra-preliminary round

While millions across the globe will be watching the FA Cup final on 30 May 2015, many may not be aware that the famous road to Wembley has already begun, with the competition's extra-preliminary round taking place across the country in August.

There are 736 clubs taking part in the FA Cup this season with exactly half appearing in the extra-preliminary round, which features teams from the bottom end of English football's pyramid system, some ten promotions away from the bright lights of the Premier League. Among the teams making their debut in the FA Cup this season were FC Romania from the Essex Senior League and Nelson FC, who ply their trade in the North West Counties Premier Division and are located just a short drive away from Premier League new boys Burnley FC.



FC Nelson players pose with the FA Cup trophy during their visit to Wembley

Nelson's ground is nicknamed Little Wembley locally so The FA invited players and staff for a VIP tour of 'big' Wembley ahead of their FA Cup tie with West Auckland. They might not be a household name but West Auckland are famous for winning the 'first World Cup', aka the Sir Thomas Lipton Trophy, on two occasions – in both 1909 and 1911 – beating Switzerland's FC Winterthur and Juventus respectively.

And it was West Auckland who progressed to the next round of this season's FA Cup, beating Nelson 2-1.

As their name suggests, FC Romania are a club made up of players who have their roots in their eastern European homeland. Former players include Claudiu Răducanu, who was capped twice at international level and made almost 100 appearances for Steaua București, including a UEFA Cup outing against Southampton at St Mary's.

Despite that experience, FC Romania needed a replay to see off Haverhill Rovers in the extra-preliminary round, chalking up a 3-0 victory to progress in the competition while collecting a winner's cheque from The FA for £1,500.

● Matt Phillips

First football camp for national minorities

Sponsored by the Croatian Football Federation (HNS), the first football camp for national minorities in Croatia was organised in Daruvar in August. During the three-day camp, around 80 boys and girls aged 10 to 16 trained, worked and played football under the motto 'United with football against racism, violence, discrimination and poverty'.

The Romani football academy 'Little Barcelona' organised the camp with the help of Daruvar city, FC Daruvar and Vladimir Bilek, who represents Czech and Slovak minorities in the Croatian parliament. *"The Croatian Football Federation supports these events and follows UEFA's vision of developing grassroots football. Organising this camp is surely a good step in that direction,"* said Romeo Jozak, HNS technical director.

Camp coordinator Tofko Dedić Toti emphasised the importance of such

events for the children: *"22 national minorities live in Croatia and it has taken us some time to organise something like this. The kids here show that we have succeeded, and we'll continue working on projects like this. Big thanks to the HNS president, Davor Šuker, to Mr Jozak and the rest of the HNS for their support – and to these kids, who show how important it is to welcome everybody, regardless of race, religion or nationality. That is the message we are sending from Daruvar."*

● Tomislav Pacak



Victory tastes the same wherever you come from



Víkingur seal third consecutive cup triumph

The men's and women's Faroese Cup finals were played at the Tórsvøllur national stadium in Torshavn on Saturday 30 August. Around 3,000 spectators witnessed a hard-fought contest as the cup holders of the last two seasons, Víkingur, took on HB Tórshavn, who had not won the competition since 2004.

The match was very intense with a lot of tough battles, and it was played at a very high tempo. Víkingur were on top in the first half but after the interval it was HB Tórshavn who dominated the game and created the most



The prime minister, Kaj Leo Johannesen, presents the trophy to the Vikingur captain, Atli Gregersen

chances. Tórshavn almost won it late on when Pál Mohr Joensen and Levi Hanssen found themselves on goal with only Hungarian keeper Geza Turi to beat, but they somehow squandered the golden opportunity.

Instead, Víkingur got the decisive goal just a few minutes later when Faroese international midfielder Hallur Hansson flicked a near-post header past Teitur Matras Gestsson in the Tórshavn goal. With that, a very even match

ended in a 1-0 win for Víkingur, who have now won the Faroese Cup in three consecutive years and are certain of playing European football next season.

The Víkingur coach, Sigfríður Clementsen, and his players proved earlier this season that they were a very strong team in decisive matches when they became the first Faroese team ever to qualify for the third round of a European competition.

