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Magazine

Interview

• Ángel María Villar

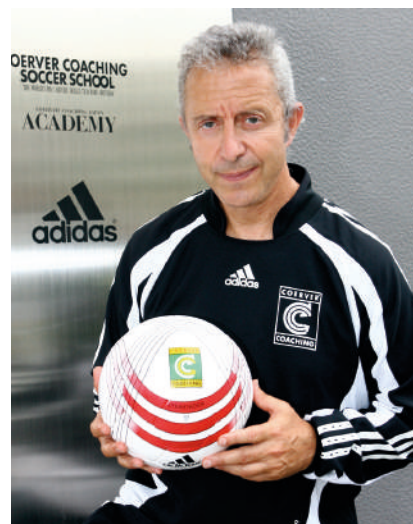
"Football will provide solutions to the coronavirus crisis"

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**Interview**

Ángel M. Villar

Interviewer: Reyes Bellver

Covid-19 and its impact on world football

The pandemic in which we are immersed with the arrival of COVID-19 is affecting all industries and sport is not the exception. In what it comes to football, it is important to highlight some measures that are being taken, as well as recommendations, especially by the highest entity body of world football: FIFA. President Infantino has already stated that in order of priority, *health comes first, and that FIFA is willing to proactively help football in these exceptional circumstances. He assured that an analysis process is underway to evaluate how will be the evolution of our beloved football.*

Since the beginning of the crisis, FIFA consulted the different stakeholders in play. In addition, it created its own work team, which unanimously agreed on a set of principles endorsed by the FIFA Council Bureau. These principles were included in a document published on April 7, and consist of a series of guidelines in order to bring some stability and clarity to football in the near future.

The most important points of these FIFA guidelines regarding COVID-19 are the following:

1.

Expiration and start of player contracts:

The football season will not end on the date originally planned. Therefore, FIFA proposes and recommends to extend the contracts until the time the season finally ends. Likewise, the same thing happens with the start of the next season, which will inevitably have to be postponed from what it was the original date of start. In this way, FIFA contributes to the contractual stability of football.

2.

Employment contracts in football that cannot be fulfilled:

FIFA strongly recommends that clubs and players work together to reach agreements and find solutions during the period of football's activity suspension.

FIFA clarifies that finding the appropriate solutions to the circumstances of each country corresponds, in the first instance, to the relevant entities at the national level, so all aspects of each situation must be taken into account (including government measures in support of clubs and players, the possibility of deferring or reducing payments, and possible insurance coverage). FIFA also hopes that fair and equitable solutions can be found in order to mitigate the negative effects of this crisis. If no agreements are reached, the cases could be transferred to FIFA.

3.

Registration periods or transfer windows:

Regarding the registration periods, FIFA will be flexible and will allow the transfer windows to be postponed. They will take place between the end of the current season and the start of the next.

This FIFA guide is the first version, as we are in a phase of uncertainty and very unstable. To talk about this subject we have invited a person who knows the football industry very well. Mr. Ángel María Villar, president of the Royal Spanish Football Federation for 30 years (from 1988 to 2018) and vice president of UEFA (26 years on the Executive Committee) and FIFA (19 years on the Executive Committee). His life has always been related to football. Before becoming an executive, he was the president of the Vizcaya Football Federation and also a professional football player, becoming a professional with Athletic Club de Bilbao and playing during 12 seasons. He also represented the Spanish national team in 22 games.

1. - PPresident, FIFA has published a document with guidelines that we have summarized at the beginning of this report. The document points at some of the problems that, due to COVID-19, are being experienced and will be experienced in football. What is your general opinion on this FIFA guide?

First of all, I would like to start by sending condolences to all the families who have lost a loved one in these difficult times and to all the health professionals who are working to ensure that this situation ends as soon as possible. I would also like to mention politicians of any kind, with government responsibility in international, national or local institutions.

In connection with the FIFA document, it is undoubtedly a successful decision, which arrived just after the pandemic situation was known. Before releasing it, FIFA held numerous meetings and

listened to all interested stakeholders. This is certainly very positive too. We must remember that FIFA governs for 211 member associations, being very complex to find a balance to the problems that COVID-19 generates in the football of each country. Each nation has its own labor legislation. In some countries there are collective agreements or specific regulations for professional sports, but in many others there are not. For this reason, **creating a guide with global recommendations for the 211 associations has undoubtedly been a complex process for FIFA, but in my opinion, a necessary and successful one.**

2. - Since the moment competitions have been suspended or their end dates have been modified, we are going to find lots of problems in relation with the of the footballer's contracts. The FIFA guide deals with this matter and recommends extending the contracts as far as possible and always taking into account national legislation. What is your opinion on the impact of COVID-19 on players with contracts until the end of this season?

In my opinion, there are two situations on this point: players finishing their contracts and those who have already agreed or negotiated their arrival with another club, even with their corresponding salary increase. **Negotiation is essential for both situations and it must be done in a personalized way, because each case is different and particular.** FIFA has published a recommendation with its guidelines, but it is in the hands of each country and each national association or federation to carry out a negotiation in accordance with its national regulations, its collective agreement (if there is one) and in a satisfactory manner for all. This is something difficult, since when decisions are made by force majeure, it is not possible to keep everyone happy.



font: World Football Summit 2019



3. - Due to COVID-19 competitions are being suspended. Others, like the Eurocup, have been postponed to the summer of 2021. What is your opinion on this and regarding the changes that are happening?

What I am going to say is that the most important thing right now is health, and any decision in sport must respect and follow any national and international health guidelines. We have to protect the players and of all those who participate in competitions. Therefore, we should not fear that competitions will be canceled, suspended or postponed, since once the world finds any strategy to stop the virus and solve this problem, **football will provide solutions, as always.**

I am also going to mention the measures that are being taken and those that will come from international football organizations. In my experience, when an international organization such as FIFA or a confederation such as UEFA, as well as national federations, makes a decision in times of crisis, it has always previously explored all the possibilities, because these types of institutions look to the general interest and not the individual. Therefore, if the proposals to

reschedule calendars, competitions or other consequences of COVID-19 come from the aforementioned organizations, a general interest is presumed, much more than the proposals that may come from the clubs themselves, since these will be looking mostly for their particular interest in the competition.

Finally and on this point, I would like to add that **from a crisis, an opportunity always arises, and we have seen this in previous dramatic situations in which football has never being left out.** The problems that humanity has had, after overcoming crises, wars or diseases in any part of the world, have always left us the consequences of positive changes in society. From COVID-19, there will be consequences, not just words. We work better together under an international organization and with a common purpose.

4. - You participated creating the reserve funds within both FIFA and UEFA. We are now seeing how important these types of measures are. With this in mind, let's talk a little about the economic impact of COVID-19 on global football:

Yes, **when I was an executive in these institutions I always voted in favor of these reserve** funds, in order to be able to economically cover complex situations that may happen in the future. If you had not had these reserves, how could you cope with a delay in international competitions?

In relation with the national federations, they can have serious economic problems if they do not have a provident fund and they cannot compete at the national team level in the European and world championships, which are the ones that generate the biggest resources for these entities. For example, the greatest income for FIFA and UEFA comes from the World Cup and the Eurocup. With this incomes they can cover not only the organization, but its entire structure, programs and what is more important, the rest of competitions, whether male or female. It is not within the normality that a Eurocup is not played. The same happens with the Olympic Games. But we are seeing that it is something that can actually happen and that is why forecasting is essential.

Therefore, my concern comes if these types of competitions are not held. If a team does not compete, it does not generate any income from television rights, advertising nor sponsorship, which are the basics to keep the national federations alive. The possibility of competing behind closed doors may be an alternative, which will undoubtedly give sponsors the right to renegotiate contracts.

As for the clubs, some are resorting to flexibility measures such as the temporary employment regulation file (ERTE). Others are negotiating with their players and coaching staff, reaching fruitful agreements. The problem of the Spanish clubs, and practically in the whole world, is that you live daily from what is generated by television rights, sponsorships, ticketing or subscriptions. It is for this reason that negotiation and taking consensual measures and always being transparent is essential at this time.



5. - One of the possibilities on the table for this season is to play behind closed doors. Would you rather wait and let the fans return when it is safe or play behind closed doors?

The ideal scenario is to finish the leagues. But when? Does it have to be this year? We must also bear in mind that to start competing you have to start training at a good level, and right now we are starting to see the beginning of that path, with some top European teams starting to train again. We should not rush. **Football without fans does not look like football, but it does not depend on me, but on the health authorities.** There is the key. The “normal” thing in professional football is watching full stands, but since there is no normality, perhaps we should study other kind of extraordinary solutions. Likewise, in non-professional football, fans are also a fundamental part.



6. - Any positive thought that you can mention coming from this COVID-19 global crisis?

Yes, my main conclusion is that football is supportive. We are seeing this solidarity in multiple ways: the RFEF launched different initiatives, direct aid to the clubs, awareness campaigns. They also made the facilities of the Spanish National Team available to the authorities so that health personnel can rest. In what it comes to players, there have been large donations by professional stars such as Leo Messi. More than 40 players from the First Iberdrola (woman's league) created the platform #JuntasVenceremos to raise money for the acquisition of medical equipment. Numerous athletes have become nurses, doctors, police, health personnel. The clubs are also helping and there are numerous examples: Futbol Club Barcelona collaborating with the Health Department of the Generalitat, Real Betis Balompié turned its car park into a masks factory, Real Madrid made their Santiago Bernabéu a large medical equipment supply center, and Athletic Club, my team, contributed with a donation in favor of Osakidetza during the first days of the health crisis. A gesture that was also publicly recognized by the Basque Health Service. And there are so many more cases, not only from professional football but also

from non-professional football. These stories fill us with satisfaction.

The conclusion is that the world of football is being working as a team to face this problem. In other industries there are many actions, but sometimes they are individual. I would have liked to see a unification. The football family as a whole contributes something as a collective group, in addition to what it is contributing individually. We must not forget that prior to the pandemic, FIFA, UEFA, as well as the other confederations, have always contributed. Players, referees, coaches and managers are also solidarity groups. The world of football has always been in solidarity.

We must learn for the future that someone has to lead that good heart that the football community and put the ideas in order.

7. - How do you see the football industry after the COVID-19 crisis?

It will take time but we will return to normality. But I consider that we can learn from this situation, since **football as universal phenomenon can contribute by providing global ideas** and concepts to help the society to deal with potential new similar crisis with more agility and immediacy. It is important and very valuable that football contributes to society. For this reason, I support all the measures aimed at strengthening sport in our country or economic recovery through football by the national institutions that run our sport in Spain.

8. - Finally, do you believe that the way of consuming football is going to change?

There will be change if we want there to be. If we are aware and learn from it, there will be positive changes. We will improve. I would personally not like to change the traditional way of consuming football. I understand and share that everything can tend to something more digital, but we must not lose the essence. When I was a player, I have always liked to be watched. When I was a child and I was playing on the street or in the schoolyard, there were people who stopped to see how we played. If there was a good player, people stopped to see him. The origin and the true talent of football is there: on the street, in the schoolyard, in the parks. And from that point on, we have created a great family throughout the world, with international and national organizations, teaching values to children and young people, creating jobs, and bringing joy and enthusiasm to millions of fans.

fuelle: World Football Summit 2019



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ANGEL MARÍA VILLAR

Presented by WORLD FOOTBALL SUMMIT

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Por: Juan Antonio Sánchez

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Just when we thought the 21st century pandemic would be obesity, the COVID-19 appeared. The virus has really paralyzed the world and has driven us apart.

