

## European Football Championship 2008: Euro-Files- Greece

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Agency: **Dildizayn**



Check the odds on who the bookies think will win Euro 2008 and you'll find nine nations ahead of current holders, Greece. But you won't find coach Otto Rehhagel complaining.

His side were 100-1 outsiders when they beat Portugal to win Euro 2004. Besides, last week's friendly win against Portugal proved that they're more than capable of beating Europe's top sides once again...

### FROM THE TOP

Having won 43 of his 78 matches it is no wonder that Rehhagel – the first 'foreign' coach to win the European Championship – is confident of retaining the trophy. Especially as he sees his team enter the tournament in good form. Greece finished Group C with the highest points tally of any team (31), after winning 10 games and losing just one. And, perhaps not surprisingly, six members of his squad feature in the Castrol Performance Index rankings.

### EXPERIENCED AT THE BACK

Defence was the foundation for Greece's success in 2004 – the team conceded just four goals. And it will be defence first again this year. Eintracht Frankfurt's Sotirios Kyrgiakos is the second-best-ranked defender on 1817 points (despite Greece failing to match Germany's impressive defensive record in qualifying). His overall score fell after last week's friendly with Portugal, but after playing every minute for 'The Pirate Ship' en route to the finals, and contributing to two clean sheets in their last six qualifiers, he added to his tally with some efficient distribution and a brace in a crucial 2-2 draw against Norway.

The experienced Trainos Dellas is expected to partner Kyrgiakos in a four-man backline, with Atletico Madrid's Giourkas Seitaridis set to play on the right and Vassilis Torosidis on the left. Seitaridis boasts 1,120 points – a result of his tough tackling, consistent passing and ability to get forward.

### IF IT AIN'T BROKE...

Greece's midfield features many of the components that proved successful in Euro 2004. Central pairing Angelos Basinas and Konstantinos Katsouranis are still running the show, while Georgios Karagounis sits menacingly behind the front two or three: the 31-year-old scored the opening goal in Euro 2004's opening match against Portugal, and a set-piece double against the same opponents last week prove he's still a danger. That threat from dead-ball situations, his strength in the tackle, plus his ability to support and supply the front two saw him climb to third place in the midfield rankings with 1759 points.

### OPTIONS IN ATTACK

Scoring six goals between them in the last six qualifiers, strike duo Theofanis Gekas and Ioannis Amanatidis are expected to lead the line. Gekas trailed his strike partner after the qualifiers despite scoring twice the number of goals as three came against lowly Malta; Amanatidis, in contrast, boasted a high-earning strike, against rivals Turkey in Istanbul, evading the offside trap following a defence-splitting pass, before controlling the ball and lobbing the Turkish goalkeeper.

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Motor Oil and Lubricants Castrol UK and Ireland  
Castrol UK Ltd, Wakefield House, Pipers Way, Swindon  
SN3 1RE United Kingdom

[www.castrol.co.uk](http://www.castrol.co.uk)

Press contact: Caroline Topping

Phone: +44 (1793) 452781

eMail: [Caroline.topping@uk.bp.com](mailto:Caroline.topping@uk.bp.com)

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