

EDITORIAL RESPECT

A few days ago, I was looking at UEFA.org, where there is a lot of material dedicated to coaching and coach education. As so often happens, something caught my eye. It was near the beginning of an article about the UEFA Coaching Convention – which has since been given a thorough overhaul and made a lot easier to read. The part that caught my eye was at the end of a paragraph that set out the basic aims of the UEFA Coaching Convention, almost as a mission statement. One of those aims was to establish coaching as *“a recognised profession”*. I have to admit that, if I were given a chance to rewrite that statement, I would make it *“a recognised and respected profession”*.

This reflection about respect is inspired by information received from various parts of Europe. It is disheartening when a member association tells us that there have been more than 30 changes to the coaching teams of the top division clubs in a single season. Enquiries about the situation in other leagues produce equally disquieting replies, about 50% of the division teams having changed their head coach during the season. Many clubs ended their domestic championship with their third boss of the season. Some of the coaches' contracts dealt with only single figures in terms of the number of games



The UEFA Coaching Convention, revised to improve standards even further

to be played – but in some cases the financial rewards were several zeros beyond single figures if the objective of avoiding relegation was achieved. This trend seems to apply right the way across Europe, no matter how big the country or the clubs. It was surprising, for example, that a club in the Spanish championship recruited a coach for just the last four matches of the season.



This situation provokes reflections on the definition of 'coaching'. Traditionally, team building and player development have been considered important components of the job description. How do we reconcile these long-term tasks with the tendency to require quick fixes? What can coaches do to command respect from the people who hire and fire? For the coaching profession, it is a worrying fact that a high percentage of technicians who are dismissed from their first job are never given a second chance.

There is no easy solution to the situation. UEFA has been – and still is – encouraging national associations to offer coaches a level of education which makes them highly qua-

lified to do the job. In other words, we need to 'educate the educators' so that the coaches of the future are prepared in the best possible way for the realities of a very demanding profession. While the top coaches take the limelight, the coach educators perform crucial backstage tasks that often go largely unnoticed. It is with no apologies that this issue of *The Technician* puts the spotlight on a range of topics related to coach education and all the hard work and dedication that goes into the training of coaches who, through their level of knowledge and competence, will hopefully help to earn coaching the respect that the profession deserves. ●

Ioan Lupescu
UEFA Chief Technical Officer

IN THIS ISSUE

INTERVIEW – HOWARD WILKINSON	2-5
RAISING THE BAR	6-7
HANDLING GOALKEEPERS; KICK-STARTING FUTSAL	8-10
‘B’ HAPPY	10-11
PUTTING SMILES BACK ON FACES	12

THE INTERVIEW

Describing coach education as a marriage between coaching and education might be the ultimate truism. But statements of the obvious sometimes serve to provoke reflection, in this case about the profile of the coach educator and the importance of a generally unsung role. This interview is with a man who, despite his strong individuality, epitomises the ideal blend of the coaching and education ingredients of the profession. As a player, he accumulated experience at Sheffield Wednesday FC (the club he supported as a child), Brighton and Hove Albion FC and Boston United FC, where he started his managerial career. After five successful years, he joined the English Football Association as one of its staff coaches and resumed club management in 1979 at Notts County FC, and then at Sheffield Wednesday in 1983. He joined Leeds United AFC in 1988, and after a successful era at the club is still in the record books as the last English manager to win the top English league title. His appointment as The FA's technical director in 1997 involved – in addition to spells as head coach of the senior and Under-21 teams – a thorough review of coaching programmes and youth development, resulting in the Charter for Quality and the launch of a project for a national football centre, which has now come to visible fruition in the form of the impressive complex at St George's Park. His dedication to the coaching profession has seen him serve as chairman of England's League Managers Association since its formation in 1992. It has also led him into long-term cooperation with UEFA as a member of the Jira Panel, which has played – and still plays – a key role in the pan-European development of coach education. He is:

HOWARD WILKINSON



UEFA via Getty Images

Can you describe the sort of coach education that you received at the start of your career?