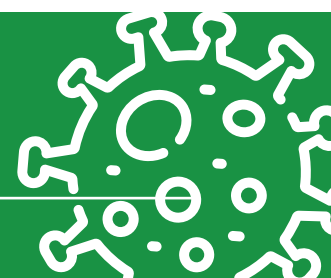
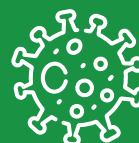
The word "uncertainty" is one of the most widely used words in the sports industry. Thousands of competitions and events around the world have been postponed or cancelled, one after the other, generating a "domino effect". A lot of dates proposals for the realization of these competitions are rounding in the air, but nothing can guarantee that they will finally take place with normality. No big event has been able to avoid this situation.

Without a doubt, it is time to rethink in order to establish new strategies that will let us recover as soon as possible. It will be very important to see how the sports managers will approach these different scenarios considering that the things are changing day after day. New training sessions methods, competitions, transfers of athletes, and how the

teammates interact nowadays are aspects that have already changed.

Adaptability will determine the continuity of many projects. But you don't have to fear the change. You have to face it as an opportunity to try those things that once raised but were rejected without any analysis that justifies it.

The change in the competition model in soccer, both professional and amateur, is practically a reality this season. Systems as Playoffs, single-elimination playoffs, or the realization of unique a competition event to decide the winner of the season are some of the formulas chosen in the sports industry to determine its champions. However, beyond thinking that this situation is something extraordinary, perhaps a door will open to find more exciting, interesting and spectacular competitions in the future.





In a few months, we will face some circumstances that we have never thought about in our lives. For example, celebrating tournament finals that will take place once the new season has already started. Is that a problem? NO. What should prevail now is being fast in what it comes to proposing solutions and executing them to minimize losses.

In the amateur sports world, where you normally pay and don't get paid for practicing, this hard blow comes with another meaning. The boys and girls can no longer come and enjoy their teammates in every training. The same happens to 2^oB footballers. Their practice has been reduced to nothing. Lack of resources, both during the quarantine period as in the "post", makes complicated the situation for small clubs with tight budgets and designed for each single season.

However, there is some hope coming from public and private institutions, not only for amateur football but also for the entire national sport. The Foundation Spain Global Sport (attached to the General Administration of the State) will be involved in this reconstruction process. Also the Royal Spanish Football Federation, the Professional Football League and the rest Spanish sports federations. In short, the country's sports muscle (Real Decree-law 15/2020, of April 21, of complementary urgent measures for supporting the economy and employment).

In this context, the blurred Iberian candidacy for the **2030 World Cup** takes on great relevance. This joint proposal with our Portuguese neighbors must become in an engine that reactivates the economy not only of the host cities but of all the National territory. Without forgetting that these mega events have other positive impacts, as much or more important than the economic ones. This has a great value to the country and that, in the same way, will affect the host cities: in the social sphere (programs to promote sports activities and a healthy culture within the population), in the cultural (enhancement of heritage) or in the environmental (sustainable projects). It is also important to mention that every action developed in the host cities will stay there forever (infrastructure).

In conclusion, we are facing an unpredictable horizon where the bases are changing every day depending on "something" not yet fully controlled. An analysis by sports managers that contemplates different scenarios and that raises innovative ideas to adapt to different circumstances, are some of the strategies we can consider in response to this situation.

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FIFA GUIDELINES TO ADDRESS LEGAL CONSEQUENCES OF COVID-19

By: José Francisco Redondo

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The health and social emergency situation caused by the worldwide expansion of COVID-19, popularly known as “Coronavirus”, has hit the sports industry, and especially the world of football. The current situation, in which the vast majority of competitions are paralyzed, has caused many legal questions about how the situation will be like once the competitions can be restarted. There will certainly be some changes.

To try to shed some light on these issues, a working group created by FIFA dedicated to “*analyzing the need to apply amendments or temporary exemptions from compliance with the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (hereinafter, RETJ) to safeguard the contracts of the football players and the clubs, as well as to adapt the periods of registration of players*”, has made a series of considerations on three issues of

special interest on the contractual stability of the players coming from the suspension of competitions due to the COVID-19. These considerations are included in a document published by FIFA itself on April 7, 2020 through its Circular 1714 and called “*COVID 19. Football regulatory issues. Version 1.0*”

Below is a summary of the main guidelines approved, which FIFA both hopes and expects will be followed around the world.

Expiring agreements and new agreements

The definitions section of the RSTP and FIFA defines a “season” as “the period starting with the first official match of the relevant national league championship and ending with the last official match of the relevant national league championship”. However, despite the breadth of the definition given, each member federation has the obligation to indicate through the TMS, the FIFA transfer correlation system, the exact start and end date of the season in its competitions. They usually go from July 1 to June 30 of the following year, which, in the current perspective, can be a problem.

This will naturally cause the original start date of the next season to be impacted. Issues thus arise where:

- Employment agreements are due to expire at the original end date of the season.
- Loan transfer agreements (and related employment agreements) are due to expire at the original end date of the season.
- (Permanent and loan) transfer agreements (and related employment agreements) are due to commence at the original start date of the next season; and expiring agreements and new agreements.
- Employment agreements are due to commence at the original start date of the next season.



In connection with these situations, FIFA proposes some guiding principles:

I. Where an agreement is due to expire at the original end date of a season, such expiry be extended until the new end date of the season.

II. Where an agreement is due to commence at the original start date of a new season, such commencement be delayed until the new start date of a new season.

III. In the event of overlapping seasons and/or registration periods, and unless all parties agree otherwise, priority be given to the former club to complete their season with their original squad, in order to safeguard the integrity of a domestic league, MA competition and continental competition.

In what it comes to international transfers, FIFA says:

“Notwithstanding the recommended amendment to agreement dates, any payment that contractually falls due prior to the new commencement date of an agreement should be delayed until the new start date of a new season or its first registration period”

In conclusion, FIFA is committed to maintaining the status of players’ employment contracts until the effective end of the season, regardless of the date on which this occurs.

Agreement than cannot be performed as the parties originally anticipated

At this point, FIFA is aware of the possibility that the situation caused by COVID-19 does not allow the parties to fulfill their commitments under the same conditions agreed upon prior to the pandemic, as it is possible that *“players and coaches will be unable to work, and clubs will be unable to provide work”*.

If this situation occurs, FIFA establishes guidelines to resolve them. In the first place, clubs and employees (players and coaches) be strongly encouraged to work together to find appropriate collective agreements on a club or league basis regarding employment conditions for any period where the competition is suspended due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Such agreements should address, without limitation: remuneration (where applicable salary deferrals and/or limitation, protection mechanisms, etc.) and other benefits, government aid programmes, conditions during contract extensions, etc.

Where the relevant social partners exist, agreement should be reached within CBA structures or another collective agreement mechanism. Unilateral decisions to vary agreements will only be recognised where they are made in accordance with national law or are permissible within CBA structures or another collective agreement mechanism.

To end this section, FIFA has a final recommendation on the employment contracts of club employees, which *“must should be “suspended” during any suspension of competitions (i.e. suspension of football activities), provided proper insurance coverage is maintained, and adequate alternative income support arrangements can be found for employees during the period in question”*.



Registration periods (“transfer windows”)

In this case, FIFA mentioned the article 6 paragraph 1 of the RSTP mandates that players may only be registered during one of the two annual registration periods fixed by the relevant MA (colloquially known as “transfer windows”). Associations must fix registration periods and request to amend, extend, or cancel registration periods.

In view of the current situation, on a case-by-case basis following analysis by the FIFA administration while bearing in mind global coordination, it is proposed that:

I. All requests for an extension of the current season finishing date be approved;

II. All requests to extend or amend registration periods that have already commenced be approved, provided

that their duration complies with the maximum limit (i.e. 16 weeks) established in the RSTP.

III. All requests to amend or postpone registration periods that have not commenced be approved, provided that their duration complies with the maximum limit (i.e. 16 weeks) established in the RSTP.

IV. MAs be permitted to amend season dates and/or registration periods, either within TMS or by otherwise notifying FIFA; and as an exception to article 6 paragraph 1 of the RSTP, a professional whose contract has expired or been terminated as a result of COVID-19 has the right to be registered by an association outside a registration period, regardless of the date of expiry or termination.

All of the above must be addressed without prejudice to the individual study of each case.

Other regulatory matters

Aside from the core matters dealt with by the specific guidelines set out above, the working group identified other additional regulatory issues which will require a decision from FIFA:

- Clubs are not obliged to release their registered players to association teams.

If a club agrees to release a registered player to an association team, the player may decline the call-up.

- Any such decisions shall not be subject to disciplinary measures.

-If a player is unable to resume duty with their club by

the relevant deadline due to COVID-19, the association and/or the player shall not be subject to any future restrictions or disciplinary measures.

- The following international windows are subject to this decision: 23-31 March 2020 (men’s international match calendar), 6-15 April 2020 (women’s international match calendar), 6-15 April 2020 (futsal international match calendar).

On 6 April 2020, the same decision was rendered by the Bureau regarding the next international window in June 2020 (1-9 June 2020, men’s international match calendar – 1-10 June 2020, women’s international match calendar).

Conclusion

The document published by FIFA is undoubtedly of great value, since despite being only a first version, it does help clubs, national associations and the rest of their interest groups to have a guide on how the events should unfold before the inevitable late completion of the 2019/2020 season.

Regarding labor measures, it should be noted that the provisions of the reference document regarding contractual stability are merely recommendations, since FIFA does not have the capacity to intervene in labor contracts between the clubs and their employees, which are private in nature.

However, it is a fact that FIFA (through the member associations) is in charge of establishing the dates of the transfer windows. FIFA will not be able to compel a player who has signed with another club for the 2020/2021 season or whose bond ends on June 30, 2020, to continue playing with his club until the end of 2019/2020, but can prevent him be registered with your new club until the market reopens. FIFA cannot compel a club to renew a player's commitment that expires on June 30, 2020 until the end of the season, but it will prevent him from registering new players.

As for the other measures, they show FIFA's great commitment to allowing competitions to resume, as well as great sensitivity in understanding the different scenarios that will occur due to the pandemic, modifying some points of its regulations in order to help all players in the world of football to adapt to the new reality.

FIFA®





Interview

Coerver Coaching

Interviewer: FutboJobs

Alf Galustian, is co-founder of Coerver Coaching, a respected global football education platform, which has helped improving thousands of players and coaches around the world.

He has worked as a coach trainer, and is widely known in the world of football for his tireless efforts to improve the level of trainings.

He has also worked as a teacher in the courses to be an academy manager offered by English FA, and as a technical advisor for the Premier League. Of the 20 clubs currently playing in the Premier League, Alf has worked with 15 of them empowering their coaches. He has also worked with prestigious clubs such as Real Madrid, Manchester City and Juventus.

1. - Thank you very much for taking this time and speaking with us. We will start with Alf talking about the method, so that later Ramiro and Rodrigo will explain us the Coerver micro franchise program in Spain.

Alf, how did Coerver Coaching started?

When we were working in the United States in 1983, we witnessed in Philadelphia a clinic by the Dutch coach Wiel Coerveron about the development of young players. His philosophy left us speechless. Coerver considers that, in the first formative years, individual development is more important than team development.

At the time, we had a camp in New York. We contacted Wiel to discuss the possibility of calling it Camp Coerver. He loved the idea. Wiel never wanted to get involved in the business, so we had to buy the rights from Wiel to be able to use his name exclusively. It was then in 1984 when we founded Coerver Coaching.

