

A Way of Life

So you want to be a professional coach? This is a question which we directed at the young coaches who took part in the first six courses of UEFA's Pro Student Exchange Programme. The answer should be axiomatic: otherwise why are they training for the coaching profession? But have they considered the implications of a job which, at the highest level, can become hazardous to their health, their reputation and their employment prospects? In a discussion I had with Pep Guardiola at the FC Barcelona training ground, two months before he announced his resignation, we agreed that being a professional coach was not so much a job, but a way of life.

A guest tutor on our Pro courses, Howard Wilkinson, chairman of the League Managers Association in England, provoked our unsuspecting hopefuls with a demanding challenge: "Are you obsessed by the subject [coaching], and are you ready to commit the rest of your life to it?" Anyone who considered answering no to either was advised to think again about their career path. Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal FC head coach and one of European football's most respected technicians, offered support for this uncompromising view when he eloquently stated: "You must love the game and want to share with the players a certain way of life, a way of seeing football." But, as José Mourinho of Real Madrid CF said at a UEFA coaches' forum: "Philosophy is one thing, but you also need to be pragmatic."

The demands of the job in professional coaching can be excessive (this also applies to association coach educators and club academy coaches), and this is reflected in the time commitment required. The story is told of a club coach's daughter who brings her friends home one afternoon to see an unusual sight. Due to inclement weather, training has been cancelled and a tracksuited gentleman is sleeping on the family living room sofa. The little girl points to the "sleeping beauty" and says to her friends: "Look, I told you I had a father." Families, friends and interests can all suffer due to the ever-increasing clamour for a coach to be omnipresent, at the beck and call of the media, players, sponsors, owners, and others. Sir Alex Ferguson of Manchester United FC offered some advice to his coaching colleagues on this aspect of the job when he said: "You are the head of a backroom team and you need staff to do what you cannot do – there are so many challenges that you cannot do everything. You need to delegate."

In professional football, the to-do list is exacting, but it is the pressure which is wearing. The constant demand to produce results, the burden of dealing with elite players, the stress of trying to satisfy hungry media, and the multifarious difficulties imposed by time restraints, crisis situations, intrusive agents and all-powerful owners take their toll. As Arsène Wenger put it: "Today, every decision by the coach is tested." While Pep Guardiola poignantly observed: "Sometimes, the pressure gets to us too much."

But, before we are engulfed by too much negativity, it is important to recognise that for the majority of top technicians, the pluses far outweigh the minuses. Of course, the old maxim also applies: "If you are lucky enough to find a way of life you love, you have to find the courage to live it." The Pro licence students who have attended our courses have been forced to confront the question: So you want to be a professional coach? But, in truth, the realities will only register with them when they reach the front line as professionals – it will be a job which quickly becomes a way of life.

Andy Roxburgh, UEFA Technical Director



Arsène Wenger, who shares his vision of football with his players

UEFA technical

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The collective voice

Is there a coaches' association in your country? If not, should there be one? How should it be organised? What services should it offer to the coaches who become members?

Within the European football family, cultures vary widely, as do contractual and legal parameters. But, in terms of looking for benchmarks, the League Managers Association (LMA) in England can provide valuable pointers in a number of directions – not least the organisation's mission statement penned by the LMA's chairman, former Leeds United and England manager Howard Wilkinson.

"The LMA," it reads, "was established to be the collective, representative voice of the professional football managers. It aims to protect the interests of our members, promote their views for the benefit of the game, and deliver a range of support services to assist them in all areas of their professional and personal life. The LMA strives to be constant in the volatile world of football management."

This volatility can be measured – and in May, the LMA published a series of statistics prepared in conjunction with one of the organisation's partners, the Warwick Business School. People may point at Sir Alex Ferguson (26 years at Manchester United FC) or Arsène Wenger (16 at Arsenal FC) as examples of longevity, but the average tenure of the head coaches (alias managers) dismissed in England's Premier League is 2.65 years. In the three strata below the top division, the average descends steadily to 0.89 in League 2. The overall average across the four fully professional divisions is 1.75 years – an increase on previous years, which could be interpreted as a result of UEFA's financial fair play measures, which are now being implemented at domestic level.

