



**ENGLAND CONMEBOL President Nicolas Leoz and FA Chairman Geoffrey Thompson. Right: the participants.**



**BELGIUM Guy Thys was a Belgian footballing hero.**



# News from member associations



## BELGIUM

### Remembering Guy Thys

On Friday, 1 August, Belgian football lost a monument. Guy Thys, the most successful coach in the history of Belgian football, passed away. The world of football has lost a father, a diplomat and above all a born gentleman.

Guy Thys symbolises Belgian football. Under his wing, our country encountered its greatest successes, which made the Red Devils feared the world over. At the time, our team was certainly one of the most talented of the continent.

In 1976, Guy Thys succeeded Raymond Goethals as head coach of the Devils. In 1980, four years after he took over the hot seat, Guy Thys caused a sensation in Italy in the European Championship. The Red Devils reached the final of this prestigious tournament, falling only at the final hurdle, when they came up against the Germans. René Vandereycken scored for Belgium, while Hrubesch gave his team a clear advantage by scoring Germany's two goals. Despite their defeat, Belgium went down in the history of European football.

Two years later, in the opening match of the 1982 World Cup in Spain,

the Belgians allowed themselves the indulgence of beating reigning champions Argentina 1-0! Guy Thys was, of course, behind the tactical display by our players.

In 1986, at the World Cup in Mexico, Belgium were to experience the greatest moment in their footballing history. After qualifying against our Dutch neighbours, Guy Thys took our national team to the semi-finals. The Devils were one of the best four teams in the world! Only Maradona and Argentina managed to put a stop to them. Guy Thys became the symbol of Belgian football by stirring the whole population.

The last tournament under the orders of Guy Thys, the 1990 World Cup in Italy, could and should have allowed the Devils to achieve other feats. If it had not been for the killer goal by England's David Platt in the last 16, Belgium could have dreamt of another historic campaign, so well were they playing.

On 1 May 1991, the national team played their last match in the era of Guy Thys.

For almost 15 years, Guy Thys coached the national team and commanded them for 114 matches (a national record).

Guy Thys was still active at the level of the Belgian FA. He was one of the initiators of "Casa Hogar", the operation launched in favour of street children in Toluca in Mexico. Guy Thys was also involved in coach education. In this respect, he was chairman of the panel responsible for awarding the UEFA Pro licence. He also occupied a public relations role with the URBSFA, accompanying sponsors to Red Devil matches.

The death of Guy Thys leaves a great void. He will never be forgotten and will always have a place in the heart of the Belgian football world. We, the Belgian FA, the clubs, the coaches and the supporters, are orphans without him, but the memory of Guy Thys will live on for ever. Thank you, Guy.

*François Vantomme*



## BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

### No change to the Premier league

At the recent general assembly of the Football Federation Bosnia and Herzegovina held in Sarajevo, the item that attracted the most attention was the proposed competition system for 2004/05.

In his address, Federation President Jusuf Pusina highlighted the positive results that had been achieved since football in Bosnia & Herzegovina was unified on 23 May last year. Unification had had a considerable impact on the performances of the senior and youth national teams in their respective European Championship qualifying campaigns. All of the delegates applauded the success of the different national teams, especially the players of head coach Blaz Sliskovic.

Last year, the general assembly decided that, as from 2004/05, the leagues with 16 clubs, including the Premier League, should be reduced by two, to 14 clubs each. But this year, the delegates decided that the Premier League of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the first divisions of the two entities should continue to number 16 clubs. The second division competition will be played in seven different leagues: four in the federal part and three in the smaller entity of the Republic of Srpska. This proposed competition system was accepted unanimously.

Amendments to the federation's statutes and rulebook were also proposed and accepted.

In the elections, Milan Jelic was voted in as the federation's new President. Iljo Dominkovic is First Vice-President and Jusuf Pusina Second Vice-President.

*Fuad Krvavac*



## BULGARIA

### 80th anniversary of organised football activity

At the beginning of October, football players, staff and fans commemorated the 80th anniversary of the establishment of the first national football organisation in Bulgaria.

At the end of 1923, the first Bulgarian National Sports Federation was founded. It included a "football section", whose president, Pavel Grozdanov, was working as a police inspector at the time.

In the intervening 80 years, Bulgaria has enjoyed success in the international football arena, finishing the 1994 World Cup finals in fourth place, winning two Olympic medals - bronze at the Melbourne Games in 1956 and silver at the Mexico Games in 1968 - and appearing in two European Championship final rounds, including EURO 2004 next year.

At youth level, the nation has fared even better, having won three International Youth Tournaments!

The anniversary celebrations at the national opera were attended by FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter, who congratulated Bulgaria's footballers and presented them with a special FIFA cup. Mr Blatter



## GERMANY

Birgit Sarge, coach of VfB Peine, was one of those to receive a fair play prize from fair play ambassadors Horst Hrubesch and Herbert Fandel.