During these 36 years of Coerver Coaching, the content and method we use has evolved dramatically.

I believe that my arrival in the Premier League in 2010 as a technical advisor was an acknowledgment of how successful the Coerver Program has been in player development.

2. - You have mentioned your work with the Premier League a moment ago, could you describe a bit more your participation in the “Elite Player Performance” Program, developing the grassroots football of professional clubs?

After the 2010 World Cup, where England did very poorly, the Premier League launched the Elite Performance Player Program, better known as EPPP.

A comprehensive audit was conducted to try to improve the next generation of players (it costed millions of pounds). They found out that, despite having probably one of the best leagues in the world, England and the United Kingdom were not producing high-level technical players.

After that audit, I was called by the Premier League as its technical advisor and teacher for the 2010/11 season. My mission was to conduct a series of

coaching training courses, focused on individual technical improvement, involving grassroots coaches from all clubs.

An interesting statistic they gave me was that 68% of the players in the Premier League were foreigners. At the same time, 83% of the players considered "creative" or those able to "win games on their own" were foreigners.

My recommendation to the Premier League was that we needed to answer three key questions before implementing a technical program: what to teach, how to teach, and when to teach. I adapted the Coerver training program to work with them.

3. - What exactly do these three questions mean? And do the answers to them change depending on the country?

The first question is “what”. Here we are talking about the content that we are going to teach. It is about exercises and games. At Coerver we have created thousands of exercises and games during these 36 years to satisfy both grassroots and elite players.

In the development of young players, especially between 8 and 12 years old, there is not much difference in exercises and games between what a player from a “modest” club does and what an elite player does. I don’t like the word “elite”, but I can’t find another one. Understanding that elite players are young footballers in professional clubs.

The second question is the “how”; the applied teaching method. There is often confusion between exercise and method. This part focuses on communication skills; what to say and when to say it. A coach is a person who can help a player to solve a problem and improve whatever he needs. This requires experience, knowledge of the game and paying attention to details.

The third question is “when”; here we will consider age and level as factors.

At Coerver we follow the traditional European professional leagues. However, we have created programs for many professional clubs in Europe and also Asia.

For us there are 4 age groups to work on the development of the players: from 5 to 7 years old, those from 8 to 11 years old, those from 12 to 16 years old and those from 17 to 21 years old.

If we focus on the group of players aged 17-21, until a few years ago in England, many did not think that this was a stage of development. In other countries where I have worked, such as Italy, Brazil, Germany and France, it was still an age of development. In England we think that development takes place mainly until 17 (speaking of technical and not physical development). This difference has always been a bit strange for me.





Obviously, the coach who trains children from 5 to 7 years old is not going to be the same person who trains those from 17 to 21 years old. I think many coaches talk about skills and technical development, where I feel that they should probably be evaluating what happens in each age group to adapt how that technical development should work. Children under 12 are certainly a critical group. However, that is not the only important age of development. Each stage must follow consistency in content and philosophy.

I believe that Coerver Coaching has played a very important role in the development of the under-12 group, and is becoming increasingly important in the 13 to 16 group.

Children under 12 years old are in the “golden age phase” for learning, and it is absolutely essential. But when you talk about developing future professional players, in my opinion, the ages at which I have the opportunity to say that a player can become a professional are between 12 and 16. I have rarely seen a player under the age of 11 who you could predict that was going to be a professional in the future. Maybe it's just my opinion, but I've worked in 17 national federations and more than 50 professional clubs around the world. When they are 12 to 16 years old, you may see a superior player for the future, but it is really with the 17 to 21 years old players (once physical development is complete) that you can predict they are going to succeed or not in the future.



4. - The next question is about futsal. Successful national teams practice it in the grassroots categories so that young players acquire more technical skills and can use them i on the traditional XI football field. What do you think about this?

To be honest, until I went to Japan I knew little about futsal. After working for more than 5 years with my colleagues from Spain, I have learned a lot due to the incredible knowledge that Spanish coaches have about “futsal”. They know how to integrate both sports at an early age. I knew about small space games. We all grew up playing similar games in England, but futsal is different. One of the components of futsal is the reduced space.

These conditions are very important for the development of the players. At Coerver Coaching, we have 150 facilities in Japan, and most are futsal courts.

My personal opinion is that it is a great sport, compatible at an early age with football. But at some

point you may have to decide if you want to be a futsal or a football player. The ball is heavier and remains on the ground. Practicing futsal is absolutely beneficial when it comes to improving technique, but it also involves many more touches per player when controlling the ball. Of course it will improve technical skills. It will also help you to make faster decisions, since in futsal there is less time to think.

Although I think futsal is a great game to play and also to train, I think that at some point you will have decide what type of player you want to be and what sport you want to focus on. It would certainly encourage more players and coaches to get involved with futsal because it really is a fantastic game.

5. - Are there any cultural aspects that you have learned that are important for the football development of a country?

I can only speak from my personal experience. For me, Japan was a great cultural influence. The first thing that caught my attention was the respect shown in the relationship between the coach and the player. As you know, when you meet someone in Japan, the depth of reverence is an indicator of a person's level of respect. In Japan, the coach is considered as a very respected person.

When I grew up in Europe, the coach was generally a former player. Some were good coaches, some were not, but I don't think they had the same level of respect. I'm trying to remember some of my early coaches, and to be honest I can't remember many inspiring influences. But that's the way we grew up and we have to accept it.

Japan is different. I have worked sporadically at Arsenal for 16 years, and Arsene Wenger has often told me about his time in Japan. He spoke of Japanese precision in time management, his work ethic, diet, and discipline. All of these Japanese cultural values had a profound influence on me as a football lover and coach.

The other thing I learned in Japan was the importance of long-term planning. Prepare for the long term and not just for the short term. When I went to Japan in '93, the J-League had just started, but they had a long-term vision, and they continued with it. Today they are an outstanding football nation, especially if we observe the success of their national teams, both male and female (FIFA World Cup champions).

6. - Thanks Alf, it has been a real pleasure to have you with us. We are going to continue the interview with Ramiro Montesinos, one of the managers of Coerver Spain to understand a little more about the project in our country. Ramiro, how does Coerver works in Spain?

First of all I want to thank you for the opportunity to have this interview in such an interesting place as this magazine. We started 5 years ago acquiring the method rights to develop the project in Spain and with the aim of launching a micro-franchise program to offer coaches the opportunity to transform their passion into their profession. To do this, we selected 50 people from our closest environment to develop the different Coerver programs for players, coaches and clubs. In this way, managed to receive the necessary feedback to create our franchise programs, adapting to what grassroots football needs in our country in everything related to the development of technical skills. We also care about what our potential franchisees need.



7. - What are the main professional profiles required by a company like yours?

Basically any coach who loves football, who likes to work with children and wants to undertake a project that can become his part-time or full-time job.

If the question is focused on what minimum qualification we require, the answer is that it depends on multiple factors. Each application is analyzed individually and a personal interview is conducted. A UEFA PRO licensed coach with a lot of coaching experience may be the profile we are looking for, but a diploma / bachelor's degree in primary education with a football monitor degree and little experience can also be a perfect profile. One will know more about football and less about learning theories and the other the opposite. Both can fit. It is the responsibility of the program to train such people to provide the information and the knowledge that our method requires.

8. - And what do you offer them?

To resume, we offer them everything they need in terms of technical training, business development training (both initial and ongoing), personal care support, marketing and communication departments, graphic designers, franchise management CRM, exercise databases, schedules for events, registration portal, online product sales, national and international events, etc... My summary was too long, haha. In short, we offer them everything they need to start the business and the corresponding advice to develop it and make it successful in the place that they carry it out. It is best to take a look at the FAQs section of our website www.vivedelfutbol.com or write us to franquicias@coerver.es

9. - So, seeing everything you offer and knowing a little about the sector and how valuable the brand is in itself, acquiring an official Coerver franchise will be quite expensive, right?

Not at all, our program is from micro-franchises. It is a model that seeks self-employment and not overload the economy of anyone who wants to start this project. With less than a thousand euros you can start operating and generate an income with your own Coerver franchise.



10. - Well Rodrigo, your turn has come. Something else before we say goodbye?

Thank you. Yes, of course. I would like to clarify that we are not a company that sells franchises in the traditional sense. We do not charge € 8,000-10,000 to start and then we forget about you. We are dedicated to developing franchises together with our franchisees. It is useless to charge a lot of money at the beginning to a person who is interested and after some time the person just leaves because they are not successful and also feel cheated. Remember that we have an international prestige worked for more than 36 years that forces us to be successful. We operate in

a different way, since our success and benefit is that our franchisees stay with us for many years and create prosperous businesses that are established as a reference in their countries. In the end, even though we are a brand that sells franchises, we are a company that what we are really looking for is to create a team and develop a business with it. The 50 people who have been with us for 5 years now are a proof what I am saying.

11. - What importance do you give to job platforms such as FutbolJobs to attract those possible profiles?

Honestly, when we knew about the work you were doing shortly after your launch, we thought it was a great idea that was covering an existing need. Bringing together companies like ours with clubs and any entity that requires players, coaches, physical trainers, and other professionals in the sector, is

remarkable. We are glad that the FutbolJobs initiative has been a success and continues to grow, giving a fundamental service that nobody else does. It is, without a doubt, a spectacular idea which I recommend to every professional looking for an opportunity in the industry.

11. - Thank you friends of Coerver Coaching. Today we learned a lot about your method and how it is working in Spain

You can get more information about Coerver Coaching and its franchise program by visiting their websites: www.coerver.es and www.vivedelfutbol.com

In addition, you can also follow them through

Facebook: @CoerverCoachingSpain
Instagram: CoerverSpain
Twitter: @CoerverSpain



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COACHING



GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL IN SMALL ACADEMIES: HOW DOES THAT LOOKS LIKE?

By: Ilie Andrei

**What aspects should we take into account when preparing a season?
Once the preseason is underway in a "small" academy, we will have to take care of
several aspects to be able to work as professionally as possible.**

1 The play style we are going to chose.

1.1 What is my play style?

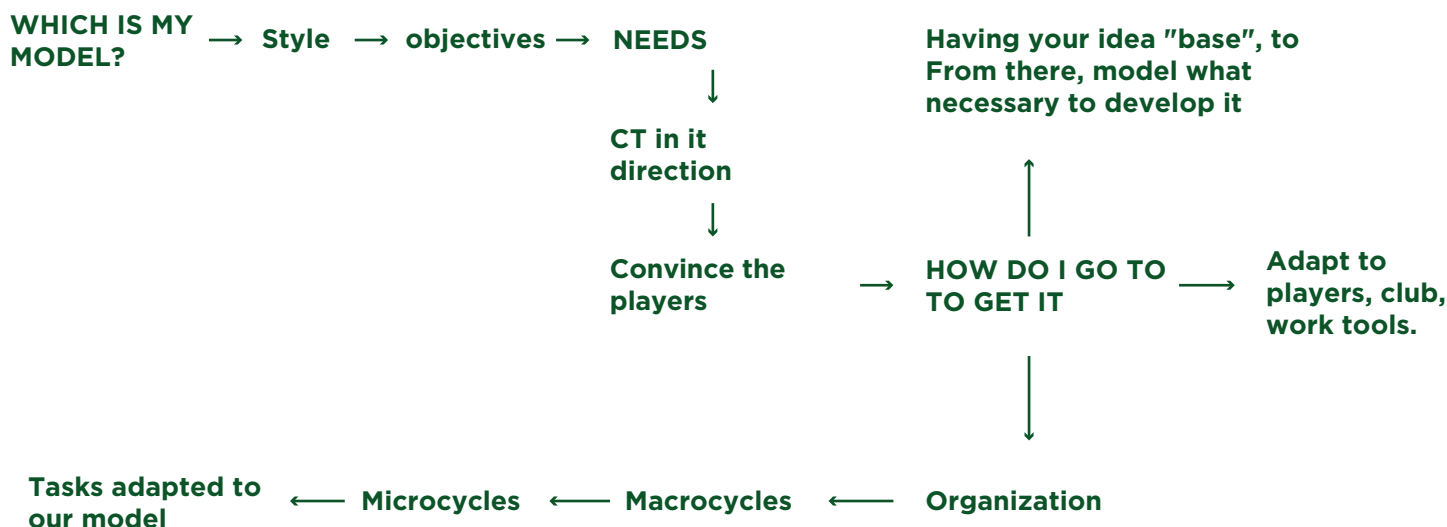
The first thing we need to do is make clear what play style we are going to chose and work with: defensive, offensive, tiki taka, direct, etc. It is also important to understand where we are: the club, his history, players. Once we take the decision, we will set some goals to achieve.