When I was transferred to Brighton as a player, I had to live in 'digs' – the word we used for a sort of boarding house – with two other players. We completed preseason training and started the league in August. By September, I was becoming increasingly bored with all the spare time we had. One morning, the reserve team coach, Steve Burtenshaw, pinned a note on the board advertising an FA preliminary coaching course every Thursday night and Sunday morning. I went to the first session purely for something to do. But by the end of that session I was convinced that coaching was for me. A new door had suddenly been opened in terms of structure, tactics, technique and how I looked at the game. Before, it had been a game with no real logic to it: you just played and you did well or you didn't do well. I realised that there was far more to the game and from then on I was fascinated. I started to do a lot of reading. There wasn't that much [in the way of books] at the time, but enough to get you interested. I remember one by the athletics coach Percy Wells Cerutty, an eccentric Australian who produced an amazing batch of world-class long-distance runners. What fascinated me was that he, like most great coaches, was an innovator: he changed things, he saw the need to do things differently, he made a difference. And that's what I like about coaching: it can make a difference.

You have been deeply involved in UEFA's coaching and coach education programmes. How would you assess UEFA's role in

developing the education of coaches over the years?

UEFA's work in coach education over the past 15 years has been enormous yet sometimes unnoticed, a bit like the swan that's gliding gracefully across the lake but pedalling like mad below the water. Since I joined UEFA I've seen an enormous change. But it's not a change that's been perceptible month on month. The reason for that is quite simple: what UEFA set about doing was basically to try to raise standards right across Europe. And that is a very, very painstaking, arduous, feet-on-the-ground process. Some of the newer national associations can't see it, because they don't know what it was like before. But I can look back over quite a number of years and see the advances that have been made. I can remember going to Turkey, Portugal, Cyprus, Malta, Ukraine, Iceland, Romania, Hungary and other countries when the UEFA Coaching Convention was in its infancy. The difference now across the whole of Europe is huge. I would honestly argue that, if it weren't for UEFA, coaching in many parts of Europe would still be struggling to find its feet.

On a personal level, you always stress that you have enjoyed the role that you've played. Have any special moments stuck in your mind?

I have enjoyed it. That's true. Firstly because it's about football and secondly because it's about education. I really believe that teaching is the most important profession in the world. I think that without teachers, without educators, we'd still be trying to light a fire. So that part of it is very fulfilling. It's fascinating to go to work in different places and experience different cultures.



Howard Wilkinson on stage at one of his many UEFA coaching events

Because I have visited countries on working missions, I've been able to see the real Greece, the real Turkey, the real Hungary. I remember going to Ukraine one winter. One of my early coaching heroes was Valeriy Lobanovskyi. So I'm there at the Dynamo [Kyiv] training ground and seeing the room where Lobanovskyi developed his statistical models and profiles. And I'm in their own operating theatre ... Many clubs have got one now but in Ukraine they'd had one for years. I've been very fortunate in meeting different people, experiencing and absorbing different cultures, hearing different points of view ... It has been an ongoing learning programme. For me that is not 'work'. Some would say I haven't done a real day's work in my life! Though that's not quite true because there were times when I was a footballer when you needed to find another job in the summer. I have worked on a building site, in a timber yard, as a chauffeur, as a postman ... So I have worked in the conventional sense, but my real work has always been football and sport in general. I think the best thing about it all is that you meet people who have a genuine common passion – they're involved in the game of football and love it. That's the common ground. It has been a privilege to be involved in it.

You've had a lot of contact with people who are just starting their coaching careers. What do you try to communicate to this next generation about the role of coaching?

I am very anxious to make them aware of the downsides. The first question has to be: 'What is it you really want to do?' Not everyone can be top man. Some people just don't have the qualities. But there's no disgrace in that. So