The women's cup final was played on the same day as the men's and for the fifth consecutive year KÍ Klaksvík came out on top, narrowly beating HB Tórshavn 1-0 with a very late winner from young substitute Hervør Olsen.

● Terji Nielsen



Football is back!

A few days after the start of the new school year, children between the ages of 6 and 12 resumed another part of their schedule as the new football season kicked off. The French Football Federation (FFF) is celebrating the start of the new season again this year by running a nationwide scheme rolled out at local level.



The campaign poster

Over three weekends in September, regions and clubs are welcoming, in different age groups (U10/U11, then U8/U9 and U6/U7), any children who would like to take up football or practice their skills. Taster workshops, ball juggling and non-competitive matches have been organised for the enjoyment of all.

Almost 300,000 children and parents benefit from this nationwide initiative each year.

The FFF has supported all the regions that are participating in the scheme by showcasing one or more pilot sites. The federation has also renewed its partnership with Mickey magazine – a big favourite among children of these ages, it has produced a dedicated guide to the new football season.

● Jean-Baptiste Schmidt



Youth players of the year

Sara Däbritz, Niklas Stark, Julian Brandt and Benedikt Gimber are Germany's 2014 youth players of the year. All four were presented with Fritz Walter gold medals by the German Football Association (DFB) on 7 September in Essen.

Sara Däbritz won the U-20 Women's World Cup with Germany in Canada, while Niklas Stark from Nuremberg captained the Under-19s to victory in their European Championship in Hungary. Julian Brandt was also on the team in Hungary, having debuted in the Bundesliga at 17 with Bayer 04 Leverkusen. Benedikt Gimber, meanwhile, was a linchpin of the Under-17 national team last season and won the youth A championship with TSG 1899 Hoffenheim.

The DFB introduced the Fritz Walter medals to honour the former national team captain who led Germany to World Cup victory in 1954 and is held in extremely high regard to this day



Sara Däbritz

for his sporting achievements and personal qualities. Fritz Walter medals have been presented to the best youth players of the year since 2004, together with cheques for €20,000 (gold), €15,000 (silver) and €10,000 (bronze). No fewer than 23 men and 15 women from among the 102 medal winners of the last ten years have gone on to play for the senior national team.

● Stephan Brause



Referees' summer seminar

The Gibraltar FA held a summer seminar for all its referees and observers on Saturday 9 August. Participants were given presentations on a number of topics in preparation for the new season and audience participation was encouraged, the ultimate aims of the seminar being fun and education.

The day started with a fitness session in which participants were put through their paces by fitness coach James Alvarez, in preparation for the FIFA fitness tests on 21 August. An interactive workshop on mass player confrontation was then led by the director of refereeing, Adrian Bacarisa, and technical instructor Denis Alvarez. The aim of this workshop was to help participants to understand why mass confrontations occur and to give guidance on how to manage such confrontations effectively.

A presentation on the role of the fourth official followed, with good practice examples of how to support the other match officials on matchday as an integral member of the refereeing team. After a lunch break the participants were again split into their working groups and presented with match situations

to analyse. Refereeing Assistance Programme video material and domestic clips were used for these analyses.

On completion of the group discussions, the participants were reunited for a plenary session in which each group presented their findings from each clip, prompting a very interesting debate. "Gibraltar's referees have been urged to protect the players and the image of the game at this summer seminar on the eve of the 2014/15 season. They are not to be afraid of making unpopular decisions for the good of the game," Adrian Bacarisa said.

● Steven Gonzalez

It has been a studious summer for Gibraltar's referees and observers



Ferencváros move into their new stadium

A full 18 months after the start of the demolition of the club's former Albert Flórián Stadium, Ferencvárosi TC moved to their new home and played their first match at the impressive Groupama Arena. The new arena lies on the grounds of the former Albert Flórián Stadium, and with a capacity of 23,698 it is the second largest football stadium in Hungary. In July, one month before the opening match, it was announced that the first game at the arena would be between Ferencváros and English Premier League side Chelsea FC.