1.2 Do we have a staff or are we on our own?

It is complicated to have a coaching staff when it comes to small academies. Even if we are talking about 2 professionals. But it is clear that the job becomes easier if more people is involved.

1.3 Once we have an idea, we have to develop it

Are we opened to new ideas and changes or we close the doors to the world and we just work on our idea? I believe we have to absorb our philosophy and make it clear, but have to adapt ourselves to the circumstances. For example, to the players we are going to coach.



2 The amount of players we have and how many of them come to every training session.

The important question: *how many players am I going to have today?*

First Case: A have a complete team, but once the season goes on I find myself training 8-10 player in a 11 football field. Why does this happen in small academies?

The most common excuses are:

- *I don't have time to get there.*
- *My parents can't take me.*
- *I'm going on a trip.*
- *I'm not feeling well today.*

It is difficult to determine whose fault it is in these cases. The club's for not setting rules? From the coach for not fixing them? Or the parents, who see the academy as an ordinary activity, in which the child pays and trains when he feels like it? It is an after-school activity that is not mandatory. I pay, I decide. Many times the parents do not care about the rest of the players, the club and the technical staff who dedicate

their time so that the training sessions are the best as possible. There is no commitment. Why when they are in a quarry of a major club nobody is missing? Parents consider that by being in prestigious quarries they will have a guaranteed future. But that is a mistake, since many actual top players came from small town academies, thanks to their interest, their dedication and the sacrifice from their families.

The results are always important. When a team is winning, everyone trains, whether it's cold, hot, rainy or snowy. But it is not the same when the team is losing. That is the moment when we need to be united so that we can work together and look for any solution to change the situation. This is the hardest part of the work as a coach: convincing them to keep coming and telling the players that by working we will get better and, most importantly, that this will be useful to them as lesson.

Second case: When my team is already reduced in amount of players and then the winter comes, with cold, rains, exams and vacations. I find myself with only have 5 players, both in football 8 and football 11.

What do we do in this case? How many exercises do we have to prepare? In my case I have always prepared a plan for the ideal scenario where the team is complete, and an alternative one in the case I count with a reduced amount of players. Parents do not call us to notify that they are not taking they child to the training camp and that is the main reason why you cannot anticipate of how you are going to work during your session.

Why do we keep this type of teams? Well, honestly, I think it is an economic issue more than anything else. When you keep such a short team it is so that your rival club does not take the best players away from you. But it also true that you cannot provide a professional service. Players fail to improve in a group context. You can see the progress in what it comes to technical skills , since trainings become individual classes. Player's technique is greatly improved. At the end you have to be resourceful to get the boys motivated. You have to keep their attention. Being a coach is also knowing how to motivate even if the conditions are not the ideals.

3 The time we have for trainings

How much time do we have to train and what is the actual effective training time?

Depending on the club, the amount of teams there are and the material that we have, we can analyze different situations.

If we have 1h15 of training, it does not mean that we will be using all the time. It happens in many cases that some players are late. If training starts at 8:00 p.m., some parents believe that their kids have to be at the academy at that time. When arriving, they have to get change and we lose time. If the team who is training before you has not yet finished because they are completing a very important exercise, you have to wait. If we enter the field at 20:00, there are always 5-10 minutes of talks and jokes, or sometimes there is a parent who wants a chat with you. Therefore, at the end we have 50 minutes of training. Between the warm-up, the explanation of the activities and the beginning, you have 35 real minutes to train. It's enough? I do not think so. And this is a case in which we have 1h15, but in other academies they only have 1 hour.



4 How to prepare the training exercises with all the inconvenient situations we described before?

When preparing the tasks, we will take into account our identity, play style, club identity, players profile, number of players, material we have, dimensions of the field we have to train, coaching staff and functions of each of us within the tasks to be performed.

We will try to prepare exercises where all the players are involved, trying to keep them moving during the entire session. We look for exercises that are adapted to the team level, trying to keep the children active at all times.

As I said before, you need to have alternative plans when it comes to training sessions. It can

always happen that some players are not available. Maybe the club asks you to change the field to a reduced one. There are several situations that can affect your work.

What is the positive aspect of this? That we can improve our capacity to adapt to different circumstances. We can offer multiple training models and also being able to improvise when is required. Is it good to improvise and not carry everything as planned? Yes. The ability to modify, create and adapt during a training session is something positive. It will allow you to keep growing and developing your career as a coach.


5 Final conclusions

What difficulties do we face?

Coaching Staff: Unfavorable economic situation. With what we earn in grassroots football we barely pay for gasoline. Therefore, we do this more for love than for money. Even if you have just a little, they expect you to give “something” to them. How much can you offer? That is where the problem comes and that is when many clubs or coaches take advantage of those who are finishing their coaching degrees: “this is just an internship and you pay them if you want to, but it is not necessary”. How long can a coach resist in a situation like this? In my case, it has been 3 hard years.

What facilities does the club has to develop your model? Do they have a play style fixed for the academy? Do we have all the necessary material? Do we have 30 old balls, 20 cones and 15 bibs for the entire academy? Or do they actually have all that I need to perform at my best as a coach? Are all the players coming to train?

Being a coach is not easy. But you have to keep motivated.



THE INFLUENCE OF THE PANDEMIC IN THE PSYCHOLOGICAL PART OF THE GAME

By: Manuel Salgado

It may seem frivolous from me to talk about football and psychological factors at a time when millions of people are living a hard situation because of the coronavirus pandemic.

However, I consider that if we want to begin to recover part of our previous lives, this sport is an essential part of the world of many people. Of course, at different levels, including psychological. And I'm not just talking about athletes.

Football in all its categories and in most leagues (except for some inexplicable exceptions) has been suspended for more than a month.

Football, like any other job, has had to overcome the same process as other professional sectors, in order to prevent this pandemic from becoming bigger and even more dangerous.

After the recognized success of this quarantine, it is time to assess how and when the “normality” will resume. In that sense, football is very particular in terms of the number of people around it and the risk of infections that this implies. For example, those matches in Bergamo or London still resonate as supposed centers of the pandemic and biological bombs.

While writing this article, on April 22, the details of the return to competition, or the pending schedule in First and Second Division, are still not known with certainty; however, the remaining leagues in Spain have been cancelled and won't come back until the start of the 20/21 season.

In reference to the objective of returning to that normality so mentioned, the protagonists are varied. The clubs, the RFEF, the AFE, La Liga and the Televisions, without forgetting the most important: **the football players**. They are the ones who really gamble a lot, in every way, especially when it comes to their health.

I want to focus on this group to analyze how the quarantine may have affected them, in what state they arrive to resume the competition, what is the price they will have to pay to play during the pandemic, what fears they may have regarding their physical integrity and how to protect their families, and how they will handle uncertainties regarding their future for the coming season. We will study these points from the perspective of Sports Psychology, also bringing in my experience in Clinical Psychology.

Returning to the psychological aspects, we must highlight several elements of interest, which I previously referred in the article:

- **How the quarantine will have affected them.** This will depend on every personal situation, considering other elements in turn, such as: where and with whom they are sharing the isolation, what contracts bind them to their clubs, whether or not they were injured before the break, and even the family relationship they have at home. Seen this way, it is complex to extract a general vision of how it will affect all the players (there are more than 700). It wouldn't be very professional.
- **In what condition will they come back to the competition.** Insisting on my intention not to confuse you with generalities, I do consider that most will come with a lot of motivation, wanting to resume the routine, in which physical exercise is an important part of it. Here I must point out to those players who express more doubts regarding the security to resume the matches, since they can present episodes of anxiety as the day marked to resume the competition approaches.
- **What price will they pay for playing during the pandemic.** HThere is one aspect that particularly worries me: the increased risk of injury due to sustained inactivity, excessive weekly competition and stress due to fear of being infected, or because they are uncertain about their professional future. I hope I'm wrong, but it is very likely to record a greater number of cases of injuries, especially muscle injuries.

If you read any media, you will find different opinions within the players themselves, in relation to all aspects to consider in this reconstruction phase. There is a debate about the frequency of matches, the number of substitutions, the protection health measures, the attendance or not of the fans, and when the deadline should be to finish the season (considering here the weather as a really important handicap).

The football organizations must listen the players and their different opinions. They certainly don't want to pick a date to restart competitions and then having players refusing to play.



• **How ERTE's will be handled and the doubts about the contracts for the 20/21 season.** Regarding this last point, as I said before, not everyone will be in the same situation. The majority will have a contract beyond the next season, so it will be a factor that will have less impact on their psychological stability. Regarding the incidence of fair cuts, I understand that the finances of elite footballers are strong and stable enough to withstand a short period of cuts in their salaries, without thereby neglecting the personal situation of their families.

• **What will be involved in playing games behind closed doors.** Perhaps you think this is the less important thing. Some training sessions are carried out behind closed doors on many occasions. Or perhaps you consider that it will be a factor to consider only for teams with very supportive fans that have an important role during a match. The reality is that the presence of spectators supposes an extra motivation for all the protagonists involved in a match, even the referees themselves.

- For being truly committed you need to feel the atmosphere. The vibes coming from the public is a necessary plus, which gives the players the energy to spend more than an hour and a half pushing their bodies and minds to the limit

- Therefore, the absence of the public is a handicap. For example, NBA players have refused to play if people cannot be in the stands.



• **How they will manage doubts about the risk of catching the virus and infecting their families.** This scenario is new for everyone as returning to our jobs. Therefore, it is also for football players. Surely they will receive all kinds of recommendations. They must follow protection protocols, all of which should bring them some security. Many are proposing to avoid typical pre-match hotel concentrations so that risks are reduced by not being with their teammates.

Now, these protocols will not generate the same calm for everyone, since being a footballer does not mean being apprehensive. Some players can suffer from hypochondria, which would represent big anxiety situations, with the consequent repercussion on all levels, not just in sports performance.

What thoughts will go through the minds of some footballers?

"Will I return as well as before the pandemic?", "Will the coach continue to trust me?", "Will the club call me to renew my contract?", "Will I be sure not to infect myself and my family ? ", " How can I take a shower in the locker room or celebrate a goal?".

Going back to the beginning, it is clear that some people believe that the world is not going to stop if football does not return until September. However, it is not about the world stopping or not, but to make our planet a place similar to what we had before the COVID-19, in an improved version if possible, or even better.

Remember that a psychologist helps you to be and feel better, in any aspect of your life.