By the time the 2011/12 league season had come to an end, half of the professional clubs in the four divisions of the English league had changed their manager, including seven of the 20 clubs in the Premier League. European champions Chelsea FC's last five managers





Howard Wilkinson,
president of the
League Managers
Association
in England

have had an average tenure of 0.85 years. However, the proportion of resignations has risen, whereas the number of dismissals has dropped. Of the 49 cases, 33 were dismissals and 16 resignations, with 9 of the latter motivated by a

move to another club.

Another revealing statistic is that half of the managers (49.07%, to be precise) who make their debut in professional league football are never reappointed to a second job. The LMA's annual statistical summary also remarks that *"over one-third of the managers dismissed went within a year of appointment, which indicates failings in the recruitment process"*.

These parameters paint a picture of the sort of advice and support that the modern professional coach can require during a walk along the rocky road of management.

Dismissals and their repercussions are obviously a major concern. The LMA maintains that frequent changes are detrimental to clubs on a number of sporting and administrative fronts. At the same time, the organisation offers its members strong legal support and is currently working on the implementation of a standardised model contract which, as the LMA's report explains, sets out to *"gain a fair and reasonable outcome to severance arrangements following the departure of a manager, with minimum legal involvement, creating savings for all parties"*. The project takes on even greater relevance after a season in which English clubs spent a record amount on compensation and legal fees. One dismissed manager wrote to the LMA to say, *"I really appreciate everything you have done, and there is no way I could have got through the last four months without your constant advice and support."*

It's significant that the LMA pays great attention to the managers and coaches who are, as they put it, *'in transition'*. Support services remain available to those who are out of work, and the LMA also helps managers to maintain their profile and their contacts with the game by involving them in interviews, public appearances, football events, coaching clinics and community projects which offer great opportunities for networking. Job vacancies are also circulated among members.

But one of the main features of the LMA's support for the profession is continued education (with e-learning an important component), which allows coaches to enhance their skills, especially while they are *'in transition'*. Significantly, the LMA offers courses under the banner of *'Survive, Win, Succeed'*, as well as educational options in the fields of technical coaching, management and organisation, and the development of leadership skills, which are becoming increasingly relevant in today's professional

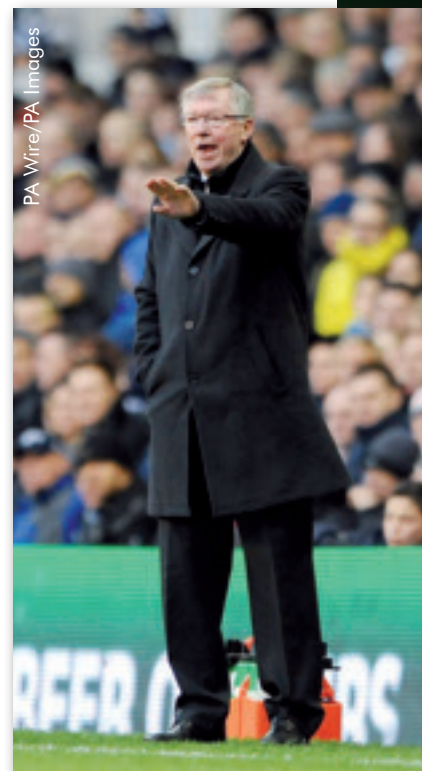
game. The LMA's courses are recognised by The Football Association and are valid as refresher courses aimed at retaining the UEFA Pro licence. The courses focus on easy access via the internet for busy coaches, access to top-quality experts, and training based on practical rather than theoretical problems.

The LMA's activities are built on the foundations of strong commercial relationships with the game's sponsors and partners. This means that a number of support services can be offered to LMA members on an efficient basis – among them extensive medical and travel insurance schemes, which cover 91 British managers and coaches working in 38 different countries. Still on the healthcare theme, the LMA organises *'Fit to Manage'* health tests – a project initiated in response to a number of medical conditions affecting coaches, many of them attributable to the stress inherent in the profession. Last season, 90 members accepted the invitation to have a check-up. The value of this service was underlined by the fact that one in four of them was referred for treatment.