The opening game was played on 10 August and the first kick on the new pitch was taken by 93-year-old Ferenc Rudas, a famous name from Hungary's most popular club. The first goal in the new stadium was scored by former Fulham and West Bromwich Albion player Zoltán Gera, who returned to Ferencváros this summer, exactly ten years after he had left the club for West Bromwich. Thomas Doll's side held onto their lead until the 51st minute, when Ramires equalised for the visitors. Cesc Fàbregas netted the winner for the Blues nine minutes from time.

The Hungarian Football Federation, led by president Sándor Csányi, is undertaking a stadium construction and renovation project which is scheduled for completion in 2016.

All top-division club stadiums will have been rebuilt or renovated in two years' time, with the government supporting this new stage of the project with a budget of 40 billion forints. Three new arenas have opened so far – besides the Groupama Arena, there has been the Nagyerdei

Stadium in Debrecen and Pancho Arena in Felcsút, where Hungarian league games and international matches have already been played, including four matches in this summer's European Under-19 Championship final round.

● Peter Bokor



The inauguration of the new Ferencváros stadium

First women's national team

The Liechtenstein Football Association (LFC) is making strides into international women's football as it sets to work with the women's Under-16 team put together at the end of August. The newly formed national team is aiming to compete in a UEFA U16 development tournament in April.

After 80 years of the LFC this is the first time Liechtenstein has had a women's team. Some 30 girls have been initially selected for the new squad, which the LFC has appointed 29-year-old Tanja Herrmann to coach. Herrmann has a B+ coaching diploma from her native Switzerland. Having previously played in the top two women's divisions in Switzerland and coached FC Zürich's women's Under-17 team, she clearly has both the know-how and the experience to rise to this new challenge.

The initial focus for the new squad as they prepare to compete next year is on the targeted development of the individual players' abilities. In addition to the work they do with their clubs, the girls will come together for national team training sessions once a week – and these sessions will continue even after the all-too-short championship season is over.

Next year's U16 development tournament will then be a first opportunity for the team to see where they stand as they go up against countries at a similar stage in their women's football development.

● Anton Banzer

A new website for youth training

With the start of the new school year, the Lithuanian FA has initiated a new football project. In September it launched the website www.futbolotreniruotes.lt. Visitors to the site will be able to locate football coaching, sports clubs and schools for children throughout the country, as well as lots of contacts and other useful information. The project manager, Vaidotas Rastenis, says that the site has already generated interest and requests from children and parents all over the country trying to find where, when and with whom football training is being offered. The system works in a very simple way: after entering some basic details (child's age, sex and preferred town or area), the site will show all the relevant information about where to go and where to train.

The general secretary of the Lithuanian FA, Edvinas Eimontas, whose idea this was, says that it's not only boys who might want to look up information on football training. Interest from girls is also highly anticipated throughout the country.

"To present the project we organised a fun photo shoot, which was attended by youth and professional players – Edgaras Jankauskas, Georgas Freidgeimas, Deividas Cesnauskis and Viktorija Magalinskaja. The vision of the project is: 'When I grow up, I will be ...' This is something we want to encourage the children to imagine, and maybe one day some will become the new stars of football," says Eimontas.



Edgaras Jankauskas, an active supporter of the new project

According to Lithuania's most famous footballer, Edgaras Jankauskas, no professional player will ever forget the day they first played football or the name of their first coach. "Not all young players grow up to be stars, but the more of them that can find training, coaches and teams that bring people together, the more likely Lithuania is to produce promising players there."

● Vaiva Zizaitė



New general secretary

The Malta Football Association has a new general secretary in the form of Bjorn Vassallo, formerly chief executive officer, a post he had held since 2010 and which has now been abolished.

This is in the wake of the association's plans to establish a new platform on which to consolidate its long-term development programme. Vassallo's appointment was approved at the association's first council meeting following its annual general meeting. He was nominated for the post by the president, Norman Darmanin Demajo.



Bjorn Vassallo, the new general secretary

The general secretary's role, which was held by Joe Gauci for many years, will be a challenging one as the Maltese association aims to further strengthen its base and increase momentum in line with the backing given to the president by the council when he was elected four years ago.