Interview

David Sciama

Interviewer: FutboJobs

1. - How and why did the Coaches' Voice project come about? Who are the people who put it in motion?

I set up The Coaches' Voice with my partner **Peter Kenyon**, the former CEO of **Chelsea** and **Manchester United**. We believe that coaches are at the centre of the game and felt there was an opportunity to develop something that didn't exist – a place for coaches to come and talk about their ideas, their

strategies and their experiences in an environment they could trust. The coaches who have been on the site (and those who haven't) have incredible insights to give and, after everything I read or watch on the platform, I understand a little bit more about football.

2. - It's a two years journey. Do you think The Coaches' Voice has changed the way people perceive coaches and their job?

I can't speak for anyone else, but I have been fascinated by the range of coaching styles, philosophies and tactics we have featured since launching the business. Each coach is different, and they all have their own individual strengths, but learning how they approach the game with the pressures they face is something I admire.

We like to think we show the human side of the coach on The Coaches' Voice – this is important to people's perceptions, as they get to see a side of coaches they don't often see.

3. - What has been the response of coaches to your work so far?

We have been very pleased with the response. In the early days, it was more difficult to get interviews because coaches didn't know us – so we had to explain the project, the concept and how we worked. Now more people know us, and we have been hugely

encouraged by coaches who have produced content with us recommending us to other coaches.

This makes our job much easier, but it is also the biggest compliment we can get from the coaches we work with. It proves that the process is working.

4. - There is amore didactic and formative side with the Academy. Can you tell us how does it work? What is the difference with other tools for training coaches?

The CV Academy is an online education platform for football coaches at all levels from grassroots to elite. The site requires a subscription, which you can pay monthly or annually. In keeping with the main site, the quality of production is at a high level and is different to other tools I've seen. However, I think the main difference is our focus on the 'why'. Many other platforms just tell you what to do – we go beyond

that and get the coaches to explain not just what they are doing, but why they are doing it. We believe that this is the most important tool to help someone develop as a coach – understanding not just what a coach does, but why they do it. No two situations are ever the same, so if you understand the decision-making process you can become a better coach.

5. - Grassroots football is also an important part of it. Why and how do you work with it?

Grassroots is the lifeblood of football, often where people first engage with the sport. We feel there is an opportunity to develop content and educational materials at this level because no matter what level you play or coach at, there is always the ability to

improve. We're also seeing more and more demand for one-to-one sessions, and have recently added some on to the site. These are especially useful in the current environment, allowing anyone to train without the need for other players.

6. - You are also working to develop Conferences with coaches...What are the objective for this?

The idea for our conference is that we create a physical event and environment that brings the website to life – somewhere coaches can network, share ideas and learn from other coaches. I don't think there are enough events just focusing on coaches. We want to help that.

7. - There are many agencies and online portals that offer job seeking services. What do portals like FutbolJobs provide, especially focusing on coaches and players?

One thing that has always surprised me since working in the football industry is that people's networks are smaller than you would think. When I first started, I thought everyone would know each other, especially players and coaches. FutbolJobs makes the football world a much smaller place, doing all of the hard work and putting all of the opportunities in one place.



Training session CV Academy
Photography - Shamil Tanna

8. - More generally, Why are job portals important?

We know from the community of coaches we are building that there are a number of very talented coaches based all over the world. Portals like FutbolJobs allow that community to discover opportunities outside their existing network and geography.



Interview with José Mourinho
Photography - Tom Oldham



The match that was more than just football: **Atalanta vs Valencia** a biological bomb

By: Gonzalo Oubiña

font: ar.marca.com

Atalanta's brilliant campaign in the 2018-2019 season gave them the opportunity to play the Champions League for the first time in its history. The dream seemed to evaporate quickly after losing the first three matches of the group stage, receiving 11 goals and just scoring one. However, his dizzying offense (they are the top scorer team in Serie A) allowed them to recover and advance to the knockout stages of the top European competition. In that instance, Valencia was waiting, the Spanish revelation team that beat Chelsea and Ajax at the group stage.

The entire stage was set for a great football match. UEFA has some stadium regulations and Atalanta's doesn't fit them all to play a round of 16. That forced them to move to Milano and play at the San Siro. We all know the history of this stadium and all the historic moments it has witnessed. More than 40,000 people traveled from Bergamo to the fashion capital, which represents the 30% of the city's population. Absolute revolution. The fans were excited to see their team be part of the big European scenario. As an additional condiment, many Spanish fans came from Valencia to cheer on a team that was performing really well during the season. But of course, it was too good to be true. What no one ever imagined was that one last guest was missing. The one that nobody expected or wanted. Camouflaged, invisible, even more lethal than the Atalanta's attack and more powerful than the Valencia's illusion. There he was: the coronavirus.

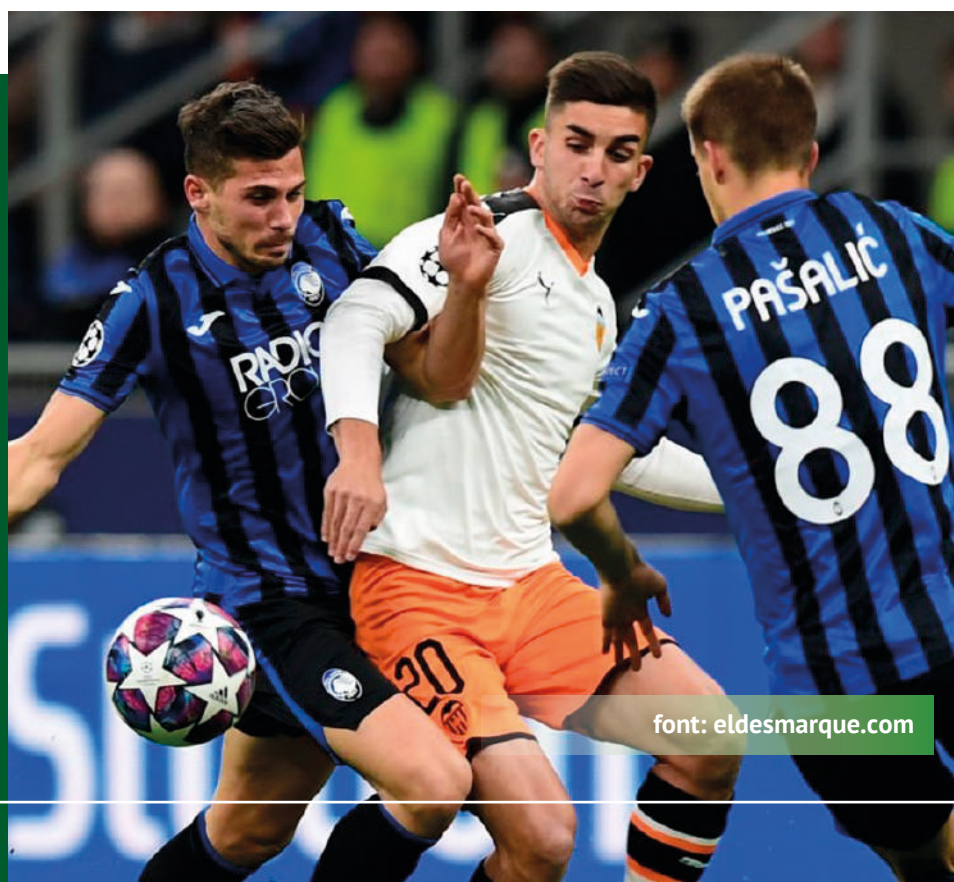


Scientific experts define that match as "a biological bomb". In mid-February, COVID-19 was not yet a reality. Or it was, but the authorities underestimated it. The virus was a joke for young people, content for social media and all kinds of memes. The game was played and the virus spread among practically everyone. Witnesses assure that that day the subway to the stadium was absolutely full like a typical Monday morning in the heart of Milan. Both fans from Atalanta and Valencia traveled there, exchanging songs, jumping, all being next to each other in a small and closed space. Without violence, but with a lot of contact. When they got off the subway, both fans joined the bars around San Siro to continue drinking beer. They ensure that the bottles went from mouth to mouth, sharing the moment of joy. What nobody was aware of was how they unknowingly became carriers of the virus that has become a global pandemic (as defined by the WHO). A month later, Spain and Italy were already the global focus of the pandemic in terms of number of infected people.

The mayor of Bergamo, Giorgio Gori stated that at that time they did not know what was happening. In an interview via Facebook, he assured: "The first patient in Italy was on February 23. If the virus was already circulating, the 40,000 fans who went to the San Siro stadium were infected. No one knew that the virus was already circulating among us. Many watched the game in groups and there were many contacts that night. The virus passed from one to the other. It was a biological bomb".

Fabiano di Marco, head of Pulmonology at the Bergamo hospital, sadly remembers when, days later, everything exploded: “Everything happens on Sunday, March 1. Early in the morning, I enter the emergency room. I will never forget it: it looked like war. I can’t find another definition. Patients everywhere with severe pneumonia, panting. On stretchers, in the corridors”.

Three weeks later, on March 10, the second leg was played. Behind closed doors, Valencia would have to fight to reverse the negative result obtained in Italy (they lost 1-4). Atalanta was a better team during the match and they beat Valencia again. But leaving the merely sporty aside, it should be noted that that day 35% of the Valencia squad were infected and did not yet know it. It is also important to say that Valencia played a match in Mendizorroza against Alavés four days before the rematch against Atalanta. Coincidence or not, Alavés was other of the most affected teams by the COVID-19 virus.



font: eldesmarque.com

This is the chronicle of what happened between Valencia and Atalanta, which was an engine for the spread of the virus that has the world in check. But this is something that goes beyond football. In this match it is not 11 against 11. We are all against one. Humanity is playing one of the most important games in its history. The rival is elusive as the most skillful striker you can imagine and more lethal than the highest scoring offense. Our defense was late and we lost the first leg. But we are together. We play at home. Let's think as a team and follow the strategy of our trainers who are the doctors and the health authorities. We will have to score the goal of our lives and celebrate all together again.



Interview

Miguel Ángel Liera

Interviewer: FutboJobs

1. - What is your position in Walsall FC?

I am the **Walsall FC Academy's director**. My work is evaluated by the CEO and the president. They both set for me some objectives that I have to achieve. There is also the first team's coach. We work together. He helps me to shape my work.

2. - How was it when you first arrive to the English football?

I started my career in **Alicante** and then continued at the **Nastic of Tarragona**. I was lucky to promote from 2nd to 1st division. However, with 25 games in the First Division and two goals scored, the club's general manager joined with agent and told me that there was an English team who wanted to sign me. They made me travel to England but I found out it was all a lie. The coach of my team at that time was **Paco Flores**. He was angry with the situation and everything ended up with me leaving the club. At the end of the season, I made the decision to go to **Hercules**, where I had a good first year. I felt comfortable. I played several games and even scored a few goals. But it was too good to be true: at the end of the season they stopped counting on me. They didn't offer a contract renewal. At that time it was normal to bully the players to send them a message: they made me train in the afternoon, alone, with a hot weather, in order to force me to quit.

I decided to wait because I had a good contract, but I found no team at the second division. On the last day of the market, the opportunity to go to England to try something new appeared. I had an offer from **Milton Keynes Dons FC**, a League One team whose coach was **Roberto Di Matteo**, who was taking his first steps as a coach back in 2008.

As I had no children, I had no problem to go. English football had always been attractive to me and it was a great opportunity to discover a new culture. Therefore, I decided to take the challenge.

I went alone, I started training, Roberto Di Matteo liked me, so I signed a contract for one season.

