



UEFA
Grassroots
Programme

GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER

Editorial:
A Place to Play

**The Seven Colours
of UEFA's Grassroots
Rainbow**



**Grassroots –
How do we make
them Grow?**



A Charter for Change



**Dreaming about
Grassroots**

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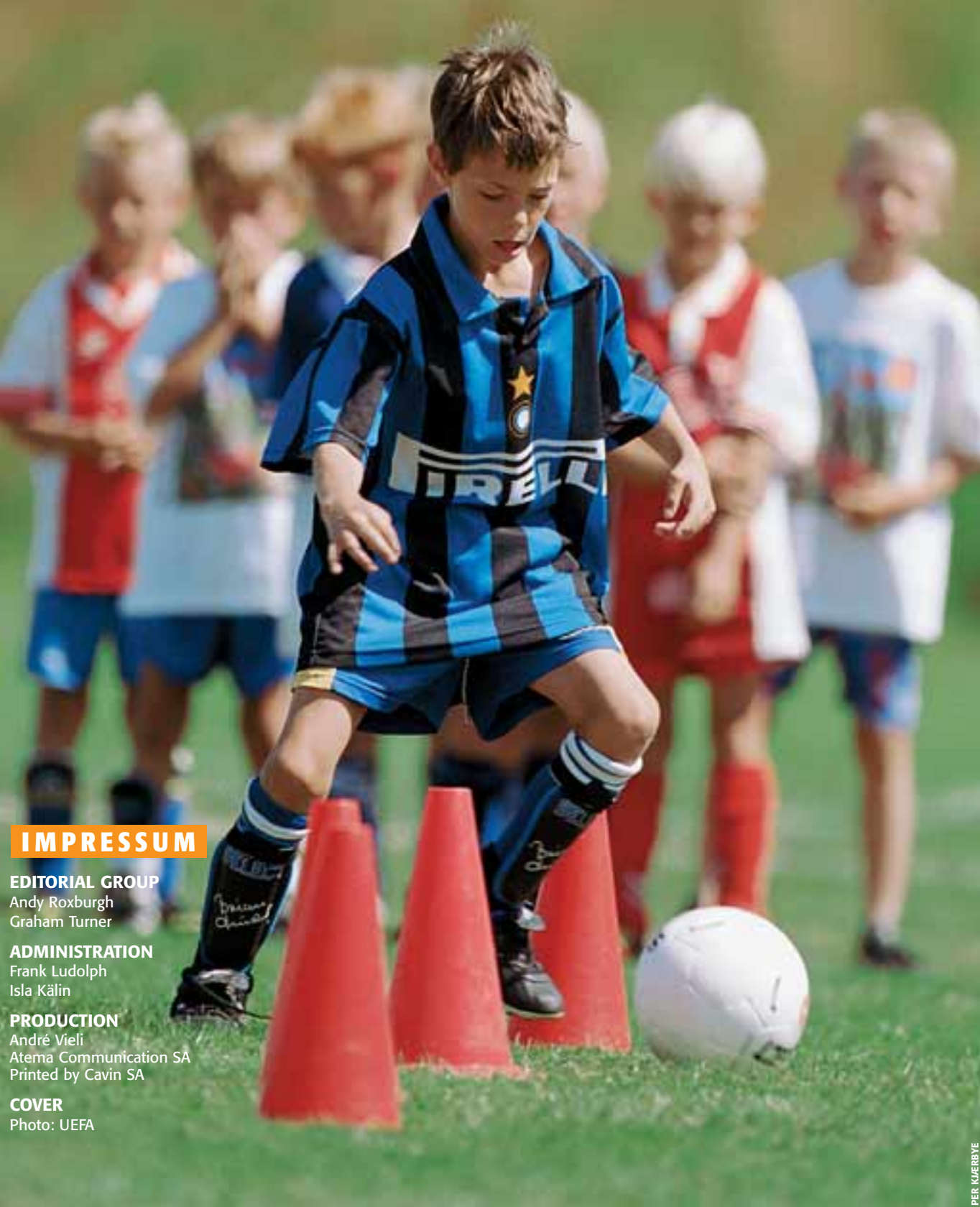
JAN DE KONING, KNVB

GIVING
YOUNGSTERS
THE POSSIBILITY
TO PLAY.



