

## Serbian union wins Eastern Europe Tournament

Thursday 19 July 2012

Serbia was the winner of the Second Eastern Europe Tournament for out of contract players organized by the professional footballers' associations of Bulgaria (ABF), Greece (PSAP) and Serbia (SPF Nezavisnost).

In Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, almost 50 players gathered. Not only to participate in the Second Eastern Europe Tournament, but most of all hoping to impress scouts and club representatives in order to earn a new contract.



In previous months, some players had to terminate their contract because their clubs had not paid them for months. Many of them suddenly were unemployed and in a devastating financial situation. This tournament gave them the chance to show their passion for football and their determination in finding a new contract.

Among the participants was [Dragisa Pejovic](#), a Serbian defender, who has been struggling to find a new club due to his revelations about match-fixing in Serbian professional football.

Pejovic and his team mates took the title in the stadium of PFC Levski. Serbia beat Bulgaria (1-0) and drew with Greece (0-0), while Greece and Bulgaria failed to score in their encounter (0-0).

Perica Stanceski received the award for being the *Best Player of the Tournament*. He was picked by the three coaches Rumen Stoyanov (Bulgaria), Tomislav Civic (Serbia) and Stelios Giannakopoulos (Greece). Stelios explained: 'He has the qualifications and charisma that should be the characteristics of a player. I am talking about sharpness, technical ability, speed and discipline.'

'It is no wonder that the hard work, under the instructions of coach Sivic, has brought us this result', said Perica Stanceski. 'We were all like one, no arrogance or hidden intentions. We all enjoyed wearing a jersey of SPF Nezavisnost.'

'Playing for the union was a privilege. My colleagues made a big mistake about not joining the SPF. Often they justify themselves referring to the cost of a membership fee. I bet they spend a lot more money at cafes... They don't have the benefits, such as the training camp and this excellently organized tournament, with many scouts as spectators.'

His coach, Tomislav Civic, added: 'Before the tournament, I was sceptical. I did not think that a tournament like this would be possible. But I must say, that it is great that these three unions and an organisation such as FIFPro care about footballers. I am proud being a part of this event.'

The presidents of the three unions Doncho Donev, Mirko Poledica and Stelios Giannakopoulos said they were satisfied

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with the organisation and the level of play. Donev said: 'I think that the players are satisfied and will have a lot of good memories from their stay in Sofia. Last but not least I hope that the tournament will fulfil its main goal: as many players as possible signing professional contracts for the upcoming football season.'

Poledica mentioned that five Serbian players who participated in the training camp of Nezasvisnost had already found a new club before the tournament began. 'We expect that several more players will get an offer.'

FIFPro board member Dejan Stefanovic attended the tournament and left Sofia with positive impressions and numerous new ideas. 'I was delighted by the level and the skills of the players, who deserve to continue their careers at the top level club competitions. The organization was immaculate. At FIFPro, we are looking forward to organize a six-team tournament in Austria next year. It should be on par with the one in Amsterdam.'

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