At the beginning it was hard since I didn't speak English. But I liked it. I knew it was a great opportunity. I liked the idea of learning a language, absorbing a new culture and feeling the atmosphere at the trainings and specially during the matches.

3. - What main differences do you find between the English and the Spanish grassroots football?

I always say it: English football is not for everyone and, in our case, the Spanish footballer does not always manage to adapt in the best way. From my experience in League One, League Two and **Premier League** I always tell this anecdote: **Iván Ramis**, the **Mallorca's** center-back who I think is still playing, met me on a warm-up before a game. We had a chat and I asked him how was everything going. His response was that he was really tired, that he talked to his coach because he couldn't play two games every week. His knees did not allow it and physically he felt weak. With that anecdote you understand the hardness of English football. The calendar is tight. You have to play two games almost every week. Physically you have to be at your best to perform

optimally. Furthermore, conditions are difficult, with cold and muddy fields. Players are physically very well prepared. They are fast, strong and go to the limit, since in English football the referees are more permissive. On the other hand, the technical aspect is secondary. It is clear that today there are more and more players who are both physically and technically good, but at that time you had to be strong if you wanted to play. As I mentioned, playing every 2 or 3 days is not for everyone. You also play at Christmas when Boxing Day arrives. In a matter of 10 days you have to play 3 to 4 games. Not all athletes can stand it and that toughness is what makes English football difficult but beautiful at the same time.

4. - When did you realize you wanted to be a professional footballer?

My father encouraged me from a very young age. When I was 8 or 9 years old, he took me to the **Betis** tryouts as a communion gift. Despite never having played football in a proper team, I performed really well and the club picked me. Since then, my life has been connected with football. I always wanted to play. I had a lot of fun. My father has always accompanied me on that adventure. He was the person who took me to train and to the competition games during the weekends. I was lucky to play at Betis since they taught me a lot of very important aspects of the game. However, I had a difficult time, when I suffered some severe headaches with sinusitis. That affected me. I wasn't in shape anymore. I was forced to leave Betis and go play in a small club in Nervión, **Seville**. I gave up a little bit, I didn't like it. I decided to go back to my town and practice there. I played in the evenings in **Preferente** and during the day I dedicated myself to study. I was lucky that at 18

someone watched me play. He saw qualities in me, and brought me for some tryouts at **Real Madrid B**. Clearly I was not prepared to compete at that level, the difference was too big. Some time later, I was lucky enough to go to **Recreativo de Huelva** when Joaquín Caparrós was there. They liked me. I signed my first contract and it was there when my professional career started. I can say that I have played in all categories of Spanish football. I know the sport from its bases perfectly.

5. - Can you give any advice to the children dreaming to become professional football players?

The first thing I always tell the children is that being a footballer is the best profession in the world. I tell them that if you have a dream, follow it, even if you know that it will not be easy. It requires a lot of sacrifice, dedication, self-love and passion for the game. It will be a long and complicated road in which they will have to put aside many things: friends, parties, habits. If you want to be a footballer you must understand that you have to give up on a number of things. You will need to put them aside and dedicate yourself almost full time to football. If your dream is to become a professional athlete, you must fight for it and you must know that to reach happiness, there will be many hard days and difficulties . With perseverance and dedication, the day will come.



font: saddlers.co.uk

6. - What are your future professional goals?



My goal since I retired was always to stay connected to football. It is my passion and what I do the best. I have lived for the sport all my life. As a former footballer I understand what it takes to become one. I have the knowledge to understand the children dreaming about one day reaching the top. What I would like to do someday is train a professional team here in **England** or abroad. My short-term goal is to coach some English team. I am convinced that I am on the right path, since in 4 years I have managed to improve a lot. I started training 10-year-old kids and I hope that the position I have now will be a springboard to take a quality leap and, little by little, achieve my dream.

7. - Can you talk us about the “Llera Sport Skill Ball”?

The **“Llera Sport Skill Ball”** method consists of a harness tied to the footballer and an elastic that holds a ball at the other end. Children and young people can kick the ball and improve their technique. The ball comes and goes. The constant repetition makes the players to be better and faster, forcing both feet to be used, improving coordination and striking.

It all started when I specialized myself to develop the technical part of the game. My first step as a coach was specifically defense oriented. I used to work with kids in small groups and try to exploit their defensive qualities. Workouts lasted between 30 minutes and

an hour. I worked with them as a group but also including individual exercises. I noticed that here in **England** they had a problem with the individual technique, the hit and the controls. I launched an online investigation and found a similar idea in the **United States**. I took the concept and I developed it following my needs. I started using it with the boys and it brought fantastic results. As a training tool, it is very useful for improving technique, coordination and agility.

8. - The football transfers prices have risen a lot in these last few years. What is your opinion on this? Do you think there is a limit?

It is true, and at the same time it does not make much sense. The price of a footballer is the one they want to pay for him. As we all know, in the world of football there are many interests hiding behind the ball. There are many people involved. The more money we are talking about, more people will be there trying to take an advantage and grab a piece of the cake. At the end,

the player is the one who receives the less, but that has always been like this and it is hard to believe that it will change. If football moves in that direction it is because they admit it, accept it and do not investigate it. It must be naturalized that there are many interests behind.

9. - Would you change something from the actual football?

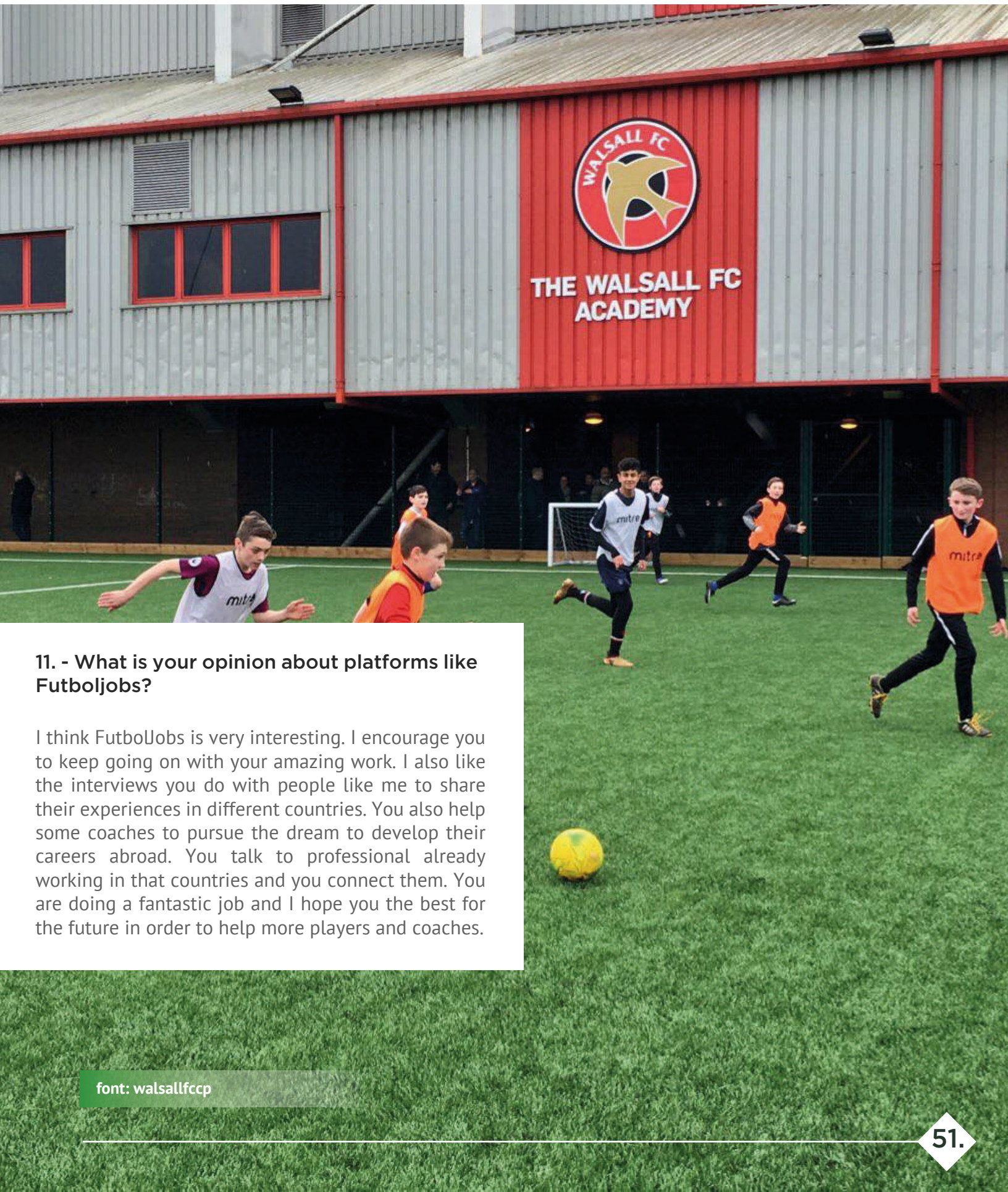
It is not something that I think about. I have a lot of work to do. What I try to do is to adapt myself to the circumstances and think about how can I improve technically and tactically with my footballers. You will never know if changing some things you will make football be better. You can make it even worse. What it is clear is that we live in a world that does not give you time to think about what we would like to change. We have to keep growing as professionals and adapt to the actual football rules and conditions.



10. - What has football given to you and what did he took away from you?

Football has given me everything. My lifestyle, the personality I have, everything. I started playing with 8 years old and I am still here. Football is my life. What did he took away from me? Maybe time with my family, friend and some habits that a normal person can have but a footballer can't.





11. - What is your opinion about platforms like Futboljobs?

I think FutbolJobs is very interesting. I encourage you to keep going on with your amazing work. I also like the interviews you do with people like me to share their experiences in different countries. You also help some coaches to pursue the dream to develop their careers abroad. You talk to professional already working in that countries and you connect them. You are doing a fantastic job and I hope you the best for the future in order to help more players and coaches.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION IN GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL

by: Daniel Guaita

In our current society, and especially sports speaking, winning is what prevails above all. Your “value” is attributed to what you have achieved in your sports career, to how full your trophy shelf is. As Bielsa said once on his twitter account back in 2014: “We belong to a society in which everything that is a triumph is blessed, and everything that is not, is not forgiven.” This is because we understand the concepts of competition and education as opposites, as incompatible, when they should not be. But for this analysis, we first have to understand the difference between competing and winning.

First of all, we must understand what is the objective of grassroots football, which is nothing more than giving players the opportunity to practice sport and develop themselves personally and athletically through it. Therefore, the primary objective in these categories is education. Some clubs seems to forget this. Rincón comments in an article: “grassroots football very often goes from being a sport to being a market. The important is the score. Not the education. Not having fun. Not playing a sport”. Are we really aiming the right way?

Very recently we were able to see a professional football coach give an important lesson to all parents, family and football workers. “THERE IS NO HURRY!”, let the children grow, let them learn, (Rojo, 2020) prioritize personal development over the results. In addition, we must be very clear that the majority of those boys and girls who play in a football club, be it in the town where they live or in a professional one, are not going to end up living from it. That is why we have to prioritize even more the education over the rest. And when we talk about education is not just in what it comes to football skills, but also being able to help them being better persons. We have to provide an ideal context to make them grow, especially as a person, since, in the end, they are people before football players (Añón, 2017).



The question is: can't we win in grassroots football?