BONGARTS/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

A MAXI-PITCH
IN THE NETHERLANDS.



PER KJÆRBYE

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A PLACE TO PLAY

EDITORIAL

**BY ANDY ROXBURGH,
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

A boy handed his father a poor report card and then asked him, "Dad, what do you think my trouble is? Is it hereditary or the environment?" When it comes to grassroots football, there is little we can do about the hereditary element, but there is a lot we can do to create a dynamic, welcoming environment.

Football, often in partnership with government authorities and commercial agencies, has a duty to provide the conditions which will create interest in the game and allow young people to grow through football. The UEFA president, Lennart Johansson, summed up the need for intensive activity in this area when he said, "If the grassroots are not cultivated, football at all levels will suffer." So what are the priorities?

Constructing pitches for playing and training has become a major issue. The ever increasing loss of street football and the general lack of practice areas have necessitated major investment in building projects and playing surfaces. UEFA's CHF 52 million contribution through the HatTrick fund has helped the associations to construct hundreds of mini-pitches throughout the continent. These small, artificial pitches (21x13 m) have been erected to encourage free play among children, youths and adults. The next phase of development has already started, and is focused on maxi-pitches (approx. 40x20m) which are suitable for organised training and four-a-side, five-a-side or six-a-side team play. In the Netherlands, these areas are called Cruyff courts and are built with the joint efforts of the Dutch FA (Mathieu Sprengers, president of the association and the UEFA treasurer, is a driving force in this area), the

Johan Cruyff Foundation, and the local authorities. Partnership is unquestionably the way forward when it comes to facility provision, whether it's the funding of full-sized pitches or mini/maxi play areas.

Grassroots development today also depends on human resources. Volunteers, grassroots leaders, youth coaches and event organisers are in great demand in order to provide the logistical support the game requires at this level. But recruitment needs to start at the top and it is therefore vitally important that UEFA's member associations employ grassroots managers to coordinate and lead grassroots development on a national level. The countries that are in the vanguard of grassroots work have reaped the benefit of having full-time specialists implement their mass participation schemes.

For the aforementioned facilities and human resources to be of value, a variety of grassroots programmes are necessary. These projects can be social, sporting, promotional or specialised – a 'football for all' philosophy requires activities which can appeal to the widest possible elements of society. Football for the disabled, the

homeless, the unemployed, ethnic minorities and the disadvantaged are just some of the groups which can profit from participating in grassroots football. Social inclusion and integration have been successfully achieved as the result of many grassroots football schemes. The cross-cultures project, backed by the Danish FA, the Norwegian FA and UEFA, which started in the 1990s in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, has been an outstanding success in this respect.

The importance of a vibrant grassroots environment cannot be over-emphasised, neither for football nor for society in general. If there were no schools, no formal education, the world would be a poorer place. The same principle applies to grassroots football – if we don't create opportunities for people to play sport, and football in particular, then community life will suffer. At UEFA, football is our passion, our raison d'être, but we must accept our social responsibility for bringing people together and trying to make their lives better through the football experience. We cannot do much about heredity, but we can create a grassroots football environment which lets the game flourish and those who play it blossom.



Stars like David Beckham can have an enormous influence on grassroots football.



LENNART JOHANSSON ADVOCATES
THE IMPORTANCE OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL.

THE SEVEN COLOURS OF UEFA'S GRASSROOTS RAINBOW

**"THE UEFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IS AWARE OF THE GREAT IMPORTANCE
OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL AND HAS THEREFORE CONSTANTLY STEPPED UP ITS COMMITMENT
TO THE GAME AT GRASSROOTS LEVEL. GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL IS THE FOUNDATION."**

That was part of the preamble when Lennart Johansson opened the 6th UEFA Grassroots Conference at the House of European Football in Nyon. "A varied conference with a clear purpose and expert speakers has been put together," the UEFA president added, "and we hope that this conference programme and the workshops later this year will further stimulate and advance grassroots work in our member associations."