On the touchline with the late Sir Bobby Robson



Issuing instructions as manager of Sunderland AFC

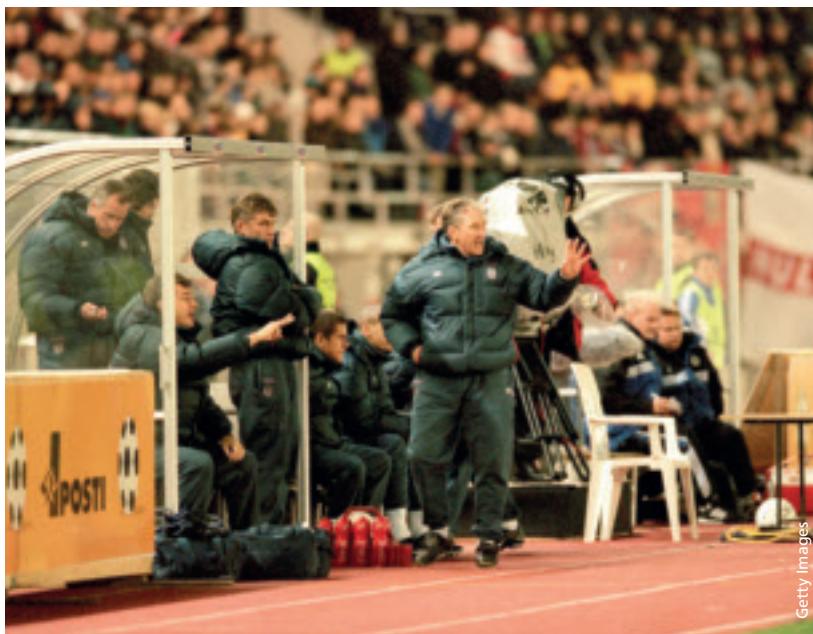
trying to find the role that suits you is important. It's vital you first look at yourself: recognising what your strengths and weaknesses are, what your personal qualities are, what you really value and what you believe in. When you become a coach, by definition you become a member of the education profession. Once you start talking about improving performance, working with people to produce a better product – and they are the product – that's education. Improving starts with improving yourself. It's also important not to underestimate the value of survival in this precarious profession – because there are so, so many who do not survive. In England, half of the managers who start in coaching are no longer in the game five years after they took that first job. Survival is, in itself, an enormous achievement.

Can you pick out any major influences on you as a coach, and/or as a coach educator?

Yes, I can. I started coaching in 1966, when I did the B licence. From that moment on, I was coaching as well as playing. I coached Tuesday and Thursday nights at local grassroots clubs, and on Friday afternoons at a school – Lancing College, where my predecessors had been Ron Greenwood and Gordon Jago. But my first step towards becoming a senior coach was when I did my A licence. The course director was Alan Wade, who was a really inspiring coach educator. He was passionate about the game and a great visionary. I vividly recall him doing a coaching session at a refresher course for coaches and managers where he demonstrated a way of playing that we would now liken to the Barcelona style. The general reaction from those who were watching was 'No, no, this is never going to work. What is he on about?', 'This is pie in the sky' and 'He's insisting that the goalkeeper only throws the ball out?' Thirty-five years later, his vision has become a norm.

At Sheffield Wednesday, we had a manager called Alan Brown. He also had ideas that some people considered crazy. They weren't. Like Alan Wade, he was a visionary. He had enough vision to see which way the game would go. Before him, we'd had another very, very good coach called Jack Mansell. Jack was also passionate about his coaching. Remember that this was a time when there were coaches – or 'trainers' as they were known – who might smoke a pipe while they were running the training. Jack, Alan Brown and Alan Wade, along with a school-teacher called Eddie Beaglehole, were the first modern coaches I encountered. They were game changers. They were trying to change a culture. We'd never really had a serious coaching culture in England to compare with the coaching cultures in the Netherlands, France, Germany

Coaching the England team at a fixture in Finland



and much of the rest of Europe. We've come a long way since those pioneers in the coaching field were trying to prove that it was the right way to go. In England, we had the ridiculous idea that practising was 'not what gentlemen did'. 'What? Practising to get better? We don't do that! You play, and then you go and have a game of golf or go to the races.'

It's often said that you were the last English coach to win the top English league title. That spell at Leeds United, how much does that mean to you looking back on it now?

I tend to think just about winning the title but other people often remind me and thank me because of our continuous success over an eight-year period. When I went there, they were in the second division. The following season we were promoted; the season after that, in what is now the Premier League, we finished fourth; the season after that we won it; in the next three seasons we qualified for Europe twice by finishing fifth, and won the Charity Shield. In addition, we managed to develop our own great young players, such as Batty, Speed, Kelly, Kewell, Robinson, Woodgate, Hart, McPhail and Alan Smith. All of them played Premier League football and not one of them cost us a penny. I tend to remember the title and sometimes lose sight of the overall success, with one blemish the season after we won the title. It was the same at Sheffield Wednesday. I was there for five and a half years of steady, rising success. But it's all so long ago. These days, at UEFA courses, I'm meeting with people who've just stopped playing international football, who may already be coaching at the top level. So I have to be careful about reminiscing and I have to really think about what I'm going to say because you don't want to appear old-fashioned, past your sell-by date. That would be terrible. No way do I want to keep banging on about the past and become 'an old man who pontificates about the good old days'. It's important to know what you still want to do. It's more important to know when it's time to go.

But since you last sat in a dugout, do you think you've carried on learning as a coach?

