

Interview Andreas Ivanschitz

1) Less than 100 days separate us from the UEFA Euro 2008. What do you feel when you think of the European Championship?

Ivanschitz: For us football players it is the greatest event we will ever experience, and we are looking forward to this celebration of football very much. This goes for the players as much as for thousands of fans.

2) What is your personal goal for the European Championship?

Ivanschitz: I want to play a good UEFA Euro 2008™. The most important issues are our preparation and taking a step back from our individual interests. If the performance of the team is good, anything is possible. We want to reach the quarter final at least, maybe we can make it even further.

3) What will be the essential factors to keep the Austrian National Team competing after the group matches?

Ivanschitz: The collective will be the critical factor. Moreover, we will have to improve our technique and ball handling, as well as radiating calmness. If we can do that, we will be able to manage our strength better and challenge the teams till the end. Then we won't experience a crash like in the past few games, where we had to pay the price for intensive running after 60 or 70 minutes.

4) Is home field advantage a real advantage or rather an additional burden because of media pressure?

Ivanschitz: Of course, the pressure is very high, just as the expectation of fans and the media is. Nevertheless, home field advantage is a real advantage. The 12th player will help us, I'm sure.

5) Would you like to have another player in the ÖFB squad or are you happy with the current team?

Ivanschitz: I am in frequent contact with the team coach and we occasionally discuss this issue. Yet, after all it is the sole decision of Josef Hickersberger. The basis of the squad is fixed, but there is always room for surprises.

6) A heated issue of discussion in Austria are the „oldies“ like Ivica Vastic and Mario Haas. Should these players be called for or should the team follow Hickersberger's way?

Ivanschitz: Players like Vastic and Haas show us week after week that they are very good. However, we as the football players will not interfere with the decision who should be called for or who shouldn't.

7) Would a short-notice call of these players be a problem for the team?

Ivanschitz: No, I don't think so. We have a lot of time for preparation before the Championship.

8) Who is your personal favourite for winning the European Championship?

Ivanschitz: In our group I definitely see Germany. They have played well in every match up to now. I can also see Italy, Spain and France, of course.

9) Will Greece repeat the sensation of Portugal?

Ivanschitz: It is definitely easier to surprise than to confirm such a big success. Also, all teams are warned against Greece. Yet, Greece certainly has the quality to become European Champion again.

10) Do you see the UEFA Euro 2008™ as a possible stepping stone for your future career?

Ivanschitz: The European Championship is the best opportunity to prove your abilities. This goes for all players and, of course, for me. Maybe the Euro 2008 is a stepping stone, maybe it isn't.

11) With what results will Austria reach the quarter final?

Ivanschitz: I don't care. What counts is to be promoted.