All 52 of them were represented at a massive and intensive three-day event that reflected the plethora of topics

covered by the grassroots umbrella. Among the participants were the members of UEFA's Grassroots and Disability Football Panels, guests from disability agencies, representatives from the Asian, Central & North American and African confederations plus former stars now playing the role of grassroots 'ambassadors', such as Dariusz Dziekanowski, Serguei Aleinikov and Paulo Sousa.

Apart from a practical session led by Yves Debonnaire of the Swiss FA, conference-room sessions ranged from futsal (world and European champion

coach Javier Lozano of Spain) to disability football (Jeff Davies from England), promotional grassroots activities (Piet Hubers of the Netherlands and Eric Vlieg of adidas International) and first-hand feedback from national associations (Hansruedi Hasler of Switzerland, Thomas Slosarich and Keld Bordinggaard from Denmark, Franco Ferrari from Italy and Jean-Pierre Morlans of France) in addition to discussion groups, the fruits of which are reviewed on later pages.

Without wishing to single anybody out, a presentation by Jim Fleeting highlighted one of the key areas broached during the conference – the social value and implications of grassroots football. Jim has been at the head of the Scottish FA's grassroots community scheme since 1992 and was 'mein host' when Edinburgh staged the Homeless World Cup last summer.

Significantly, the event attracted 60,000 spectators. But of even greater significance was the impact on the participants themselves. No fewer than 92% claimed to have found 'a new motivation for life'. Almost half of them improved their housing situation as a direct result of the event. More than one third found regular employment and/or



A practical demonstration at the Stade Nyonnais ground, opposite UEFA's head office.



Futsal expert Javier Lozano.

pursued their education, while another significant number were motivated to address their drug dependency.

In sporting terms, 72% continued to play football after the event and no fewer than 16 signed professional or semi-pro contracts in playing or coaching capacities at clubs.

It was a clear indication that grassroots football has a vital social role to play

in terms of reducing anti-social behaviour patterns such as vandalism, drug abuse or the poison-barbed trident of bigotry, sectarianism and racism – or even forming part of rehabilitation programmes at prisons. Jim pointed out that the setting up of a pilot 'midnight league' scheme involving 1,320 young players in Scotland had 'coincided' with a 40% reduction in night-time calls to the police.

The project, sponsored by a bank, underlines the fact that local, national and multinational business concerns, along with national and local governments and city councils, are more than willing to support grassroots projects of tangible social value. In other words, football people, such as national associations or professional clubs, are not alone in nurturing the grassroots. And, as head of the European football family, UEFA has a part to play – and the nature of UEFA's role was discussed and reviewed during the conference in Nyon.

UEFA is currently active in seven areas within the grassroots environment. In broad terms (some of these areas are mentioned in greater detail elsewhere in this issue), these are:

- The endorsement programme entitled the **UEFA Grassroots Charter**.
- Support for Special Olympics, disability football and so on within **UEFA's social responsibility programmes**.
- The **UEFA Regions' Cup**, providing international competition for amateur teams.
- The continental conferences and courses provided by the **UEFA Grassroots Programme**.
- The **grassroots information service**, comprising publications, an extranet and the UEFA website.
- **UEFA grassroots promotional activities** such as the Summer of Grassroots Football, Young Champions, the Starball Match and other events.
- The **UEFA HatTrick project**, which is promoting and funding the provision of mini-pitches and maxi-pitches.

These areas of activity create the seven colours of UEFA's grassroots rainbow – and our 'pot of gold' is grassroots football which is available to everyone in Europe who wants to play.



BOBBY CHARLTON CASTS AN EXPERT EYE.

GRASSROOTS: HOW DO WE MAKE THEM GROW?

**“YOU WILL NEVER LEARN EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT GARDENING,”
SAYS THE INTRODUCTION TO A BEST-SELLING BOOK, “BUT YOU CAN BECOME AN EXPERT
IF YOU COMBINE THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED FROM BOOKS
WITH A GREAT DEAL OF CAREFUL OBSERVATION AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.”**

Much the same can be said when it comes to cultivating the grassroots of European football. There is no precise recipe for success across a continent so varied in footballing climates and ‘growing conditions’. But one of the beauties of the grassroots conference in Nyon was that it allowed so many

‘gardeners’ to exchange their careful observations and practical experience.