Definitely. About two years ago, I met a guy who was my classmate at school. He said: 'I remember you were always asking questions. The rest of us used to get fed up because you'd never be satisfied with the teacher's answer.' I have always had that natural curiosity. If you present me with an interesting subject or topic, I want to examine it and I want you to justify what you've said. I'm always curious about what's going to come next, what's better. I think I was like that as a manager and I think it's a good asset to have in the coaching profession. In my early days at Leeds, somebody called me 'the mad professor', because I brought in a urologist,



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to help design a drink that would rehydrate each player individually. On my first day, I turned the kitchen upside down, and reorganised the food and the menus. What I did in training was also sometimes looked upon as a little strange or different. But I was always fascinated by trying to find new ways to get that extra winning edge. A player recently asked me if I remembered what I had said to the squad on my first day at Sheffield Wednesday. He had a clear recollection. 'You said: "We don't necessarily have the best players in Britain – I hope we do – but we can be the fittest; we can be the best organised; we can be the most disciplined; we can be the best prepared. Providing each one of you recognises those as your targets, the rest is up to me." I also asked them on that first day to name their chief objective and they said it was to win promotion. I said 'Okay, that's where I come in. But the things I've mentioned are things we can all do, and they've got nothing to do with your technical ability. These are add-ons that are not expensive and are good to have.'

The final question: if you could leave just one legacy as both coach and coach educator, what would you like it to be?

When I was technical director at The FA, my colleagues and I worked hard to put together a plan to produce a continuous stream of players with a way of playing that was consistent across the teams and who were good enough to get England to World Cup and European Championship semi-finals and finals. At that time, the

young players we had in our youth teams included people like Carragher, Lampard, Gerrard, Carrick, Rio Ferdinand, Joe Cole, Owen and Terry, to name but a few. Above them was the emerging Manchester United crop of Beckham, Scholes, Butt, the Neville brothers ... I could go on. The future looked really bright. Semi-final and final appearances were our genuine targets for 2006, 2008 and 2010. At the same time, I appointed Hope Powell as England's first full-time women's football manager, along with other measures that, I'd like to think, gave women's football a kick-start, as well as the importance and status that it needed and deserved. A significant part of that plan was to set up a national training centre that would be England's symbolic and spiritual home. We said we wanted to be the equivalent of Oxford and Cambridge universities – world class in terms of education, learning and development. Unfortunately – with seriously negative consequences and for reasons I won't go into here – the plan was placed on the back burner. But I'd like to think that St George's Park could still become the focus of an England set-up that will eventually bring us to a time when we go to tournaments and are expected to win things. Introducing the Pro licence, mandatory coaching qualification criteria and related sports science disciplines were other major achievements. The current plans will need time, but I hope the seeds that have lain dormant for maybe nine or ten years will produce the green shoots that, hopefully, will blossom into English roses. ●

On the left of the front row, after leading Leeds United to the league title in 1992

RAISING THE BAR

"If you go take on a new challenge where you want to start a renaissance or a revolution, the most important factor is coaching. It is therefore important that the coaches are trained properly. But, even more importantly, the coaches that are supposed to educate these coaches have to get a good education themselves."



Fatih Terim

These words were spoken by Fatih Terim, special guest at the fourth and final UEFA student exchange event of the season, which brought together Pro licence students from Norway, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Terim, in his third spell as head coach of the Turkish national team, travelled to Nyon shortly after taking a parallel appointment as football director of his native country. In broad brushstrokes, he painted a picture for the student coaches of his vision for future development. "We need technical people who are familiar with education," he said. "They need to be experts in their field in order for our young players aged between 6 and 18 to be properly trained. So we need

people who know how each age group should be treated and how they should train. In other words, this requires properly educated coaches. So we have started to introduce some variations in our coach education courses. We have started to increase the duration, we have introduced additional lessons that we believe to be valuable, and we are achieving much higher quality. We have been adjusting criteria to pinpoint what we think is right and what we think is wrong in an attempt to achieve our ideal.

"Our coaches have to possess a great deal of information and [courses should] have a modern, up-to-date structure," he added. "We sometimes attend Pro licence sessions along with the coaches to gain good perspectives. And we don't hesitate to ask for outside help when we feel we need it. The objective is quite simple: to help our coaches to climb to a higher level."

Keeping up with the game

Terim's comments were evidently delivered in the context of his beloved Turkey. But some of his sentiments could legitimately be applied to UEFA's motives for implementing a far-reaching 'renaissance' of the UEFA Coaching Convention, which, incidentally, received fulsome praise from Terim – as did the level of UEFA guidance offered to his national association in relation to the education of specialists.

