



The European Federation of American Football (EFAF) is the governing body for American Football in Europe and is recognized as the continental federation by the International Federation of American Football (IFAF) for Europe. 30 national federations for American

Football are members of EFAF, which represents more than 100.000 individual members in all of Europe.

All member federations are recognized by the governments of their nations as the governing body for American Football in their country. Most of them are members of or recognized by the National Olympic Committees and/or sports governing bodies of their countries.

EFAF is administering all European international competitions on club and national team level. On club level the European Football League (EFL) with its final game EUROBOWL is the national champions' competition each year. The EFAF Cup is a second annual pan-European club team competition for the national champions and/or national runners-ups of countries not qualified for EFL.

A number of regional club competitions are played regularly in different parts of the continent.

Internet: www.efaf.org

Members of EFAF

Austria
Belarus
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Norway
Poland
Portugal
Romania
Russia
Serbia
Slovakia
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
Turkey
Ukraine

(29 nations are Full or Country Administrator Members, Moldava is an Associated Member)



Competitions for national teams are held every four years on senior age level and every two years on junior age level. The European Championships for senior national teams are held with about 20 nations competing, divided into three pools of playing skills with a system of promotion and relegation. EFAF also organizes annual or bi-annual national teams' competitions in Flag Football for both genders on senior and a variety of junior age levels.

Major events like key national team games and major national finals are televised live on EUROSPORT, EUROSPORT 2 and/or by domestic broadcasting companies e.g. ORF (the Austrian national broadcaster). The opening and final game of the 2010 European Championships took place at the Commerzbank Arena at Frankfurt am Main (Germany), a state of the art multifunctional soccer arena which also was used for FIFA Soccer World Cup 2006. A number of national finals (in Germany, Austria, Finland and some other nations) have been or are regularly played in arenas also used in past FIFA World Cups, UEFA EURO championships or even Olympic Games.

History of American football in Europe

The beginnings of organized American football in Europe date back to the mid 70s. Students, encouraged by TV broadcasts of the NFL's Super Bowl and contacts with American military personnel, met in a Frankfurt park to try to play the game which has developed out of European-style football and rugby throughout the U.S in the late 19th century.

1977 the Frankfurt Lions as the first American football club on European soil were founded. In 1979 a six-team German league was the first to play a full season and determine a national champion. The German example drew attention in neighbouring countries like the Netherlands, Switzerland or Austria. And in Finland, Italy and later Britain similar first steps were taken soon. In Finland American football was adopted as a proper summertime occupation for athletes used to the traditional ice hockey in wintertime. The Finnish national team became a strong contender during the first two decades of European American football, winning five European Championship titles.

So the first German championship in 1979 was followed by the first Finnish league season in 1980 and championships were held for the first time in Italy in 1981. 1983 saw the start of league play in France, Austria followed in 1984 and Great Britain, Switzerland and the Netherlands in 1985. Today, about 30 countries regularly determine their national champions.

First internationals were played in 1981, when national teams of Germany and Italy played a series of three games against each other. Two years later the first European Championships were held at Castel Giorgio, Italy. The hosts from Italy met Germany, Finland, France and Austria, the Italians beat Finland in the final game by 18-6. The tournament was the first in a series that continued from 1985 through 1997 in two-year-intervals with four teams competing in a final tournament. But the growing number of nations made it necessary to convert the scheduling formula. Today European Championships are held on three different levels involving a system of promotion and relegation between the levels every four years. In addition to the European Championships for adult teams since 1992 a biannual Junior Championship for players up to 19 years was inaugurated.

European club competitions started in 1986 with the first Eurobowl tournament at Amsterdam. Until 1992 this was played in knock-out rounds and a final tournament every two years. Since 1993 the tournament is held annually, as of today The European Football League features a preliminary group phase and is followed by play-offs for which eight teams are qualified. Furthermore the EFL is supplemented by further competitions: The EFAF Cup is a second pan-European cup competition for clubs at European level, Atlantic Cup, Eastern Cup and the CEI Interleague are three regional cup competitions for Teams from Northwest, Eastern and Southeastern Europe respectively. About 50 clubs from more than 20 different nations regularly compete in the various competitions.

American football in Europe today is firmly integrated into the sports landscape of Europe. In many countries, the national associations have become key members of the national sports organizations. And American football made in Europe already makes its mark in the U.S. as well. Many European-trained players play for U.S. collegiate teams, two of them, fellow-Germans Sebastian Vollmer and Markus Kuhn, already have been drafted by NFL teams recently for example.

Competitions of EFAF

The European Federation of American Football was founded in 1993 and then took over the role as the central organization of national associations for American football in Europe. In addition to promoting and supporting the development of the sports in European countries one of its core tasks is the alignment of various European-wide competitions for national and club teams. These include in particular

- The European Championships for national teams

The tournament series features three championship tournaments on different levels. The winner of the C pool tournament advances to the B pool tournament the next year, the B winner to the A pool tournament, in which six teams compete for the European Championship. In total 15 to 20 nations play in one of the tournaments in each four-year cycle. The last EC A pool tournament was held in Germany, and the hosts won the final against France to claim their second European championship. The run for the European Championships of 2014 starts with the C pool tournament at Switzerland/Austria in the fall of 2012, followed by a B pool tournament in Italy in 2013. European Championships are held since 1983. For the past twelve competitions Finland won five titles. Germany, Italy and Britain each were European champions twice, Sweden once.

- The European Championships for junior national teams

Players aged 19 or under and their national teams compete for the European Junior Championships every two years. Currently the Austrian national team is the defending champion after winning its first title in 2011 in Spain. In total Germany has won four titles in 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2008, Finland won three times (1992, 1994 and 1996) and France twice (2004 and 2006).

- Euro Flag (European championships in flag football)

Since 2003 European Championships in flag football for male adults are held. France won two titles so far. Since 2005 championships for female adult teams are held as well. Youth flag football national teams also compete bi-annually for an European title in the age groups of U13 and U15.

- Eurobowl for club teams

Since 1986 an European Cup is played by the top club teams of the continent for the Eurobowl trophy. Twelve teams are eligible for the preliminary rounds, mostly champions and runner-ups of the top European national leagues of the previous year. In the quarterfinals they have to take on the four semifinalists of the preceding year.

- EFAF Cup for club teams

Close to 30 national championships in all of Europe naturally feature different levels of playing skills. Club teams not yet able to compete for Eurobowl in the elite 16 in European Football League may qualify for EFAF Cup instead and compete at continental level. Champions of leagues not eligible for EFL play and runner-ups of all countries are eligible to participate.

- Regional club competitions

The Atlantic Cup (Northwestern Europe), the Eastern Cup (Eastern Europe) and the CEI Interleague (Southeastern Europe) are regional competitions mainly addressed at nations where American football is still in its developmental stages. International competition with less travel involved is deemed to enhance playing skills in such countries. In the Atlantic Cup play teams from Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg gather international experience. CEI Interleague provides Southeastern European teams from for instance Croatia, Serbia or Hungary an opportunity for cross-border competition. The Eastern Cup brings together teams from Russia, Ukraine or Belarus.