Vassallo, a dynamic person with excellent managerial skills, will be eager to enhance the good work of his association in the administrative sector, as well as in its wider activities. After being appointed Vassallo said that his new post would motivate him to work even harder and thus help the association to render invaluable services to the game. Considering his qualities,

he will surely be an asset to Maltese football and the national association, which thrives on modern managerial skills.

● Alex Vella



Moldova says NO to match-fixing and illegal betting

The Football Association of Moldova (FMF) launched a social campaign: 'Say NO to match-fixing and illegal betting'. The goal of this campaign is to make the fight against match-fixing and illegal betting in Moldova a top priority and to ask players, officials, fans and all others involved in Moldovan football to help tackle this crime.



The campaign logo

Before the start of the new season, representatives of all of Moldova's top-division clubs voted unanimously to pass a convention on the integrity of football matches and all of Moldova's referees signed the document, which is designed to combat match-fixing.

On the official website of the FMF – www.fmf.md – a video clip was launched in which the FMF president, Pavel Cebanu, the head coach of the national A team, Ion Caras, former player Vladimir Țincler, FIFA referee Vera Onica, Moldovan international Luvannor Henrique and two young players from CSCT Buiucani all speak out against playing in fixed matches and getting involved in illegal betting. This video clip was a great success in Moldova, where it was picked up by different TV stations and websites.

"We call on all our member associations to apply a zero-tolerance policy to match-fixing and illegal betting. It's about the reputation of Moldovan football and we all have to protect that. I am sure that all together we can eradicate the greatest threat to football once and for all," the president said.

The FMF is not alone in this fight for clean football. Last year the Moldovan parliament adopted a law imposing strict punishments on anyone found to be involved in the manipulation of sport events and illegal betting.

● Press Office



A positive message

Some 1,400 boys and girls and 130 teams (8 to 11-year-olds) descended on the City of Belfast playing fields in Mallusk for the Northern Ireland Boys' FA (NIBFA) National Games Development Day.

The event was supported by the Irish FA, with over 40 staff members from the football development department involved. This festival has been running for nine years now, having started out with just a few volunteers supervising the children taking part. The NIBFA's vision was for the format of the event to send out a positive message about playing and learning in a relaxed and fun environment with no winners, as each child receives the same participation medal. This event, in turn, laid the foundations for the Irish FA's small-sided games strategy.

This year, the festival had boys and girls playing together. For the children involved, this community event provided a fun-filled day and an opportunity to experience a healthy form of football for all while at the same time making new friends. Year on year, the number of children grows, with the tournament igniting a keen interest in continuing to play football in the future.

The support of Irish FA staff has enabled this event to grow in terms of participation and organisation, and it is a credit to the staff and thanks to their professional approach that the goal of creating a fun, safe and inclusive environment in which to play has been achieved.

● Jenny Robinson



Making new friends on the football pitch

Star Way tournament

This year's edition of the international Star Way youth tournament was held in Moscow from 19 to 23 August, in memory of the legendary Russian footballer and coach, Olympic and European champion Valentin Ivanov. The competition is for players under the age of 15 and this year four teams took part – Russia, Serbia, Romania and Cyprus.

According to the results table, Serbia won gold, Romania silver and Russia bronze. An awards ceremony was held after the final and all participants were rewarded with souvenirs. In addition, the Star Way organising committee named the best players of the competition in the different categories.



Serbia won the Star Way tournament

The players were presented with their medals, prizes and trophies by the president of the Football Union of Russia, Nikolai

Tolstykh, and the general director, Alexander Alaeva.

● Igor Vladimirov

Open doors for aspiring players

The Scottish FA's seven regional performance schools opened their doors in August to almost 100 aspiring international players.

Mark Wotte, the Scottish FA's performance director, was joined by the Scotland national team coach, Gordon Strachan, in welcoming the new players at a joint enrolment at Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh – the venue for the new national performance centre for sport due to be built in 2016. Already, more than 200 of the most talented boys and girls from across the country are involved in S1 and S2 and have benefitted from individual skills development, sports science and nutrition – all of which is incorporated into the educational curriculum.

The following week, Mark Wotte was at Stirling University to endorse the Forth Valley

Football Academy and its new head coach, Kenny Shiels. The former Kilmarnock and Greenock Morton manager has been recruited to oversee this pilot project, which has integrated the youth academies of Falkirk, Stenhousemuir and East Stirlingshire.