During the 18 years since its launch, the convention has undoubtedly helped to raise coaching standards on a uniform pan-European basis. It has also fulfilled the objective of

promoting the credibility and integrity of the coaching profession, along with the primordial aim of facilitating the cross-border movement of qualified coaches within Europe. The impact of the convention can also be gauged by the fact that some 200,000 coaches across the length and breadth of Europe have studied for and obtained a UEFA-endorsed qualification.

"But, during that time, the game has continued to evolve," said UEFA's head of football education services, Frank Ludolph, *"and coach education needs to keep pace with the reality that the demands on today's coaches are higher than ever. The new edition of the UEFA Coaching Convention is the result of a long consultation process. A lot of concerted thought, both in technical and structural terms, has gone into the renewed version – fundamentally by a team of vastly experienced technicians and coach educators but also by experts who have made sure that the new convention is totally aligned with European law."*

Turning the pages of the 2015 edition of the UEFA Coaching Convention will reveal that the



content has been restructured with a view to producing a concise, clear, user-friendly document that is easier to read and assimilate. Procedural issues have been pared down to a minimum to make the rules and guidelines less cumbersome than in the previous edition, and the previously separate contract and directives have been merged into a single document, which creates greater coherence, consistency and clarity in legal terms.

Preparing for reality

The more clearly focused visual identity of the new convention serves to highlight the important changes in terms of coaching content. There have been significant adjustments to the minimum criteria for UEFA-endorsed qualifications – for example, the hours of education required for a Pro licence have been increased from 240 to 360. For the various courses, the common denominator is a marked shift towards the principles of reality-based learning and the value of work experience acquired at club level. The ratio of practical work versus off-the-pitch education is 50:50 at the B, A and Elite Youth A levels, and for the 210-hour combined B+A course, which is specifically aimed at long-serving professional footballers keen to make a swift transition from playing to coaching. At Pro level, the balance tilts towards practical education, which accounts for 60% of the total minimum requirement.

The new edition of the convention also features an 11-point code of ethics for the coaching profession and, going into the nitty-

gritty of educational content, a topic-by-topic and hour-by-hour breakdown of the course syllabuses. At each level, the convention provides clearly defined profiles, job descriptions and learning objectives, and also offers national associations greater flexibility in setting up the three-yearly further-education courses that qualified coaches are obliged to attend.

However, the basic objectives of the UEFA Coaching Convention remain unchanged: to strive for the best possible quality of coaching; to contribute to European integration through the mutual recognition of coaching qualifications; to create unified minimum coaching standards; and to enhance the status of the coaching profession as a whole. *"The convention should be a real engine of development for European football,"* said François Blaquart, technical director at the French Football Federation and member of the UEFA Jira Panel. *"This is a real opportunity for federations to strengthen their programmes and to raise the level of expertise among their instructors and coaches."*

"The document is an important tool for technical directors and heads of coach education to create more consistency in the process of educating coaches, to improve the quality of their own coach education and to equip coaches to continue to improve the quality of European football," said Michel Sablon, a member of the UEFA Jira Panel and of the working group that invested a great deal of time, effort and expertise in the drafting of the new document.

This feeds back into Terim's Turkey, where the national association has experienced coach educators but is keen to offer them opportunities for continued improvement. Under the banner of 'educating the educators', UEFA sent three highly qualified instructors to Turkey for a full week of work with the coach educators in order to make sure they stay ahead of the game. The visit provided palpable proof that UEFA regards the 2015 edition of the convention as more than just a document: it provides a set of principles and guidelines that UEFA is prepared to back up with unstinting support for the national associations who are responsible for implementing it.

As Howard Wilkinson, another member of the UEFA Jira Panel, said: *"The continuous development and provision of education are critical to the improvement of our lives. Once again, UEFA has demonstrated its huge commitment to those responsibilities. The revised convention is proof of this and, once again, raises the bar in terms of both standards and content."* ●



Michel Sablon, one of the prime movers in the rewrite of the UEFA Coaching Convention



HANDLING GOALKEEPERS; KICK-STARTING FUTSAL

Conspicuous by their absence from the previous pages dedicated to the UEFA Coaching Convention are mentions of the specialised UEFA-endorsed licences for futsal and goalkeeper coaches. But both feature prominently in the new edition of the convention.