The discussion sessions yielded enough material to write an ample gardening manual and, apart from offering some detailed practical tips, threw up fundamental questions about the precise

nature of the grassroots philosophy and the values it represents and defends. Fascinating talking points were raised, such as:

Club and country

At grassroots level, there is no obvious reason for conflicts to arise. But there are areas where good working relationships need to be built between clubs and national or regional associations, based on respect for each other’s objectives. Many top clubs have excellent grassroots programmes that embrace school activities, player visits, soccer camps, tournaments and even providing schools with equipment. Understandably, talent detection is often their prime objective, along with a desire to win and secure the allegiance of future ‘customers’. National associations may therefore need to dovetail their efforts with club programmes in order to keep the footballing base of the pyramid as wide as possible and to address the issue of teenage drop-out rates, especially in the 13-15 bracket, maintaining the objective of offering football to everybody, irrespective of talent levels.



FOOTBALL NEEDS “GARDENERS”.



In many countries, there is also a tremendous amount of work to be done in terms of offering footballing opportunities to girls as well as boys.

Clubs, associations and schools would also benefit from close collaboration in the pursuit of the optimum use of playing facilities – including artificial pitches – and in fundraising activities.

Finding enough ‘gardeners’

Encouraging more and more people to enjoy grassroots football entails a need for more coaches, leaders, referees and... volunteers. Some national asso-

ciations are struggling to cope with shortages of volunteers and, in some countries, there is no ‘volunteer culture’ at all. We need to find ways not only of recruiting enough volunteers to keep grassroots football in good health and of supporting them, but also of offering incentives and, above all, of recognising of the work they do.

Making sure the boots fit

Grassroots football needs to be tailored to meet the needs of its players. This means acquiring more knowledge about children and how they develop. In more pragmatic

terms, the right equipment has to be available – even if it is loaned or shared. At the conference there was a suggestion that the 5-7 age group should use a size 3 football and the 8-13 category a size 4, with size 5 reserved for 14+ players. Another proposal was for national associations to encourage equipment manufacturers to offer inexpensive ‘starter kits’ for children’s football.

Social issues

The conference served to confirm that grassroots football receives widely varying levels of political support,



THE GRASSROOTS CONFERENCE IN NYON.

even though governments are quickly coming to recognise the social value attached to the practice of sport in general and football in particular. It is important to forge links not only with the ministry of sport but also with the government and local agencies who deal with education, health and welfare, crime, drugs, the homeless, anti-social behaviour, rehabilitation programmes or refugees – all of whom stand to gain from grassroots football projects.

For 'football people' this is, of course, easier said than done. It means that national association staff members need to be equipped to forge links outside football and it means that they also need to carry compelling evidence in their briefcases, such as detailed data, case studies and clear indications of how grassroots schemes can contribute to different government priorities and objectives.

The same evidence, it has to be said, is also invaluable when approaching potential sponsors. This, in turn, means that the growing commitment to grassroots football within national associations all over Europe needs to become public knowledge.

When asked what more can be done to highlight the social value of grassroots football, the main points to emerge were:

- Maximise dialogue between UEFA, national associations, governments and the European Union.
- Develop detailed action plans, involving all the key partners in the process.
- Train national association staff members to deal with 'political' relationships.
- Share best practice among national associations.

- Gain access to separate grassroots sponsorships.
- Use major international events or tournaments to raise the political and public profiles of grassroots football.

UEFA's role

It was heartening that the participants in Nyon fully endorsed some of UEFA's initiatives in the grassroots field, such as the mini-pitch project driven by the HatTrick programme, the conferences and workshops, the use of former stars as 'grassroots ambassadors', the UEFA Grassroots Charter (including the training programmes for grassroots coaches), and events such as the Summer of Grassroots Football.

There was also applause for grassroots events (the Young Champions, the Starball Match and so on) currently being pegged to the major events at the peak of UEFA's pyramid – the finals of the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Cup. There was a call for this to be extended into TV contracts (compulsory screening of grassroots spots during coverage of major competitions), children's TV channels and other promotional vehicles such as the official UEFA Champions League magazine.

