



The deal is done

(left to right) Intertoto General Secretary Yvonne Schnyder; Friedrich Stickler, Euro-Football Pool vice president and member of Austrian Lotteries' board of management; Intertoto President Richard Frigren and Lennart Johansson, president of UEFA and Euro-Football Pool.

The annual meeting of the International Football Cup, held last September in Stockholm and hosted by Intertoto member Tipstjänst and Sweden's Football Association, was different from past such events in many respects. The IFC, UEFA, Intertoto and the Euro-Football Pool were all present. Reason for the unusual format was the launch of

quence of the changes that occurred in Europe in the last years and the opening of Eastern Europe, many new national associations and their teams rightly demanded integration within the European football scene. The structure of European football competition had to change. These changes were successfully concluded this year, and the results are well known: 24 European national champions are represented in the UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE, the CUP WINNERS' CUP proceeds as usual, and some one hundred clubs will now participate in the UEFA CUP, including four from the UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP.»

The UEFA-Intertoto Cup

What is it?

The UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP replaces the IFC - the International Football Cup, beginning in 1995. UEFA and EFP president Lennart Johansson: «During the national championship summer breaks, participating teams can compete in a challenging tournament that also serves as a welcome preparation to the forthcoming national football season. It will be fully run under the structures of UEFA and be open to the currently 49 member associations of UEFA. The UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP will give the best four clubs an opportunity to qualify for the UEFA CUP.»

Background

When lotto became popular in the late 50s, football pools soon suffered the effects of cannibalization. Especially during football's summer breaks players, with no games to bet on, quickly turned to lotto. But toto organizers didn't take this lying down: in a logical next step they insti-

gated a year-around schedule of football games suitable for betting. In fact, the IFC was played without interruption during the summer breaks in national football from 1961 until 1994. Since then, in the 33 years of the Cup's existence, more than 4,000 games have been played.

This equal partnership between toto organizations and the IFC has been highly successful. Intertoto President Richard Frigren: «Clubs no longer had to rely exclusively on friendly games which were so popular in the early days and the toto companies were able to offer attractive pools programs to their players during summer.»

Why the change?

As successful as the IFC was for some three decades, the world of sports never stands still. Pools organizers, paying large sums of money for a product they felt in need of a quality upgrade, came to the conclusion that what they

wanted was a more attractive, more challenging tournament. According to Mr. Frigren, «Intertoto asked UEFA for suggestions on how to improve the tournament. The results (after fruitful negotiations with UEFA by Euro-Football-Pool representatives Stickler and Schnyder - the editor) is the new UEFA-Intertoto Cup.»

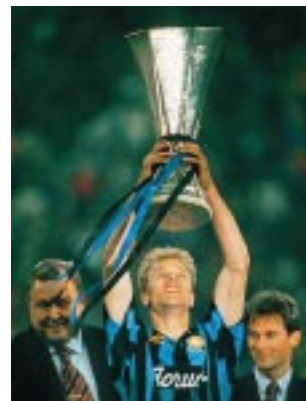
What's in it for UEFA?

At the annual meeting UEFA president Lennart Johansson put it this way: «As a conse-

Mr. Johansson summed up the advantages to UEFA this way: «With its inclusion of the IFC in the UEFA structures, and opening it up to all UEFA member associations, European football clearly takes a step forward. Close cooperation between football and the football pools will no doubt lead to a successful fourth European Club Competition.»

No pain, no gain

The Intertoto President also had a couple of words of warning for participating toto companies: «One very important aspect will be the short time between the draw and the first playing round. Because we want to include



The best four UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP competitors qualify for the UEFA CUP. UEFA referee, disciplinary and delegate rules govern it.

those teams just ranked behind the clubs already qualified for the UEFA-CUP, we will have to wait until the end of the national championships before we can make the draw. There will be only a quite limited time period available between the draw and the first playing date for the toto companies to prepare their coupons, fix the odds, get publicity going and organize toto operations for the first weekend.»

Game schedule

The provisional dates for 1995 are June 24/25, July 1/2, July 8/9, July 15/16 and July 22/23. The qualifying rounds to determine the four teams admitted to the preliminary round of the UEFA CUP will take place immediately thereafter.

National football associations should tell UEFA no later than the end of January 1995 how many teams they would like to register for the competition. On the basis of the existing UEFA coefficient list the final number will be determined at the beginning of June. It is assumed that no less than 40 teams and no more than 60 teams will participate next year. They will be divided into groups consisting of five teams each which will each play two home and two away games. One date will be kept open.

As a rule, all games will be played on weekends, preferably on Saturdays. To accommodate the toto companies, games may not start before

15:00 hours Central European Time on Saturdays, and no later than 18:00 hours on Sundays. As usual, the staff of the Intertoto Business Office will communicate the scores and half-time scores to members as soon as the games are over.

Who foots the bill?

Referees from neutral countries are used in all the games; each team gets a bonus and then there are operational costs. Together, the new tournament's annual budget amounts to about SFr. 3 million (\$ US 2.4 million).

According to the agreement between UEFA and Euro-Football Pool, the toto companies using the fixtures of the new competition for their football pools contribute SFr. 1.7 million (\$ US 1.35 million) per annum, and UEFA the rest.

Richard Frigren: «We have written to all European Intertoto members informing them of the share they would have to contribute. The principle is easy: The more toto companies share in the project, the smaller the individual contributions will be. At the same time the EFP bylaws will be changed to the effect that those companies that use and support the UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP games will be granted automatic membership in the Euro-Football Pool.»

What about television rights?

UEFA has successfully marketed TV rights, notably for its UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE, and

Lennart Johansson believes there is no reason the UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP shouldn't go the same route: «We are sure that a tight competition schedule makes the tournament as marketable a package as other competitions. With the consent of the national associations, surpluses generated from marketing are paid back to participating clubs.»

Hopes for the future

No new structure is so perfect that it cannot stand improvements. In the case of the UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP, after the

initial three-year period has elapsed the arrangements will be finetuned as newly gained experience warrants. The unspoken hope for the UEFA-INTERTOTO CUP is of course that many of the top teams of the big football nations will compete to make the competition an exciting soccer event of the summer season. In turn this should generate more extensive television coverage which would in due time add to toto revenues and – to close the circle - further aid football in general, literally down to its grassroots. □

Members of the UEFA-Intertoto Cup organizing committee

UEFA: Senes Erzik, chairman, Turkey; Alfred Ludwig, Austria; Hermann Selbherr, Germany; Roger Vanden Stock, Belgium.

IFC: Lucien Schmidlin and Edgar Obertüfer of Switzerland.

EFP: Dipl.-Ing. Friedrich Stickler, Austria and Yvonne Schnyder, Switzerland.