The UEFA Futsal B and Goalkeeper A diplomas each require an initial 120 hours of education – in both cases heavily weighted towards reality-based practical work. In the case of the futsal licence, the ratio is 74 hours of practical work to 46 hours of theory, while for the students going for their goalkeeper coaching qualification 84 of the minimum requirement of 120 hours must be dedicated to on-the-pitch activity.

For UEFA, rolling out the two new licences has involved a great deal of behind-the-scenes activity. It's one thing to play the role of the architect who produces a blueprint, but to go from blueprints to new builds you also need to support those responsible for construction and implementation. If a group of students express an interest in pursuing a goalkeeper coaching qualification, the pertinent question is who will do the teaching.

As former Celtic and Republic of Ireland goalkeeper Packie Bonner said when the UEFA course was about to be rolled out: *"Introducing a new licence inevitably raises questions about whether you have enough tutors to implement the different coach education courses. It's a big task for us to educate tutors, as it does require a different slant on things."* In this case, 'us' refers to UEFA and, more specifically, to the coach

education experts on the UEFA Jira Panel and the specialist technical instructors.

"This is all about cooperation with the national associations," he continued. *"Even in countries where specialised goalkeeper coach educators are in place, some of the tutors are part-time, carrying out their coach education jobs in conjunction with their work at clubs or academies. The reality-based approach that UEFA has adopted for the courses requires a great deal more time – and this is an issue that some national associations will need to address."*

There has been great, immediate interest among national associations wishing to implement the Goalkeeper A licence but, as Bonner pointed out, there has often been a shortfall of tutors – hence UEFA's efforts to provide specific support to national associations who embraced the principles of the goalkeeping course but had doubts about how best to set about implementing it.

The result was a project involving the national associations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine. It took the form of four instructor workshops of four days apiece. Moldova provided the first venue, while the second workshop – organised by the Russian Football Union – took place in



The team photo at the event in Riga involving goalkeeper coaches and tutors from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine with, in the forefront, Marc Van Geersom, UEFA's head of football education Frank Ludolph, Packie Bonner, Jan Erik Stinessen and Mart Poom



Roberto Menichelli, coach of European champions Italy, guides a coaching session during the event in Northern Ireland

Turkey, where the FC Rubin Kazan squad had its pre-season training camp (the reality-based nature of the course requiring the participation of real players). The third event took place in Riga and, barely a month after the visit to the Latvian capital, the fourth and final instructor workshop took place in the Belarusian capital, Minsk.

Philosophy and methodology

UEFA's team of experts at the workshops was a 'back four' comprising Bonner and three fellow former international keepers, Marc Van Geersom of Belgium, Jan-Erik Stinessen of Norway and Estonia's Mart Poom with, as 'sweeper-keeper', Frans Hoek, who joined the team whenever his duties at Manchester United FC permitted. Each of the participating associations was represented by three goalkeeper coaches and an appropriate 'captain' in the form of the country's technical director, coach education coordinator or director of education programmes.

The aim of the four workshops was to prepare tutors to handle the Goalkeeper A courses in ways which would fully comply with the guidelines set out in the UEFA Coaching Convention. The emphasis was on realism – hence the importance of working with, for example, Rubin Kazan, AC Sparta Praha and local clubs at the other venues.

"We tried to set out as clearly as possible the philosophy of the Goalkeeper A licence and the sort of methodology which will be required in order to implement it," Van Geersom explains. *"The learning circle starts with real situations where you detect shortcomings and devise a plan to help the goalkeeper to improve. The plan needs to be realistically timed as well: it can be a short-term plan, or you can draw up a plan for*

a whole season. And it's very important to have dialogue with the goalkeeper's club coach so that you can agree on the desired outcome."

During the workshop modules, each of the participants was given a specific role and a number of tasks – such as designing a national course for goalkeeper coaches or preparing detailed plans of how the tutor is going to interact with the goalkeeper coach before and after training sessions or matches. As Van Geersom stresses, the emphasis is also on preparing the goalkeeper coach to be an integrated member of the coaching staff, equipped to design training sessions involving the outfield players and not exclusively the goalkeepers. *"These days, the goalkeeper coach needs to be capable of performing tactical analysis and carry out a wider range of tasks on the pitch and in the dressing room. So, apart from dealing with the basics of training and so on, these modules also aimed to encourage initiative and creativity."*

The workshops therefore featured practical elements based on each goalkeeper coach's performance during training sessions, as observed by one of the tutors and the rest of the group and followed up in conjunction with the UEFA goalkeeper experts who were on-site.