The regional academy was the first of its kind in Scotland and has already been emulated in Fife, where Dunfermline, Raith Rovers, Cowdenbeath and East Fife have undertaken a similar project, in line with the Scottish FA's performance strategy and commitment to creating a 'best v best' environment for the development of elite talent. Shiels has experience of elite talent development from his time with the Northern Irish FA and believes regional academies are key to harnessing player progression for the senior game.



● David Childs

Mark Wotte

Gala nominations for unsung heroes

The annual Swedish football gala usually pays tribute to the champions, the top scorers and the players of the year. This time, some of the people who made it all possible will be honoured too. Behind every footballer, there is at least one adult who gave vital support in their early career. The mum who drives her kids to games every week, the dad who washes the team kit, the uncle who coaches the youth team... We call them 'football parents', and a new campaign by the Swedish FA and its sponsor SJ (Swedish Rail) aims to give them the recognition they deserve.

Former national coach Tommy Söderberg fronts the campaign, along with national team players Jimmy Durmaz and Per Nilsson (talking on video about their own football parents). Nominations are made by the public through social media and the campaign website. One 'football parent of the month' is being announced

throughout autumn, leading up to the final awards at the November gala.

The campaign follows an increasing trend of Swedish FA sponsors looking to emphasise not

only stars and their sporting success, but also the community and social values of football at all levels.

● Andreas Nilsson



More about the campaign at <http://fotbollsforaldrar.se/>



Ricardo Rodriguez and Lara Dickenmann voted players of the year

At the Swiss Football Awards 2014, VfL Wolfsburg full-back Ricardo Rodriguez and Olympique Lyonnais midfielder Lara Dickenmann took the Credit Suisse Player of the Year awards.

The Swiss Football Association broke new ground as this traditional event moved to the provinces this year, with the ceremony being held in the canton of Obwalden at the home of FC Sarnen, a club that plays in the second inter-regional league, Switzerland's fifth flight. In Sarnen, the winners of ten different awards were announced, seven of which had been voted on by the public.

The selection of Ricardo Rodriguez and Lara Dickenmann was both logical and fully deserved. At the age of just 22, FIFA U-17 World Cup winner Rodriguez has already been capped 22 times and is firmly established both in the

Swiss national team and at his club VfL Wolfsburg. Midfielder Lara Dickenmann, a Champions League winner with Olympique Lyonnais, has played for Switzerland 92 times, scoring 38 goals as the linchpin of the national team. She played a pivotal part in Switzerland's first ever qualification for the FIFA Women's World Cup, which will be played in Canada next year.

Outgoing national team coach Ottmar Hitzfeld was unsurprisingly voted coach of the year, while other award recipients included goalkeeper Diego Benaglio (Wolfsburg), who has also stepped down from the national team, striker Haris Seferović (Eintracht Frankfurt) and defender Silvan Widmer (Udinese Calcio). As expected, 2013/14 Würth Swiss Cup winners FC Zürich were also named Würth Swiss Cup Team of the Year.

Full list of award categories and winners:

- Credit Suisse Player of the Year – men: Ricardo Rodriguez
- Credit Suisse Player of the Year – women: Lara Dickenmann



Lara Dickenmann, Switzerland's female player of the year

- Würth Swiss Cup Team of the Year: FC Zürich
 - Coach of the Year: Ottmar Hitzfeld
 - Most Important Goal of the Year: Haris Seferović
 - Credit Suisse Rookie of the Year: Silvan Widmer
 - Save of the Year: Diego Benaglio
 - Fair Play of the Year: Lancy-Florimont FC
 - Referee Performance of the Year: Christian Zimmermann
 - Coolest Goal of the Year: Sidinei de Oliveira
- Pierre Benoit



Football Villages

Organised by the Turkish Football Federation (TFF) and Ülker, one of the main sponsors of the TFF, Football Villages around the country have opened their doors to children for the new season.

The opening ceremony for the 2014 TFF-Ülker Football Villages was held at the Hasan Doğan national team camp and training facilities in Riva, in the province of Istanbul, which itself opened in July this year. The president of the TFF, Yıldırım Demirören, the chairman of the executive board of Yıldız Holding, Murat Ülker, and the head coach of the Turkish national team, Fatih Terim, all attended the ceremony.

