



## adidas – Euro 2012 Player quotes



### Iker Casillas - Spain

#### *How do you feel ahead of Euro 2012?*

We have basically the same squad from the last few years and tournaments but we are missing David Villa and Carlos Puyol who are very important players for us. We are confident but we know it won't be easy. The Euro 2012 tournament might be the most difficult of all for us. At the first Euro tournament in 2008 we were an emerging side and people didn't expect a lot from us, it was new and exciting. At the World Cup in 2010 we had the performance of 2008 to inspire us and a lot of hard work and effort! When it comes to Euro 2012, the expectation will be high and other teams know how we play now so we have to work even harder than ever to win. However, if we do we'll be absolutely delighted – winning three international championships in a row is something no one has achieved. We have a chance to do it but we know it won't be easy.

#### *Who are the teams and players to look out for at Euro 2012?*

At Euro 2012 I think Germany will be a really strong team, they've got a good balanced side and played very well at the World Cup. Holland as well, runners up at the last World Cup, are a really good team. When they beat Brazil in 2010 they took a big step forward. However there are also teams like France, England and Portugal to watch out for.

#### *You are also set to play against Ireland, how do you feel ahead of this game?*

Our second game against Ireland will be a tough game, we expect the Irish players to make it very tight and for the midfield area of the pitch to be very packed. Our game plan will remain the same but we'll need our players to work hard to create space and chances.

### Jonathan Walters - Ireland

#### *How do you feel about Euro 2012?*

Euro 2012 is my first major tournament playing for Ireland and so I'm really looking forward to it, its going to be a very proud moment for me. We know how much it means to everyone back in Ireland to be a part of these types of events and we'll go out there and give it our all. We've not been at a finals since the World Cup in 2002 so it's a big moment for everyone involved.

#### *Who are the teams and players to look out for at Euro 2012?*

We've got a very tough group so our first priority will be to get through that before thinking about other teams and players. We've still got to play the current holders in Spain and the World Cup 2006 winners in Italy so its not an easy group for us. If you look at the midfield from those sides you have the likes of Xavi, Iniesta, and De Rossi, to name just a few – they are so strong in midfield and are great at keeping the ball so we'll need to work very hard to gain possession.

#### *You mention the game against Spain; tell us your thoughts ahead of this game?*



Our group contains three very strong teams and we've seen in the last few tournaments just how good Italy and Spain are, Spain in particular aren't European and World Cup Champions for nothing! They have a fantastic balance to their team; their midfield again is so strong. When you have the combination of Xavi, Alonso, and Iniesta in the middle the other team aren't going to see much of the ball so its going to be a big focus for us to retain possession and try to hit them on the break.

#### Ivan Rakitic - Croatia

*Who are the teams and players to look out for at Euro 2012?*

I think there are a lot of teams who could shine at Euro 2012. In my opinion it could be a European Championships of the highest quality, and that means that all the countries really do have good teams. Of course, first you have Spain, but then there is also Germany, England, Italy, France... There really are a lot of good teams, and I think it will be a very interesting tournament. There are also a lot of players to watch. As always, I think first you have to mention the whole of the Spanish squad! And then you can also bring out players from Holland, and Germany - I think there are 20 or 25 players who will really light up these European Championships.

*Your group is one of the toughest at the Euros and you have to play Italy next and then Spain, tell us about those games?*

I know the quality of Spain and Italy - that the Italians have experience and were World champions, while Spain are currently the strongest team around. On the day you have to be 100 percent ready and you have to be self-confident. These teams have a great chance of doing well at the tournament so we need to be at our best. I think Italy will be very strong at this tournament; they have a good mix of youth and experienced players who have been to many tournaments so they'll be tough opponents for us.