



FUTSAL: EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE AND UEFA CUP

Baluan Sholak Sport Palace

Place: **Almaty (Kazakhstan)**

Capacity: **5.000**

Inauguration: **1967**

Reconstruction: **2010**

Papp Laszlo Sportarena

Place: **Budapest (Hungary)**

Inauguration: **2003**

Capacity: **12.500 (15.000 for concerts)**

Fonix Arena

Place: **Debrecen (Hungary)**

Inauguration: **2002**

Capacity: **8.500**

Five a Side

(Hungary)

THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONS LEAGUE 2010 AND THE UEFA FUTSAL CUP FINALS 2011 WERE TWO IMPORTANT EVENTS THAT SHOWED THE QUALITY OF PARTICIPATING TEAMS, AS WELL AS THE PITCHES WHERE THE MATCHES WERE PLAYED, ON SURFACES THAT WERE DESIGNED BY MONDO.

THE RESEARCH OF THE SHOW

Since 1988 when FIFA introduced futsal (football played with five players) as a new sports discipline, this sport has been played by hundreds of thousands of people all over the world, and has constantly increased in popularity especially in the European countries. In the last few years the increased media attention, especially from TV, has made it necessary for matches to be more spectacular and entertaining. With the growing interest for this sport all across Europe, we knew we had to find surfaces that would allow athletes to perform at a very high level," recalls Laurent Morel, UEFA Futsal Competition Manager. In 2004, after extensive research, the UEFA realized that there weren't any surfaces specifically designed for futsal, but only generic products. That led to the creation of a database created in collaboration with the primary end users (players and trainers). This helped the flooring manufacturers to define the ideal surface to achieve superior game level. After numerous attempts during different events - continues Morel -, we finally were able to reach the professional quality would satisfy the demands of the best teams.

MORE SPEED AND MORE TECHNIQUE

The challenge was to offer the players maximum ball speed, increased rhythm for passes, and potentially allow them to score goals while maintaining an adequate adherence.



"As part of the game," recalls Morel, "also the futsal shoes and balls underwent some changes, reaching the average excellence of the goals as recorded during the finals held in Hungary (European Champions League 2010, ndr). The flooring played a major role in this achievement" To reach the desired results, Mondo worked in closely with the UEFA technical staff, managing to design a fast pitch offering exceptional performance. The Mondo flooring solution was the Fast Break System with a laminated wood finish. It has a very rigid and fast superficial coating, that allows for good shoe support and good grip. The underlayment layer has an elastic structure that provides the system with comfort and shock absorption and good elasticity. This flooring solution was officially used for the first time in 2007, two years after the design and tests were done. Since UEFA used it in different events and always obtained good results and positive feedback on the speed and the way the ball is rolls, without deviations, allowing a more technical and spectacular game.

THE UEFA AIMS AT THE BLACK

In comparison to the previous editions, one of the most evident innovations of the European Champions Cup 2010 edition was the color of the pitch. In fact, the color black was selected which has great impact and that transmits energy. This creative choice was dictated by the necessity to confer a distinctive character to futsal. UEFA wanted to meet the futsal audience halfway. This consisted of mostly boys of 14 to 18 years of age, who like fast sports, lots of action, and a game that requires great abilities and ends with many goals. The decision to abandon the traditional blue represented a risk, particularly for an international level competition. In the end, the absorption of light, the television effect and the signs of the shoes made the challenge even more difficult. The result was unbelievably positive: players appreciated the contrast with the ball, the spectators in the stands and those watching at home, as well as the organizing committee were all very enthusiastic about the event , " says Laurent Morel.

EUROPEAN CUP 2010

With the increasing popularity of Futsal, for the 2010 edition of the European Cup held in Hungary and won by Spain once again, UEFA decided to increase the number of the teams that would participate in the finals, from 8 to 12. They also decided to host matches on two pitches: Budapest and Debrecen. Both the **Papp Laszlo Sportarena** and the **Fonix Arena** have the surface developed by the UEFA in collaboration with Mondo. The teams had at their disposal a faster game surface, with better scoring averages. The player's comments were very positive. "After training on their home pitches, many players were very surprised with their first experience on the Hungarian pitch, because they found it to be unexpectedly fast," says Morel. It took them several days to get accustomed to it, but, they were very pleased with its performance, especially how fast they could get to the net in terms of the ability to score goals: which is every player's the main target!"

THE TALE OF MONTESILVANO

The same type of pitch was also used for the UEFA Futsal Cup finals 2011, in an edition that recorded the extraordinary undertaking of futsal by Icobit Montesilvano. When it made its debut in Europe, Kazakhstan won the trophy (equivalent to the Football Champions League). It was a historical result for the whole movement of national futsal, as no other Italian team had ever won the prestigious cup. Up to this edition, the only teams that entered in the gold bulletin of futsal were from Spain, Portugal and Russia (countries where futsal was more developed)with the single exception of a Belgian team. Once again Mondo was the sponsor of the f UEFA Futsal Cup Finals, held in the Baluan Sholak Sport Palace of Almaty, a center completely rebuilt before the 2011 Asian Winter Games . Comments from the players were also more than positive for this event. "The Mondo pitch is amazing, I think it's one of the absolute best surfaces anywhere to play futsal. It's very fast, it's a pleasure to play on it and it's also nice to see. Furthermore I believe that the black color gives the audience a visual effect with great impact," commented **Marcio Forte**, captain of the Icobit Montesilvano and of the Italian national team. His teammate, Stephen Mammarella, goalkeeper for Montesilvano and the Italian National Team, shares the same opinion. First of all I must say that it is a wood floor that brought us fortune, and so I can only have a positive memory of it. Besides the visual effect, I have appreciated both the smooth finish that allows the ball to roll very fast, and the consistency, that reduces traumas due to jumps and falls, which are very frequent for goalkeepers.