To date, 53 Football Villages in 30 different cities across Turkey have hosted approximately 4,000 children with a view to discovering talented young players. This year, 400 children will attend 10 different TFF-Ülker Football Villages, three of them for girls and seven for boys.



A great development opportunity

These 400 youngsters will be trained by experts visiting the 10 Football Villages in 8 different cities (Isparta, Erzurum, Nevşehir, Sakarya, Sinop, Izmir, Elazığ and Balıkesir). The training will include interactive activities about the Laws of the Game and fair play. At this year's TFF-Ülker Football Villages, the children will also be given lessons in chess and creative drama, with the aim of encouraging their mental, cultural and social development.

Former senior national team player Emre Aşık, now assistant coach for the U19 national

team, is acting as ambassador for the 2014 TFF-Ülker Football Villages.

Turkey's current grassroots programme was introduced in 2007 and one of the Turkish national team's main sponsors, Ülker (the main brand of Yıldız Holding), has supported it ever since. Starting in Van with 500 children, the federation has now reached some 272,000 children. Turkey was awarded five stars under the UEFA Grassroots Charter after making such huge progress in this domain.

Some of the children who attended previous Football Villages have gone on to play for professional clubs and even the youth and senior national teams. They include:

- Enes Ünal (at Bursaspor, youngest scorer in Turkish Super League history);
- Ozan Tufan, (senior national team and Bursaspor);
- Muhammed Demirci (Beşiktaş JK);
- Beykan Şimşek (Fenerbahçe SK);
- Berk Yıldız (Galatasaray AŞ).

• Aydın Güvenir



Carnival in Cardiff

"An event like no other ever held in Cardiff" – this was the general opinion as the Football Association of Wales (FAW) made history by staging the UEFA Super Cup in Wales on 12 August at Cardiff City Stadium. This match was a clash of two Spanish giants – Real Madrid CF (winners of the Champions League) and Sevilla FC (winners of the Europa League) – in the annual curtain-raiser to the European season.

The sense of occasion was heightened by the presence of Cardiff and Wales star Gareth Bale in the famous white of Real. The local boy was not to disappoint, fully playing his part in the 2-0 win. The Portuguese man of the match, Cristiano Ronaldo, scored both the goals, with

wonderful support from Luka Modrić, Toni Kroos, Karim Benzema, James Rodríguez and others. Truly a team of world stars.

Sevilla also rose to the occasion, often causing Real some difficult moments, but it was their fans who will be remembered by those in the stadium. Their vocal support for their team over the 90 minutes never wavered. The atmosphere in the ground – and in the city for the 48 hours surrounding the game – was that of a carnival that showed football at its very best in every sense.

The list of football dignitaries and related officials who attended the game reads like a who's who of European football. The UEFA President, Michel Platini, was on hand to assist with the trophy presentation, while former Manchester United manager, Sir Alex Ferguson, presented Ronaldo with his man of the match award.

A huge undertaking for all concerned, there is no question that the FAW, Cardiff City FC, the Welsh government, Cardiff city council, the security services and all the volunteers delivered a showpiece that will live long in the memories of all those who were there, not to mention the 40 million and more TV viewers all over the world.