Some of the other debate-provoking suggestions included funding aimed at allowing associations to appoint grassroots managers; the creation of a template for grassroots festivals; additional assistance with equipment such as footballs, T-shirts, DVDs and educational material; the inclusion of grassroots criteria within UEFA's licensing system; and maximum support from UEFA in terms of lobbying and campaigning on a pan-European basis.



Enough footballs to go round!

THE DANISH FA
SIGNS THE GRASSROOTS
CHARTER.



But the last words on the conference in Nyon could easily be those of Lennart Johansson when he opened it. "I have always tried to be close to the grassroots of the game and I have seen many grassroots leaders at work," he said. "You and thou-

sands of other grassroots coaches and volunteers in your associations are not standing in the spotlight. But you are investing your time, your energy, your lives for the future of the game. Without you, football could not exist. Thank you for that."

a political will capable of laying solid foundations for better integration.

The question of funding reveals similar diversity. National football associations provide financial support, along with professional football clubs and leagues and, in some cases, individual star players. However, funding can also stem from national disability organisations, sponsors, government or European Union grants, or even national lotteries. The challenge here is to rationalise the use of income and channel it efficiently enough to achieve the maximum impact on disability football projects.

The sheer diversity of disability football also makes it important to pinpoint the areas where assistance can really help goals to be achieved. At the conference, the feeling was that UEFA can certainly offer help in pan-European communication and in knowledge-sharing, which led to suggestions for greater disability football components on the uefa.com website and in UEFA publications.

DISABILITY FOOTBALL THE GOALS TO AIM FOR

Pulling the threads together is one of the challenges facing the diverse world of disability football – which was why it was positive that representatives from various external disabled football agencies accepted the invitation to attend the grassroots conference in Nyon. They, along with the members of UEFA's Disability Football Panel, made a valuable input when it came to reviewing the state of the game and designing tactics for the future.

Where disciplines, organisations and funding are so diverse, communication and inter-relating become crucial issues. This is why, in response to the question about what can be done to improve development programmes, the first point to emerge was better dissemination and exchange of information. Given that a significant percentage of disability sport is run by independent disability organisations with no visible links to the football family,

it was a strongly upheld view that closer liaison and coordination between football associations and the disability organisations is a desirable priority. For this to be achieved, there must be



Marco van Basten encourages a young disabled player.



A CHARTER FOR CHANGE

ANDRIY SHEVCHENKO, AC MILAN'S GOALSCORING TALISMAN, ONCE TOLD ME THAT HIS PREVIOUS CLUB, FC DYNAMO KYIV, DISCOVERED HIM PLAYING IN THE STREETS OF KIEV. HE WAS NINE YEARS OLD AND HE BECAME, IN HIS WORDS, THE 'CHILD OF DYNAMO'. THIS TYPE OF FAIRY TALE WILL BECOME A RARITY BECAUSE STREET FOOTBALL IN MANY COUNTRIES HAS ALMOST DISAPPEARED. EUROPE'S FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS ARE FACED WITH THE TASK OF REPLACING THE 'NATURAL ENVIRONMENT' WITH ORGANISED, STRUCTURED GRASSROOTS PROGRAMMES.

Part of UEFA's strategy for grassroots football is the development of the Grassroots Charter, an endorsement programme which establishes criteria for the non-elite game. This will be used as a tool to encourage, stimulate and support the national associations with their fundamental role as grassroots leaders.

Already six pilot associations (Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Germany, England and Scotland) have had their basic grassroots schemes approved by UEFA and have signed the charter agreement. The next step is to organise regional workshops during 2006 with the aim of explaining the details of the charter to the associations, in particular the philosophy, requirements and application process. These regional events will also offer an opportunity to share best practice and new ideas on grassroots football. The creation of action plans will be an important exercise during these HatTrick-funded workshops. The aim is that at least 20 associations should be



Andriy Shevchenko (in white, up against Lyon's Eric Abidal) was a street footballer.

**UEFA'S GRASSROOTS
WORKING GROUP PROMOTING
THE OFFICIAL T-SHIRT.**



members of the UEFA Grassroots Charter by the end of 2007.