Another project in the LMA's work-in-progress tray is a scheme whereby referees are invited to visit clubs and participate in training sessions, with a view to enhancing their professional development and encouraging greater communication between crucial *'pitch people'*. Within the same area, the LMA has also prepared proposals on the management of the technical area, aimed at ironing out the physical and operational inconsistencies which become apparent during a domestic league season. The objective is to eliminate – or at least minimise – the potential sources of conflict between managers and fourth officials.

The LMA celebrates its 20th birthday this year – and many of the concepts listed in the organisation's mission statement have been achieved in terms of protecting managers' rights and creating a powerful voice at the top of the game's administration which can promote and publish members' views on key issues within the game. By the way, it's only fair play to mention that one of the declared aims of the organisation is *"to encourage honourable practice, conduct and courtesy"* – role-model values which have great relevance in today's competitive game, in sport as a whole, and in society.

Condensing the LMA's spectrum of activities into a brief overview has been done with a view to provoking discussion on what can or needs to be done to protect and support the coaching profession in your country. ●



Sir Alex Ferguson has
shown exemplary
longevity with
Manchester United FC

How coaches develop

By Andy Roxburgh, UEFA Technical Director.



José Mourinho has won both major European club trophies, the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Cup

about the importance of having a big playing career in order to become a top technician.

Frank Rijkaard, who was a European champion both at club and international level (twice with AC Milan, once with AFC Ajax and also with the Netherlands), once said to me that being a top player was a key to the coaching door, but when you passed through, you had to show that you could do the job. Frank, a Rolls Royce as a player, proved that he also had the coaching ability when he led FC Barcelona to the 2006 UEFA Champions League title in Paris. Being famous as a player can have its advantages, but as long as you are at home on the pitch, then coaching credibility is possible, and José was a natural on the training ground.

Like all aspiring student coaches, José, trained for the job. He graduated in physical education, took part in management programmes, and attended coaching courses (the first two were at the Scottish FA when I was the technical director).

The value of participating in coach education programmes run by the national associations was summed up by two graduates of the Italian FA's Coverciano training centre. **Marcello Lippi** (▼), world champion and UEFA Champions League winner, once said: "The

José Mourinho (▲), who won the UEFA Champions League twice, successfully guided Real Madrid CF to last season's Spanish league title, further adding to his reputation as one of the world's greatest coaches. His development path to the top of the coaching profession provides guidance and inspiration to those with similar ambitions. José once said: "My training as a coach was fully comprehensive," and it is hard to argue with this view.

Firstly, he came from a football family – his father, Felix, was a professional player who later became a senior club coach. And it was in this environment that the young José became interested in scouting and coaching. He was also a player, although not in the professional ranks, and this raises the issue



Marcello Lippi during a training session with the Italian national team



Fabio Capello underlines the great importance of coach education

medallist, was in no doubt about the importance of his education when he said: "The training at Coverciano gives you your coaching know-how." Like all former players, Marcello and Fabio were tutored to see the game from a different perspective (at a basic level, not back to front as a player, but side to side as a coach) and gradually gained an appreciation of the all-encompassing leadership role of the coach. Gaining their coaching diplomas was no guarantee of success, but it was a confirmation of their professional competence – the rest was up to them.

While in the development phase as a coach, work experience and the use of mentors becomes important. And this was an aspect of the process that José benefited from in a way that few could match. After a period of working with youth teams, he was employed as an assistant at Sporting Clube de Portugal, FC Porto, and then FC Barcelona. During that time he had **Bobby Robson** (▼), a guru of English football management,

Coverciano experience is useful for organising all the things you picked up as a professional player." **Fabio Capello** (▲), also a UEFA Champions League gold

assistant at Sporting Clube de Portugal, FC Porto, and then FC Barcelona. During that time he had **Bobby Robson** (▼), a guru of English football management,

José Mourinho was Sir Bobby Robson's assistant when FC Barcelona won the UEFA Cup Winners' Cup in 1997





and the master Dutch coach, **Louis van Gaal** (▲), as his guides. The latter encouraged him and even let him manage the first team during cup matches. Louis was the ultimate tutor and a role model for all aficionados of coach education. But at some point the student has to take the plunge into shark infested waters – to sink, swim or be eaten alive.