Yes, of course you can. But it is not the main goal. You don't have to use your resources just to beat your opponent. As the former Deportivo de la Coruña football general manager Richard Barral (2020) says, clubs are always checking how their teams are doing in the leaderboard, but they focus on the progression of the young talents on the way to the professional squad. For this to happen, you have to provide a good education at your academy. When assuming as head coach of FC Barcelona, Pep Guardiola, one of the best coaches in the world, had a squad full of young players coming from the lower categories of the club (Valdés, Puyol, Busquets, Xavi, Iniesta, Messi ..). And they became the best team in the world.

I am not going to lie. We all want to win. And every victory brings positive vibes to the group and also to every player. They increase motivation. But we have to be careful, because they can also generate the opposite if in the league in which you compete it is usual to win because the teams don't have a good level. In this case, the problem is that you can't see which your weak points are and develop them. You tend to relax. The professional grow is slower. You don't work as hard as you should during the week, which is the moment where you truly improve and get ready for the competition.

So who is responsible for this education process through football to take place? Mainly coaches. However, we often find a problem when some of them can not distinguish between what the young players really need and their obsession to win.

They are the ones who should look for training models where a teaching process prevails, in which learning is based on improving technically and, at the same time, interacting with colleagues and rivals. Through this, gradually increase the level in order to make your players improve and fix some movements in their body memory. The coach will seek to develop a neural map that allows recognizing match situations and applying the player's knowledge depending on what is required. As an example we can take 2 teams that have won their respective leagues. At the start of the season they perform some technical and tactical tests to the squad. The process is repeated at the end of the competition. One team shows a 90% of the players who have mastered the concepts, while the other only a 10%. This is the difference between a coach that only wants to win and formative one.



Therefore, the club's football managers must insist on rewarding and empowering those coaches who prioritize education at grassroots football. They have to take the control and become a fundamental part of the process while a club is facing a new season. In many cases it happens that a team has an outstanding player who stands out above all and is capable of winning each match alone. Is this useful? Do we really need a player who is going to have more minutes than his teammates just because the coach wants to win? Wouldn't it be better for his progression to go play in a higher category?

At the end, we all grow, evolve and improve by facing situations that are complex for us. We must reinvent ourselves permanently in order to overcome them.

In conclusion, we can say that the objective in grassroots football must always be education, the competition will be a complement to this and the results, the consequence of all of the above (Martín, 2015; Web-futbol, s. F.).

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Interview

Rosolino Amenta

Interviewer: FutboJobs

1. - What is your role at Atlético de Madrid? How did you arrive to Atlético de Madrid?

I'm the **Head of International Business Development**, with a special focus on the planning and execution of the Club's commercial sales strategy. The main priority of my department is to create successful sponsorship and partnership cases, as part of a broader international development strategy which Atlético de Madrid has been carrying forward in recent years, with the aim of strengthening the brand in foreign markets.

I joined Atlético de Madrid in June 2019 after two years and half at SSC Napoli with a similar role. I had the privilege to lead a successful and pioneering strategy, with some ground-breaking operations (e.g. involving for the first time in football brands like Tinder or Trivago, being the first Club ever to launch an exclusive branded store on Amazon and paving the way for other top Clubs, exploiting the unique centralized players' image rights strategy of the Club).

2. - What are the key elements of the Club's commercial strategy?

Our strategy is driven by our values and our identity. Our motto “nunca dejes de creer” (never stop believing), is not a marketing tagline, but it is an ideal in which we all firmly believe. We have achieved amazing results, particularly over the last decade, if we consider the gap in terms of budget between Atlético de Madrid and other top Clubs. This is why we are considered the strongest challenger in football, winning national and international trophies in the last years which brought us to currently hold the 2nd place in the UEFA ranking.

We are aware that several brands are fully identifying themselves in us because they are as well fighting within their own industries versus established leading competitors. We know that value sharing and positioning alignment are the ideal starting conditions of each partnership, and these brands love the idea of being associated with Atlético de Madrid since it helps telling their story in a more genuine and credible way, proving that through hard work and strong belief they could achieve the same great results as we did.

3. - How important is such charismatic coach as Simeone within this strategy?

The golden age of Atlético de Madrid starts with the arrival of Diego Pablo Simeone to our Club, back in 2012. He is currently the coach with the most consecutive seasons at a club in Europe, and its percentage of victories is so far the best one for a foreign manager in LaLiga history.

Although results are crucial in football, Simeone is essential as he is one of the pillars of the Club, contributing to its stability in a world renowned to be sometimes pretty “bumpy”. Furthermore, our coach is among the people that the most embodies the values

of our Club - an extra reason to be gratified of being represented by him.

This of course has also a positive impact on our commercial strategy, since potential partners are often enticed by the idea of associating their brand not just to Atlético de Madrid, but also to Simeone. During the celebrations of LaLiga title won back in 2014, he said “Si se cree y se trabaja, se puede!” (if we believe, and work hard, we can!). A mantra for him and for us, but also a belief for many brands considering a partnership with Atlético de Madrid.

4. - How do you think crisis will reshape football? How is this affecting the job football market?

I believe we always need to search for an opportunity in a crisis, despite how deep and bad it is. The word “crisis” comes from the Greek “krino” which means “to separate, to evaluate, to distinguish”, and I think this is the right time for the football industry to ask itself some questions and see how to lay the foundations that will bring this amazing sport to become stronger than it has ever been. Maybe it will be more “inclusive”, fans from different countries will be more connected after having all shared such difficult time, or maybe there will be a rethinking of tournaments

and calendars. Anyway, it’s too early to comment as we don’t know yet what concrete measures institutions and federations are going to take to support football, either professional or amateur.

Same applies to the football job market, which I believe will suffer a drastic shock after Clubs, and not just the top ones, have increased their number of employees over the last years in different fields, such as business development, media and operations.

5. - What about the Academy? Can they play an important role? How many Academies Atlético de Madrid has?

Despite the key importance academies have within some of the biggest football Clubs, I’m not sure they will play a crucial role in the recovery from COVID19. An Academy program takes several years to form professional players and it takes up to 6 or 7 years, so due to this long time terms I consider it difficult to see an immediate help from youth sector.

development programs. We have a dedicated department managing coaches and assistants overseas, developing also innovative youth projects with strategic partners such as Wanda Group in China or Tata Group in India.

On the other hand, the lack of financial resources that will surely lead to a moderation of the players’ transfer market could push to invest more in Academies, giving more chances to potential in-house talents. Something we know well at Atlético de Madrid, since for quite some seasons Simeone’s midfield has been relying on such players (Thomas Partey, Saul Niguez and our captain Koke), plus the many top players shaped by our Club and now playing for other top Clubs.

Indeed Atlético de Madrid has the biggest federated football Academy in the world, with over 82 teams registered in Madrid (17 women) and presence in more than 40 countries through different sports



6. - What is your advice to young managers who would like to work one day at Atlético de Madrid?

Despite the image it sometimes gives to the general public, I do believe football is a meritocratic world where you have the chance to emerge if you deserve to. I don't want to sound too conventional here, but as I mentioned before our motto at Atlético de Madrid is "Nunca dejes de creer" (Never stop believing), and this is my strongest advice. Be honest whoever you're working with, and cultivate as much as possible your professional network. Football is a lot smaller world than you can possibly think.

7. - What is your opinion about job platform such as Futboljobs to look for opportunities in the world of football?

I used platforms like FutbolJobs on a day-to-day basis many years ago, at the beginning of my career, when football – particularly in Italy – was not that "professional" yet. Nevertheless I managed to build some opportunities, as well as to get in touch with trusted head-hunters. At that time there were only few platforms available, while today I believe the competition is fiercer. I wish you guys all the best, hoping you can continue bringing in the best talents available!

8. - Would you like to send a message to all football fans to cheer up?

As some Atlético fans said after the memorable victory against Liverpool, the last big match played in Europe before the lockdown: "If we came out of Anfield, we would come out of this as well!".



PERCEPTION IN FOOTBALL:

**HOW TO DESIGN YOUR TRAININGS
BASED ON THE “NONLINEAR PEDAGOGY”**

By: Joan Miquel Chacón Nicolau

“

For many people, football is played with the feet. For me, you play with the head and using your feet

”

Johan Cruyff

The first impact of psychology on football in Spain occurred in the early 1980s. It was a very discreet first intervention, based on private sessions with professional psychology centers, as a complementary service, without having a direct impact in the structure of the organization charts of the clubs or federations, with the active incorporation of psychotherapists (Cruz and Cantón, 1992).

Psychology had a much more relevant irruption at the beginning of the 90s. It was used, above all, to optimize the motivational aspects of the squads and, mainly, to provide a scientific response to the different needs of the moment. It was the coach Benito Floro in Albacete (seasons 1989/90 and 1991/92) and in Real Madrid (seasons 1992/93 and 1993/94) the first to give importance and visibility to the role and the work of the psychologist within the first team of a top First Division club.

Nowadays, psychology is a fundamental pillar in the sciences studying the physical activity and sports, its evolution, changes and scientific development.



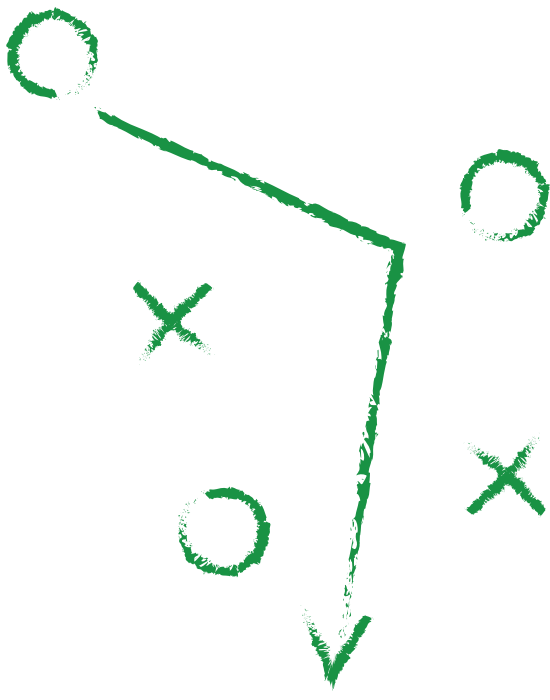
THE DYNAMIC SYSTEMS THEORY AND DESIGNING THE ACTIVITIES

The objective of this article is to present a working model to be able to design different activities through perceptual concepts, based on the theory of dynamic and nonlinear systems, and nonlinear pedagogy as an important instrument.

But what is the ecological dynamic based on? It basically aims to answer the question of how players are able to solve problems during the trainings, either in a training exercise or in a competition match. The player will interact with the environment detecting specific situations and will have to take decisions based on the knowledge he previously acquired and without receiving any other instruction from his coach.

In this sense, the selection of the answer occurs through an active and continuous process of searching and exploring relevant information coming from the game. The player will have to take an instant decision and act. The main purpose is to achieve a specific goal. The tactical behavior of an athlete is based on intentional adaptations to the constraints imposed in a specific game situation, or during the performance of a specific task.

What will be a fundamental instrument of ecological dynamics? The Nonlinear Pedagogy (PNL). It is an approach based on the work and research concepts of Ecological Psychology and Dynamic Systems Theory. Therefore, this methodology mainly refers to the player's interaction in the changing game environments in which it is related. The cognitive methodological proposal, based on the perception of the environment, decision making and execution, is overcome from the perspective of NLP. In this new methodological proposal, the player constantly perceives and acts during the relationship with the environment and the moment of the match, giving a response to the stimuli generated by opponents, spaces and teammates.