Feedback after the series of workshops was overwhelmingly positive. *"We were keen to implement the Goalkeeper A licence,"* said Ghenadie Scurtul, technical director of the national association of Moldova. *"But we weren't quite sure of the best way to go about it. These workshops were tremendously valuable because they gave us clear ideas about the way to organise courses, the methodologies involved and the quality that the tutors need to aim for. In other words, they brought the guidelines to life and completely clarified our objectives."*

The success of the four workshops conducted during the 2014/15 season has prompted plans for a second series aimed at offering support to former Balkan states.

Similar parameters apply to the UEFA Futsal B licence, which was launched at the same time as the specialised qualification for goalkeeper coaches. The emphasis has been on providing in-depth support for some of the 23 national associations who immediately expressed a desire to incorporate the UEFA Futsal B licence into their coach education programmes. As with the Goalkeeper A licence, the priority has been to offer to-the-point, tailor-made programmes according to needs in specific countries or groups of countries.

Champion educators

During the first week of June, Northern Ireland was the venue for a course for tutors from a range of 'developing' futsal nations: Denmark, England, Finland, Norway, the Republic of Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Wales and the hosts, along with two national associations who have progressed much further along the futsal road – Belgium and Slovenia, both of whom competed at Futsal EURO 2014. England's presence in Northern Ireland is the prelude to a specialised futsal course scheduled to kick off during the second half of the year. The instructors could hardly have a more impressive pedigree: current European champion with Italy Roberto Menichelli; three-time European champion with Spain José Venancio López; Portugal's national team coach, Jorge Braz; Spanish serial European and world champion Javier Lozano; Croatia's legendary futsal star Mico Martić; and Spanish coaching specialists César Arcones and Antonio Bores.

At the same time, Martić and Venancio López have been engaged in the planning of a similar course in Romania, while Belgium's Benny Meurs has teamed up with Arcones and Bores to support and run a course for tutors in Germany, with the German Football Association now prepared to deliver the Futsal B diploma course. UEFA will also be providing expert back-up for a course due to take place in Greece during the summer. In the meantime, the Polish Football Association – another more experienced member of the futsal fraternity – has already implemented a Futsal B course which was monitored by UEFA prior to ratification by the Jira Panel.

UEFA's futsal experts have given the new licence solid pedagogical foundations. An electronic package featuring 40 filmed training drills and over 200 other clips has been compiled, while a hard copy of over 70,000 words will be available early in the 2015/16 season.

All of this adds up to a compelling demonstration of UEFA's readiness to offer hands-on assistance to each and every member association to help them write the new licences into their own coach education menus. ●

'B' HAPPY

As the 14th edition of the UEFA Women's Champions League built up to its final showdown at the Friedrich-Ludwig-Jahn-Sportpark in Berlin, it had not passed unnoticed that the head coaches of the top eight clubs had one thing in common: they were all men.

Credit where credit is due. One of them, 1. FFC Frankfurt's head coach, Colin Bell, went into the annals of coaching by becoming the first Englishman to reach a UEFA Champions League final – men's or women's – and, evidently, the first to win one. His vocal accent might still recognisably be that of his native Leicester, but his coaching accent is definitely German, as he did his studies right the way through to the Pro licence under the auspices of the German Football Association. His pathway to success in Berlin followed relatively untrdden ground in that his side operated with three at the back in a 1-3-5-2 formation that slickly switched to 1-5-3-2 when defending, with the wing backs swiftly

Colin Bell jubilantly becomes the first English coach to lift a UEFA Champions League trophy after his Frankfurt team donned the women's crown in Berlin



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retreating. At 53, he was the most senior of the eight coaches. Martin Sjögren, coach of Sweden's Linköpings FC, was the youngest at 38, a year junior to FC Rosengård's Markus Tilly.

The male domination at the peak of the women's game is nothing more than a statement of statistical fact – a reflection of data related to the number of female UEFA Pro licence holders that was published in the previous issue. The latest figures collated by UEFA indicate that 3% of the UEFA-endorsed coaching licences awarded at all levels were awarded to female coaches.