Guy Thys (▼), the legendary Belgian coach, confirmed the harsh reality of football life when he stated: *“Education is always indispensable, but the match still remains the ultimate examination.”* So, it was time for our hero to stand alone, and José started coaching at SL Benfica (briefly) before moving to Uniao de Leira, a modest

Guy Thys, head coach of Belgium during the 1986 FIFA World Cup in Mexico



At FC Barcelona, José Mourinho was also assistant to Louis van Gaal

club, but one which benefited greatly from the “Mourinho effect”. FC Porto came calling, and after four years on the frontline, José had won the UEFA Champions League, the UEFA Cup and two Portuguese league titles. Forty years of being immersed in football had made him an overnight success! The rest is history: league and cup success at Chelsea FC and FC Internazionale Milano (two league titles at each), plus a UEFA Champions League triumph with the Nerazzurri, before proceeding to win the Copa del Rey and the Spanish league with Real Madrid. He remains favourite to be the first coach to win the UEFA Champions League with three different clubs.

How do coaches develop? Using José Mourinho’s story as a guideline, we can see that a number of things come into play, including personal development, life experiences, formulating a vision of the game, studying tactics, learning to use technology, etc. It is a mixture of coach education, playing the game, coaching teams, making contacts, using mentors and working with football people which combines to produce the mature coach. José Mourinho encapsulated the complex process of becoming a coach when he poignantly pronounced: *“There’s a history made up by each of us that leads us to that final victory. It’s that history, in its entirety, that turns us into champions.”*

Coaches, then, need to know how to coach, teach, manage, lead, learn, communicate, organise, plan, prepare, analyse and select. But this will not be enough, as

Vicente del Bosque (▼), Spain’s world champion coach, said at a UEFA coaches’ gathering: *“If you only know football, you are lost.”* Europe’s top coaches can easily relate to those words and to the sentiments of the jazz musician who once declared: *“We play life.”* Top



For Vicente del Bosque, a coach’s knowledge should go beyond just football

technicians José Mourinho, Sir Alex Ferguson and the others know football, but they also know about life – their training to reach the top of their profession has been, in José’s words, *“fully comprehensive”*. ●



José Mourinho, now in charge of Real Madrid CF...

...and back a coaching course in Scotland led by Andy Roxburgh, now UEFA’s technical director



A united view on youth development

At the final round of the European Under-17 Championship in Slovenia, UEFA's technical team was formed of Ross Mathie (three decades in youth development at the Scottish Football Association) and John Peacock, who seemed to enjoy the novel experience of observing from the main stand instead of leading the England team from the dugout. It seemed an ideal occasion to invite them to reflect on the evolution of youth football. Despite historical rivalries between English and Scots, they presented a united view on the state of the game.

If you had to highlight one particular change, what would it be?

Ross: "The main thing is that when I started in 1981, I had one assistant and a 'sponge man'. You're now talking about 12-14 staff behind every team, covering all the specialist areas right through to educational and sports science staff. That's one of the biggest changes and for the smaller countries, the challenge is to finance it."

John: "I would endorse that. Nowadays, the coach needs to set up and organise an extensive team-behind-the-team in addition to managing a squad of 18 players. So it adds up to a good coaching experience. You have to learn what and how to delegate and you need regular staff meetings to make sure that everybody knows exactly what they're doing. The smaller countries are beginning to realise that, if you are to take youth development seriously, there is a need to invest in exercise scientists, video analysis staff and even a chef! This has raised the profile of youth football in the last five or six years and, for the coach, all the real high-profile coaching issues come into play."

Does this have implications in coach education terms?