• Ceri Stennett

Real Madrid lift a new European trophy in Cardiff



BIRTHDAYS

Sir Trevor Brooking (England, 2 October)
 Levent Bicakci (Turkey, 2 October)
 Andrzej Wach (Poland, 2 October)
 Lutz Michael Fröhlich (Germany, 2 October)
 Julius Kvedaras (Lithuania, 3 October)
 Léon Schelings (Belgium, 3 October)
Victor van Helvoirt (Netherlands, 3 October) 50th
 Wilfried Heitmann (Germany, 4 October)
 Kennet Tallinger (Sweden, 4 October)
 Silvo Borosak (Slovenia, 4 October)
 Márton Vági (Hungary, 4 October)
 Frank Coulston (Scotland, 5 October)
 Terje Hauge (Norway, 5 October)
 Jerzy Engel (Poland, 6 October)
 Jérôme Valcke (France, 6 October)
 Iveta Bankova (Bulgaria, 6 October)
 Faruk Hadžibegić (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 7 October)
 Armand Duka (Albania, 7 October)
 Jari Maisonlahti (Finland, 7 October)
 Draženko Kovačić (Croatia, 8 October)
 Pierre Delaunay (France, 9 October)
 Sergey Zuev (Russia, 9 October)
 Ellert B. Schram (Iceland, 10 October)
 Milovan Nikolić (Slovenia, 10 October)
Joan Gaspart Solves (Spain, 11 October) 70th
 Dimitar Ziwovski (FYR Macedonia, 9 October)
 Bo Karlsson (Sweden, 12 October)
 Adrian D. Casha (Malta, 12 October)
 Siegfried Kirschen (Germany, 13 October)
 Pedro Tomás (Spain, 13 October)
 Aleksander Čeferin (Slovenia, 13 October)
 George Brian Smith (Scotland, 14 October)
 Dušan Krchňák (Slovakia, 14 October)
 Tony Paeffgen (Lithuania, 14 October)
 Tom van der Hulst (Netherlands, 15 October)
 Michel Piraux (Belgium, 15 October)
 Wendy Toms (England, 16 October)
Konrad Plautz (Austria, 16 October) 50th
 John Delaney (Republic of Ireland, 16 October)
Jean-Marie Philips (Belgium, 17 October) 70th
 Frans Hoek (Netherlands, 17 October)

Mark Arthur (England, 17 October)
 Adonis Procopiou (Cyprus, 17 October)
 Pedro López Jiménez (Spain, 18 October)
 Petros Mavroidis (Greece, 19 October)
 Aivar Pohlak (Estonia, 19 October)
 Miljenko Sakoman (Croatia, 19 October)
 Paul Philipp (Luxembourg, 21 October)
 Philip Pritchard (Wales, 22 October)
 Mircea Sandu (Romania, 22 October)
 John Taylor (Scotland, 22 October)
Arie Kenneth Scheiman (Israel, 22 October) 60th
Jan C. Huijbregts (Netherlands, 23 October) 80th
 Michel Vautrot (France, 23 October)
 Dragutin Karlo Poljak (Croatia, 23 October)
 Christian Teinturier (France, 24 October)
 Antonin Herzog (Czech Republic, 24 October)
 Elvedin Begić (Bosnia-Herzegovina, 24 October)
 Roy Cathcart (Northern Ireland, 26 October)
 Markku Lehtola (Finland, 26 October)
 Hugh Dallas (Scotland, 26 October)
 Perry Gautier (Belgium, 26 October)

Gerard Perry (Republic of Ireland, 27 October)
 Levan Paniashvili (Georgia, 28 October)
 Rui Cacador (Portugal, 29 October)
 George Fantaros (Cyprus, 29 October)
 Maria Persson (Sweden, 29 October)
 Bert van Oostveen (Netherlands, 30 October)
 José Cunha Rodrigues (Portugal, 30 October)
 Alan McRae (Scotland, 31 October)
 Kurt Zuppinger (Switzerland, 31 October)
 José Luis Astiazarán Iriondo (Spain, 31 October)

COMMUNICATIONS

- Carlo Tavecchio was elected president of the Italian Football Federation on 11 August, replacing UEFA vice-president Giancarlo Abete.
- Kadir Kardaş succeeded Emre Alkin as general secretary of the Turkish Football Federation on 3 September.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Meetings

17 October, Nyon
 UEFA Futsal Cup: elite round draw

23 October, Nyon
 HatTrick Committee
 Fair Play and Social Responsibility Committee

27–31 October, Nyon
 UEFA Women in Football Leadership Programme (second seminar)

Competitions

30 September–1 October
 UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 2)

30 September–5 October
 UEFA Futsal Cup: main round

2 October
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 2)

8/9 October
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32 (first legs)

15/16 October
 UEFA Women's Champions League: round of 32 (return legs)

21/22 October
 UEFA Champions League: group matches (matchday 3)

23 October
 UEFA Europa League: group matches (matchday 3)



NO TO RACISM



RESPECT