But what happens once you have charter membership? To motivate the associations to achieve more than the basic requirements for entry, we plan to introduce a star system of recognition. Gaining membership and satisfying UEFA's minimum criteria (i.e. having a basic grassroots structure, a grassroots philosophy, and organising the required number

of training programmes for players and coaches) will give an association one-star status. After overcoming that first hurdle, four additional stars can be acquired, with one star for each of the following: the number of players participating in the programmes, the number of girls and women who play, the number of social programmes, and the number of promotional activities and events. These stars can be collected in any order. The specific criteria for these

categories are at the planning stage, but quality will be assessed in addition to the numbers.

'Aim for the moon: even if you miss, you'll land among the stars' is an old maxim that challenges you to be the best you can. Therefore, specifically for highfliers in grassroots development, a sixth – and seventh-star classification will be created. To get the sixth star, an association will need to have the previous five stars, and provide proof of special investments in the grassroots, high-level training programmes for players and coaches, a well-developed infrastructure, 'education through football' schemes, and imaginative promotional activities. The seventh star will be open to associations that already have six stars and have created an advanced, comprehensive programme, both in terms of quality and quantity.

UEFA's Executive Committee approved the concept of the UEFA Grassroots Charter in 2004, and the president, Lennart Johansson, along with the committee members are fully committed to grassroots development, specifically the UEFA Grassroots Charter and the various UEFA educational and promotional initiatives. Everyone recognises that street football, which fired the imagination of young Andriy Shevchenko, has almost disappeared and that it is incumbent on all of us in football (UEFA, member associations, regions, clubs, etc.) to invest our time, effort and creativity into designing exciting grassroots programmes. The future of the game depends on it.

ANDY ROXBURGH

UEFA Technical Director



**LENNART JOHANSSON
AND LARS-CHRISTER OLSSON
ARE BOTH FERVENT
SUPPORTERS OF GRASSROOTS
FOOTBALL.**

DREAMING ABOUT GRASSROOTS

**DURING THE 6TH UEFA GRASSROOTS CONFERENCE,
WE TOOK A MOMENT TO DREAM ABOUT GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL.**

**HOW OFTEN DO YOU HEAR FOOTBALL PEOPLE REFER TO
THEIR DREAMS? A RECENT EXAMPLE CAME FROM ALBERTO
AQUILANI WHO SCORED FOR ROMA AGAINST ARCH RIVALS LAZIO:**

**"I HAVE BEEN DREAMING OF SCORING IN A DERBY SINCE
THE MOMENT I STARTED PLAYING FOOTBALL AND NOW MY DREAM
HAS COME TRUE," SAID A SATISFIED ALBERTO. BUT WHAT
IF IT DOESN'T QUITE WORK OUT? STEVE HEIGHWAY, THE ACADEMY
DIRECTOR AT LIVERPOOL FC, ANSWERS THAT WHEN HE DECLARES:
"IF YOU MAKE IT, IT'S A DREAM COME TRUE. IF YOU DON'T MAKE IT,
AT LEAST YOU'VE LIVED PART OF THE DREAM."**

While we are in dream mode, what would football be like if we lived in an ideal world? In an ideal football world, there would be no racism, no hooliganism, no corruption, and no discrimination – it would be 'football for all' and football everywhere. In an ideal football world, the style of play would be simple, dynamic, skilful and imaginative. The game would be competitive and, above all, safe. In an ideal football world, there would be adequate investment in facilities, education and competitions. In an ideal football world, everyone would show respect for the referee, their opponents, their teammates, the supporters and the game itself. In an ideal football world, players

would come first and the needs of the individual would be paramount – the game would be for children, not parents; for players, not coaches. Of course, team work and relationships would also be priorities when dealing with young dreamers. In an ideal football world, the game would serve society. In an ideal football world, 'carrying the ball close to the heart' would be a living philosophy.

First there is the dream. But a vision without a plan is a pipe dream. National association grassroots managers, who live in the real world, must consider a number of questions when they design their programmes: Do they have politi-



**CARRY THE BALL CLOSE
TO YOUR HEART.**



**A DREAM
COME TRUE
FOR ALBERTO
AQUILANI.**

cal support? Do they have a grassroots philosophy and plan? Do they have a grassroots administration? Do they have grassroots leaders/coaches? Do they have adequate grassroots facilities and equipment? Do they have a grassroots structure? Do they have training material, promotional ideas and former professionals as grassroots ambassadors? In respect of the latter, top players must be encouraged to give something back to the game that nurtured them. Finally, does the association have grassroots targets? As Per Omdal (honorary president of the Norwegian FA and vice-president of UEFA) says: "In Norway our target is a 10% increase in participation annually – this creates dynamics."