Ross: "I think we've realised that, if we are required to impart more knowledge to elite youth players, we need to have more knowledge ourselves. Then you realise the value of



Germany's Max Dittgen (left) and Nathan Ake of the Netherlands during the final of the European Under-17 Championship in Slovenia

UEFA initiatives like the Study Group Scheme, which really help when it comes to continuous re-education. In the past you were left to your own devices, but nowadays you know that you need to pay attention to re-education if you don't want to run the risk of losing your coaching licence. That was a great step forward on the coach education side. I have noticed an improvement in standards at all levels of coaching: children, youths and adults. There's a lot of good work being done in the youth sector – and this shows in these tournaments. Teams are much better organised and we very rarely see the scores of 5-0 or 6-0 that we used to see a few years back."

John: "Teams are well organised and make it difficult for you to win games. We talk about block defending and this has become quite sophisticated, even at youth level, so the challenge is for the top nations to break it down. In the last six or seven years, the quality of technical work has improved and the game is generally faster. Coaches have to find that bit extra which can unlock the door. It's the hardest part of the game and the number of goals is lower than in the past. Are we short of mavericks? Inventive players? Are we finding the right balance between defensive and attacking qualities?"

John Peacock



Empics Sport

Do well-organised teams depend on the amount of preparation time available?

John: "If you read the technical report on Slovenia, you'll see that this is an issue that Ross and I have raised. In England, we're lucky to get three or four days, whereas other teams can get two weeks to prepare. You can have too much preparation time – and youngsters of 16 or 17 can find it quite difficult to spend long periods of time on the road. The players expect you to keep them occupied. That's an important facet because if you have genuine ambitions to become a top player, you have to prepare yourself for long periods on the road. I find that youngsters today need help in managing themselves during their downtime. It can be problematic – it's nothing to do with technique or tactics or physical work. The key areas can sometimes be the social and psychological aspects that determine whether a player is going to succeed or fail."

Ross: "In the past, there was a 100% focus on a career in football. These days, we can't make that assumption. We have to try to prepare youngsters for a career outside top-level football. OK, we're 'teachers of football' but we have to equip our 'students' to learn. They have to be able to learn other skills as well. Too many set out with visions of making fast bucks in football and neglect other options."

What you're saying is that the role of the youth coach has become more complex?

Ross: "I maintain that if you're a good youth coach, that should be your career. But it should be rewarded accordingly. So many coaches I know are magnificent at youth level but, because the money lies in other areas, they'll leave to become a manager or an assistant manager, even if they aren't really equipped for it. The tendency is for administrators to maintain that they can't afford to spend money on youth coaching. But the question should really be: can we afford to not spend money on it?"

John: "It should be a career pathway. Look at Ginés Meléndez in Spain or Albert Stuivenberg in the Netherlands. Seeing a youngster progress from 15 or 16 years of age into the senior team gives me – and all of us – a lot of satisfaction. But you need to be rewarded and I think that specialised knowledge, experience and consistency are valuable commodities."

Ross: "Sometimes the decision to move away from youth development isn't always the best football decision. Often, a coach who receives an offer feels obliged to take it because of family considerations. Another facet is that

I believe youth development should be outside the sphere of the first team in a recruitment sense. If you've got good youth coaches, it doesn't make sense for a new first team manager to come in and change the staff."



John Peacock and Ross Mathie with UEFA's technical director, Andy Roxburgh

How do you assess the work being done in club academies?

John: "The profile has risen dramatically. Facilities are better and you have more contact time between coaches and players. As a coach, that means you need to have clear ideas about how best to use that contact time. It isn't just about taking them on to the training pitch – you need to have question and answer sessions; you need to spend time illustrating things by DVD. The coach has to be cleverer about how to manage the time spent with players."

Has youth football become more results-oriented?

Ross: "One of the challenges is that the results of the senior team often have far-reaching effects. If we don't qualify for a EURO or a World Cup, who gets the blame? Youth development! We 'aren't producing the players' or 'coach education is not good enough'."

John: "I think we should look at countries like Spain and France, where successes have been built on a playing philosophy and style at youth levels. One of the key issues is to balance team preparation with individual needs. If you want to challenge players about their development, the best place to do it is at European finals, when you pit yourself against the best teams and the best individuals in Europe. So you want your team to get the results that will get it into the finals. But you also need to find time to focus on individual education as well. It's an interesting subject."