EXERCISES DESIGN:

RELATING TACTICAL FOUNDATIONS AND PERCEPTIVE CONCEPTS

If our goal is to achieve tactical improvement, coaches must design exercises linked to real matches situations. The exercises must be based on similar concepts to the cognitive stimuli of a competition. The idea is to make the player take decisions and incorporate them as part of their memory. Think and act. The objective of this qualitative and quantitative wealth of stimuli and conditioning factors is increasing the comprehension of the game in its different phases, the different levels of assimilation of knowledge of the players, and in the different ages and categories as grassroots, amateur and professional.

In this way, the teaching and learning process in football -implementing the perspective of Non-Linear Pedagogy- is based on the permanent manipulation of the relevant conditioning factors of the exercises (player, task and environment) that try to expand sources of information to guide athletes towards achieving their goals, promoting the search and discovery of game solutions for themselves.

That is why as coaches we must analyze what are the tactical aspects that we want to develop in each player for their technical and tactical improvement. We will pick the different perceptual concepts that we will stimulate during the trainings. After this process, we must relate them to the concepts previously acquired in order to achieve our goals as a team.

As an example, to clarify the process we will talk about four stages:

First Stage

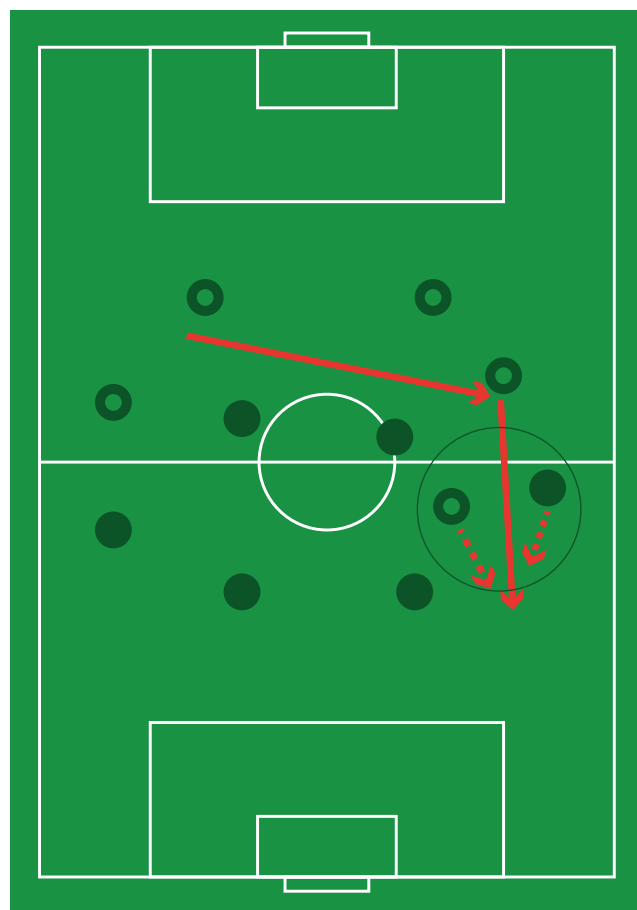
Defining the concept of creating space

first, we will talk about creating space and for that we will pick the position to work (the right back in this case) and the aspect that we want to enhance in the player. We will present a game situation to the right back in which different behaviors may emerge: you are in a defensive situation at 3/4 on your own field. You watch and collect the following information: you

identify an opponent behind you and a possible threat. How do you respond to this situation? The player must internalize the actions, the situation of the game and look for solutions to this tactical scenario that we provide him in the exercise through different parameters.

One of the highly executed offensive moves, today, is to break from inside to outside in the direction of goal (without losing angle) winning the back to central and lateral.

In these cases, the laterals in the strong ball area should prioritize staying in structure with the line rather than protecting the outer lane due to the fall of the ends. It is also very clear in situations of rapid tipping of the ball from side to side, from the opposite side he receives alone and the side cannot go out because he has an opponent behind.

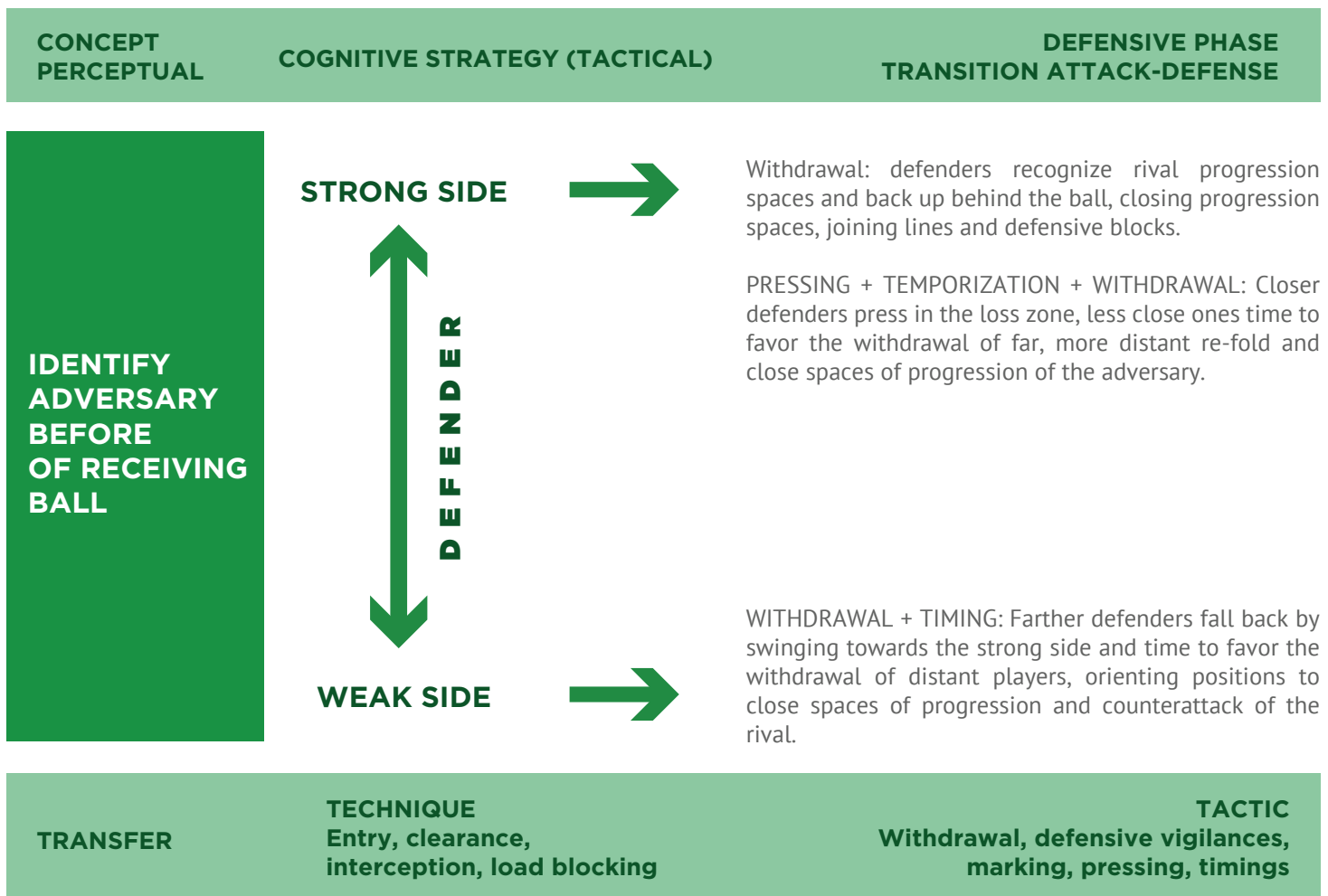


Second Stage

Defining the perceptual concept

In addition, in all phases of the game we must plan what perceptual concepts we are going to work with the players. It is also important to chose cognitive strategies to strengthen the game's understanding. And, finally, we must clarify what reactions

-according to our play style- are the ones that must be implemented to solve the problems that occur during competition. The objective is to provide different options so that the players can resolve the maximum number of situations by themselves during a match.



Third stage

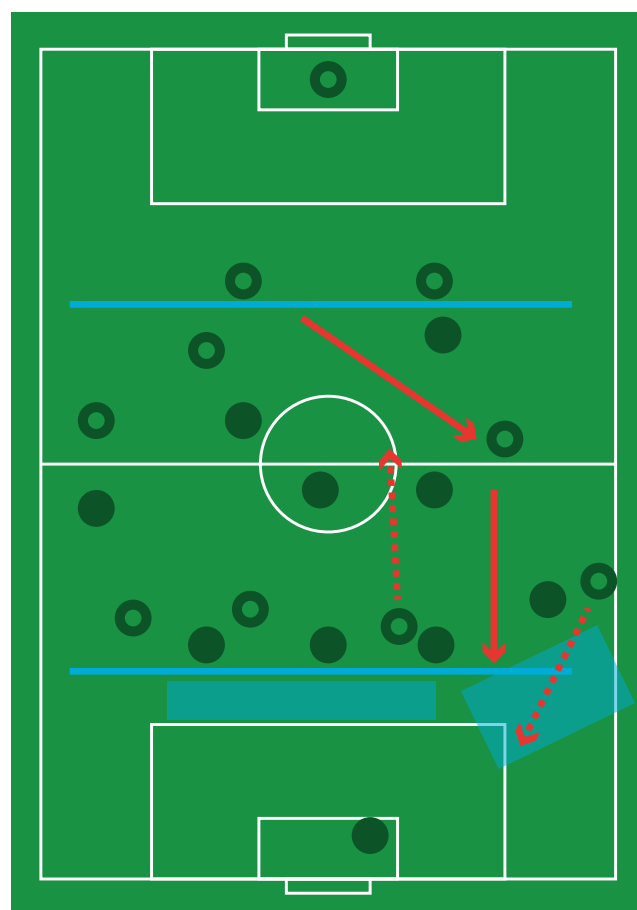
Designing an exercise

once we know how to create space and we have defined the perceptual concept we are going to work with, the next stage is designing the exercises to accompany the player during the teaching and learning process. From the perspective of Ecological

Psychology, and relying on the Nonlinear Pedagogy, we must provide the players with a series of stimuli, and also technical-tactical cognitive tools that give them the capacity to perceive and act, in order to solve different situations in a game.

SESSION 1 Perception

Heating	Rounds 6x3 5' 5 'joint mobility + 3' speed exits
Block contents	Collective defensive tactic line 4
Objective perceptual	Identify opponent before receiving the ball
Basis demarcation	Defend the space (avoid unchecking the back) prevent the strut from having positional superiority over strong central
Method	Conditional reduced match
Structure permanent	Cognitive + affective partner
Conformation teams	7x7 + 4C + 2goalkeepers
Rules of provocation	Tips (white jokers) one comes out in support and the second comes out in break by system
Task explanation	Conditioned match with movement ends and offside lines
Slogans corrections	Correct: Where do you stand to see an opponent behind you? How? When? Why?



Fourth stage

Feedback with the player



this method should be complemented with individual videos to generate feedback with the player. It is a very efficient instrument to improve the understanding of the game. However, it will be necessary to individualize those players that we accompany during their training. It is essential to take into account their individual characteristics, anthropometric conditions, his technical skills, their physical condition, their level of concentration and perception, their intuition, etc. Why? Well, because each player is different. Given this diversity, we must work on its specificity in order to optimize its strengths and help the player overcome his weaknesses. It is a complex and slow process, but that will allow us to make our squad improve.

Cruyff, Sacchi and Valdano shared a philosophy: you play football with your head.

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