Football is a vehicle for people's dreams. The child wants to be like his/her hero, talented young players want to become stars, coaches dream of winning titles, and the fans crave the glory which comes from their team's success. All of these aspirations and the individual's passion for the game take root in the grassroots and

those who lead, organise or coach in this dynamic area of football are truly the dream-makers. But, in order to deliver exciting grassroots programmes, three wishes must be satisfied: political/public support for grassroots, an organisation/structure to implement the schemes, and technical know-how in the form of enlightened parents and trained coaches. These are wishes that can come true.

William McIlvanney poignantly described the power of young dreams in a book called "The Walking Wounded". The Scottish writer stated that "A municipal (public) football park in Scotland is a casually haunted place, ghosted by small, fierce dreamers." All star footballers were once grassroots players. Alberto Aquilani, whose dream came true when he scored for Roma against Lazio in the local derby, was one of them. Dreams really can come true if, in the words of Walt Disney, 'we have the courage to pursue them'.

ANDY ROXBURGH

UEFA Technical Director



Children everywhere dream of being a star player.

A LITTLE PICTURE IS WORTH A



Have ball – ready to play.

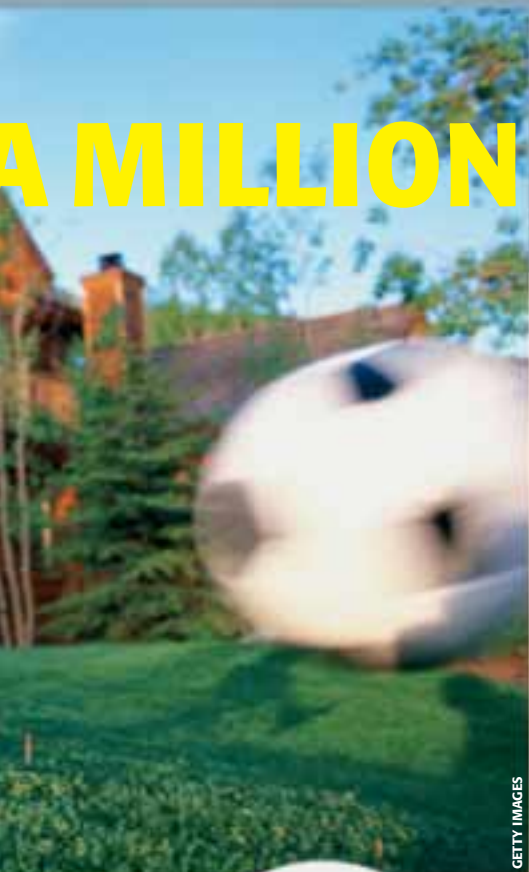


Power Play.



Grassroots football can be exhausting.

A MILLION WORDS



***Football
for all ages.***



Dreaming of stardom.

AGENDA

2006

■ May 1 – 5

1st UEFA Regional Grassroots Workshop
(Oslo, Norway)

■ May 9

UEFA/Dutch FA UEFA Cup promotion
(Eindhoven, Netherlands)

■ May 12 – 16 (Paris)

UEFA Young Champions

■ June – August

UEFA Summer of Grassroots Football 2006 – promotional campaign

■ July 24 – 28

2nd UEFA Regional Grassroots Workshop
(Copenhagen, Denmark)

■ August 7 – 11

3rd UEFA Regional Grassroots Workshop
(Kilmarnock, Scotland)

■ August 21 – 25

4th UEFA Regional Grassroots Workshop
(Marlow, England)

■ October 2 – 6

5th UEFA Regional Grassroots Workshop
(Zeist, Netherlands)

■ October 16 – 20

6th UEFA Regional Grassroots Workshop
(Hanover, Germany)

2007

■ April 2 – 6

7th UEFA Grassroots Conference
(Helsinki, Finland)



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européennes de football