Ross: "I agree to a certain extent that development is more important than results. But I think that winning is an important facet – or rather, the will to win. There's a limit to how many times you can tell your players, 'Don't worry about the result today,' because it's all about the way you play and the philosophy behind your style. But you also have to have the competitive element. At this level, we should try to create a winning mentality but without creating a winner-takes-it-all environment." ●

Ross Mathie



Vogel/Bongarts/Getty Images

Coaching in women's football

When the final of the 2011/12 UEFA Women's Champions League shattered attendance records, former Swedish international Anna Signeul, currently head coach of the Scottish national team, was in Munich's Olympiastadion alongside Germany's World Cup and three-time Women's EURO-winning coach Tina Theune as UEFA's technical observers – and the jury that selected Camille Abily as player of the match. They saw Patrice Lair's Olympique Lyonnais lift the trophy for the second season in succession thanks to a 2-0 victory over Sven Kehlert's 1. FFC Frankfurt.

The fact that two male coaches occupied the technical areas at the Olympiastadion and that only two of the competition's 11 victorious coaches have been women (Monika Staab in 2002 and Martina Voss in 2009) provided an obvious cue for Anna and Tina review the state of coaching in women's football.

men have the advantage in terms of opportunities. This is a pity, because the mixed courses I have attended have had an exceptionally good atmosphere."

Anna: "I agree with Tina. But it's difficult to generalise because, at the moment, there are big differences with regard to the situation within individual associations. What is undeniable is that women's football is writing history almost day after day. We are in a rapid growth situation which demands that we review our objectives almost continuously. I agree with Tina about the benefits of blending female students into mixed courses but, on the other hand, I can also see benefits from organising all-women's courses because this is a way of building a network of coaches in which colleagues are prepared to support each other and to develop their coaching skills in what we might call a 'home environment', where the parameters are the same. It also avoids situations which can be intimidating and allows women coaches to go about things in a more relaxed way and perform better."

Tina: "I appreciate that. But in Germany we believe that football is something that we have to study together and if you separate the men's game from the women's, you create a certain mindset which might not be ideal."

Anne: "I'm convinced that, in some countries, male students feel uncomfortable when there are women on the courses. But it's not just a behavioural question. I think there is a point where you need to focus on the specificities of the women's game, as opposed to dealing exclusively with men's football. For instance, we have just watched the Women's Champions League final and it would be interesting for a mixed group of male and female coaching students to discuss the technical and tactical differences between the men's and women's finals.

It's obvious that you don't have the same levels of skill in the women's game, so you need to be realistic and design different strategies for playing and for player development. You have to adjust your coaching skills to the players that you coach.

"This is a fundamental talking point. Is it right to send women to coaching courses which are based exclusively on men's football? OK, you can argue that football is football, but I don't buy that. Children's football, third-division football and elite football are not the same. Nor is women's



Anna Signeul (left) and Tina Theune (right) presented the player of the match award for the UEFA Women's Champions League final to Olympique Lyonnais' Camille Abily, accompanied by her coach, Patrice Lair

Tina: "This is a complex subject with a lot of different angles because we're basically talking about coach education and opportunities for coach education. There is work to be done on getting men and women together on coaching courses. There are a lot of very good coaches in the women's game – male and female – but I think that



Martina Voss, one of only two female coaches to have won the UEFA Women's Champions League

football. So when you do a Pro licence course, you want to come away from it as an expert. And, in general footballing terms, it's undeniable that you do. You're better as a coach. But there's a moment when you want to be an expert in women's football."

Tina: "You've reminded me of a German hockey coach who was Olympic champion, first with women and then with men. He said that he learned a lot by coaching the women's team – especially in terms of needing to be emotionally close to the players or maintaining a certain distance. A coach needs to be emotional. In the men's game, the Borussia Dortmund coach, Jürgen Klopp, is extremely passionate about his football – and the players react to that. The Barcelona players always said that Pep Guardiola was especially good at explaining why they should do certain things in certain ways. I think that's especially important in the women's game, where the players want to be reassured that they have a specific role to play. I think another important facet of coaching is that you need to be true to your own identity – whether you are a man or a woman. I think those will be the key features in the future: showing emotion, possessing an identity, and being very competent in the small details of coaching."