The current manager of the Welsh national women's team, Jayne Ludlow, had been in Nyon earlier in the season as a Pro Licence student, to attend one of UEFA's student exchange events. *"There was another woman on the course, which was obviously very nice,"* she said. *"Hopefully there will be more than two in the future. We have to accept that football, for many generations, has been classed as a male-dominated sport. Luckily, that's now changing. There have obviously been female coaches before me who've wanted to develop their knowledge and their understanding of the game so that they can stand toe to toe with a male coach and be just as good – potentially even better. But, for me, it's about the individuals themselves, regardless of gender. Having said that, I'd love to see more female coaches involved in developing young players because I think it's important for young women to have role models to look up to. For a six or seven-year-old girl, it's a lot easier if the person standing in front of them is a woman rather than a man. But I've worked with some fantastic male coaches so gender is not an issue. My ideal environment for the future is where people are judged on their abilities as coaches and leaders rather than their gender."*

Game in progress

As mentioned in the previous issue, UEFA has embarked on a project aimed at encouraging current and former players to gain a foothold on the coaching ladder by studying for a UEFA B licence. The scheme has hit the ground running, with a total of 130 female coaches involved in the project during the 2014/15 season. Course modules led by UEFA instructors have been completed in Azerbaijan, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Romania and Turkey (where national football director Fatih Terim offered support and encouragement to students coached by UEFA female coach development instructor Hesterine de Reus). As a postscript to that sentence, it should be pointed out that UEFA provided funding for the course in Denmark, while the groundwork was carried out by home-based instructors.

Jayne Ludlow, currently national team manager of Wales, in her playing days during a league appearance for Arsenal WFC



By the time this appears in print, a seventh course will have been staged, in Poland, and an eighth, in Moldova, will be in the immediate offing. If all has gone well, 16 female coaches will have successfully negotiated a final examination in Azerbaijan under the watchful eye of UEFA instructor Anja Palusevic.

"We have a few B licence students back home in Wales," Ludlow said, *"but I'd like to have more. I see it as part of my job as national team manager to enthuse others to follow in my footsteps. One of the things I will be trying to do over the next few years is to push a lot of my players into the coaching arena. Unfortunately, some might get one badge and then decide it's not for them, but there are many different aspects to the game that women can get involved in. I'd like to encourage them to try a coaching role, though, and I think some of them will flourish."*

That neatly sums up UEFA's philosophy! ●

PUTTING SMILES BACK ON FACES

What does a coach do when he or she is out of work? This question is particularly relevant bearing in mind the situation described in the editorial. Statistics clearly indicate that coaching is becoming an increasingly volatile profession and that, in consequence, technicians will need to address the issue of how best to deal with periods when they are out of work.

The ideal answer is to take a positive approach to the 'negative' times. This is why UEFA was happy to offer support to a project undertaken in France, which could serve as encouragement for similar schemes to be initiated in other countries.

The project is a joint venture, organised by the French coaches' union, UNECATEF, with the support of the French Football Federation and the Ligue de Football Professionnel. Under the banner 'Ten months to find a job', the programme offers further education opportunities to technicians who are 'between jobs'. The duration of the course is, logically, ten months – to mirror the span of a football season – and the programme embraces a broad spectrum of coaching components, from match analysis to language classes and IT sessions aimed at honing presentation and communication skills.

"It's a great initiative which goes a step beyond further education," said Frank Ludolph, UEFA's head of football education services for national associations. *"It's all about professional reintegration – and this starts with putting a smile back on the faces of people who, for the moment, find themselves without work. UEFA is definitely glad to be contributing to the project."*

UEFA's contribution was most evident when 15 coaches travelled to the UEFA campus in Nyon for an intensive week of educational sessions aimed at putting extra skills into their

professional backpacks. UEFA provided expertise and specialist knowledge at a series of practical and technical sessions ranging from team dynamics and the psychology of sport to the forging of working relationships, ideas on the promotion of clubs and details of everyday life in the coaching world, such as how to handle media interviews.

Jean-François Domergue, champion of Europe with France in 1984 and now head of football development at UEFA, said: *"It was a rewarding experience to witness the coaches' progress over the week and to monitor their expertise in the practical sessions. It was about rebuilding confidence and, hopefully, making them better equipped for their next jobs."*

One of the participants, Under-17 coaching specialist Philippe Le Maire, rated the programme as "fantastic", saying that *"the main strength of the course is its comprehensive content, from the activities on the pitch to topics like match analysis"*. The enjoyment, however, was not confined to the further education aspects. Everybody engaged in the profession is well aware that it can be a solitary job – and the companionship among the team of 15 was one of the important positives. But if being in work can be solitary, being out of work can be even more so – hence the value of further education projects like the one being undertaken in France. ●



The coaches pictured during a practical session dedicated to coaching at youth development levels