Anna: "One thing that strikes me is that, if you look at the benchmarks in the men's game – Spain and Barcelona – you can't help but think that this is what the women's game should be all about. It's short passing, it's quick thinking, it's intelligent movement, it's an attacking vocation and it's good, high, collective defending. Women can play that way."

"I think that the coach of the future has to be good at adjusting to rapid changes. In the past, a coach in the women's game was associated with a certain way of behaving. It was all about personal relationships rather than the job of coaching in itself. Now we need to find a viable professional approach that will satisfy the demands of the women's game as it is today and as it will be in the future. We need to review the situation all the time and try to find the best ways to move forward."

UEFA's approach to the women's game has developed very rapidly and I think the national associations should also move quickly to pinpoint the needs in terms of coaching in the women's game and design their coach education programmes accordingly."

Tina: "The immediate truth is that we need a lot more female coaches – many more. So, for the future, we need to give the existing coaches as much encouragement as we can and we need to persuade more and more top players to stay in football as coaches or decision-makers. In Germany we focus on encouraging women to

become regional or local coaches, which helps to give them an appetite for the job. When women's football really took off in our country, we were fortunate to have Gero Bisanz in the German association, who opened a lot of doors for us. I think this is important for other associations. Women need to have political support from the decision-makers in terms of offering them opportunities."

Anna: "I think the key is to stimulate the players' interest in coaching while they are still young and not leave it until they are the other side of 30. There are players who retire from the game at, say, 33 and have trained every day for almost 20 years. If you ask them whether they'd like to work every day as a coach, there's a lot of reluctance to do so. We have to cater for the former players in the sense that we need to make the coaching profession attractive to them. In Sweden we have a good idea, which is to encourage women to start in community coaching – which means they do a couple of hours' coaching on a Saturday, for example. It's not a great time commitment but it does stimulate their interest in coaching – and that's the best way forward." ●

Olympique Lyonnais players hold aloft the UEFA Women's Champions League trophy, presented to them by the UEFA president, Michel Platini



Sweet success and a bitter taste

At this time of year, it has become a tradition for the UEFA technician to salute the coaches who have reached club and national team competition finals. The 2011/12 campaign is no exception. But the season's sweet successes were mixed with touches of bitterness. The tragic deaths of Spanish coach Manuel Preciado at the end of the season and of the Welsh national team coach, Gary Speed, at the age of 42 served as reminders that the burdens of the coaching profession can sometimes be hard to bear, especially, as in Gary's case, when they are carried deep inside. At the inquest, there was an explicit reference to "the strains of management". UEFA's president, Michel Platini, was among those who paid tribute – and the UEFA technician echoes his sentiments while saluting those who struck the much happier notes during another memorable season.

UEFA Champions League

in Munich (Fußball Arena)

FC Bayern München v Chelsea FC 1-1 after extra time; 3-4 on penalties

Gold: Roberto Di Matteo (last 6 matches) / André Villas-Boas (first 7)

Silver: Jupp Heynckes

UEFA Europa League

in Bucharest

Club Atlético de Madrid v Athletic Club 3-0

Gold: Diego Simeone

Silver: Marcelo Bielsa

UEFA Women's Champions League

in Munich (Olympiastadion)

Olympique Lyonnais v 1. FFC Frankfurt 2-0

Gold: Patrice Lair

Silver: Sven Kahlert

European Under-17 Championship

in Slovenia

Netherlands v Germany 1-1; 5-4 on penalties

Gold: Albert Stuivenburg

Silver: Stefan Böger

FIFA Club World Cup

in Yokohama

FC Barcelona v Santos FC 4-0

Gold: Josep Guardiola

Silver: Muricy Ramalho



Roberto di Matteo and his players celebrate winning the UEFA Champions League trophy after their win against FC Bayern München

UEFA Futsal EURO

in Croatia

Spain v Russia 3-1 after extra time

Gold: José Venancio

Silver: Sergei Skorovich

UEFA Futsal Cup

in Lleida

FC Barcelona v MFK Dinamo Moskva 3-1

Gold: Marc Carmona

Silver: "Tino" Pérez

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