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> PUBLISHED BY UEFA'S FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION

No.5 NOVEMBER 2006

GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL NEWSLETTER





CREATIVITY AND SKILL ON THE BEACHES OF BRAZIL.





RONALDINHO'S SMILE

EDITORIAL

BY ANDY ROXBURGH, UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

The Exporter. Think of Brazil: sun, sea, samba and soccer. Think of Ronaldinho's smile – a smile which epitomises the Brazilians' love of the game and their joy of playing 'futebol'. Think of the sobering fact for European football that the country with the greatest number of representatives on matchday one of this season's UEFA Champions League was Brazil. As reported in a German newspaper, the starting line-ups of the 32 teams included 65 Brazilians, 37 Frenchmen, 24 Portuguese, 22 Italians, and only 12 Germans. Brazil may not have won the 2006 World Cup, but undoubtedly it remains the greatest exporter of footballing talent on the planet, and with its natural environment and its passionate people, it is a role model for grassroots football development.

The Game. It was a small beach, within sight of the more illustrious Ipanema, and it was alive with football action. They started out playing 4 v 4 - small sticks were used for goalposts and the width of the sandy pitch was defined by a wall on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other. The young players from the local area wore swimming trunks and played in their bare feet. The play was intense, unbelievably skilful, and sometimes truly spectacular. Others arrived, and the match became six-a-side. No team jerseys with names on the back were required. Each player knew his team-mates and in which direction he was playing. This was football for fun a game belonging to the people, a game which encouraged free expression, selfreliance, and total commitment. The players were fully engaged in the present and their young faces radiated happiness.

The Circle. On another section of the same small beach, cooperation rather than competition was the order of the day. Circles were formed and the players tried to keep the ball in the air for as long as possible. They imposed a one-

touch ruling and the ball moved quickly back and forth across the circle. Sometimes the ball was played with the shoulder, or with the outside of the foot, or was deliberately sliced and the receiving player was forced to deal with a high trajectory, spinning ball. Then, they switched to two-touch, or free play, and control became the focus as they skilfully contributed to the group's entertainment. This was football for all - a community activity with social implications. One circle, which consisted of six players, included a young girl, a small boy, and an old man. The only requirements to join the circle were a willingness to take part, some technical ability, and a 'young heart'.

The Variations. The football environment in Brazil is stimulated and energised by a variety of football disciplines and game variations. Futsal has had an enormous impact and many star Brazilian players developed their technical dexterity and fast reactions playing the specialised game with the small, heavy ball. Significantly, the 2008 FIFA Futsal World Cup will be played in Brazil. In addition, organised beach soccer has always been popular and FIFA has scheduled the next two Beach Soccer World Cups for South America's biggest republic (2006 on Rio's Copacabana and 2007 which has still to be allocated). Football everywhere, with all its varieties, is a living philosophy in the country that produced Pelé, Zico, Ronaldo, etc. For the sake of balance,

it has to be added that the top Brazilian clubs are now hyper-active in recruiting and developing many of the young talents who emerge from the grassroots.

The Message. For many reasons (i.e. weather, size of population, etc.), few countries in Europe can replicate the Brazilians' natural football environment. But lessons can be learned nevertheless. Football associations that are serious about the game's health and growth are duty-bound to promote mass participation and interest. Grassroots football which acts as a vehicle for social integration, health, and happiness is the aim. As a by-product, talents will emerge. In Brazil, a love of the ball, expression through small-sided games, and the sheer joy of playing have been cultivated to such an extent that football passion and creativity have become part of the nation's DNA. Europe may have had the top four sides in the 2006 World Cup, but in a fiercely competitive world, complacency is not an option. Constant development of the game is imperative, and the foundation of all football growth and advancement lies in the grassroots. Ronaldinho's smile lost a little of its power during the 2006 World Cup due to fatigue, but in recent years, as an FC Barcelona player, he has been the symbol of Brazilian brilliance on European soil, and a reminder that football, at all levels, is a game to be enjoyed and treasured.



Even in a less delightful setting than the beaches of Brazil, the joy of playing is what matters most.



THE UEFA GRASSROOTS WORKING GROUP AT ITS MEETING IN ROME.

CHARTER IN FULL FLIGHT

WHEN UEFA'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE GAVE ENTHUSIASTIC APPROVAL

TO THE CREATION OF A GRASSROOTS CHARTER IN 2004, THE IMMEDIATE TARGET WAS TO HAVE

20 NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ON BOARD BY THE END OF 2007. CONSIDERING THAT MANY

ASSOCIATION GRASSROOTS PROGRAMMES ARE IN THEIR INFANCY, THE TARGET COULD JUSTIFIABLY

HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED AS AMBITIOUS. BUT THE UEFA GRASSROOTS CHARTER

HAS BEEN GREETED WITH SUCH ENTHUSIASM THAT THE MAGIC NUMBER OF 20 COULD

BE REACHED WELL BEFORE THE PROJECTED DEADLINE.

This is a remarkable fact, bearing in mind that speed has not necessarily been a priority. The UEFA Grassroots Charter is an endorsement programme aimed at establishing criteria for grassroots development. Signing the Grassroots Charter means that a national association satisfies certain minimum criteria. Entry is at a basic one-star status and, before the end of the year, further evaluations will start in order

to see if some of the progressive members warrant higher status.

Additional stars are allocated on the basis of specific areas, such as catering for girls' and women's football; social programmes, such as disability football; and the number of promotional activities or events. As many as seven stars can be earned. But to acquire seven-star status a national association will

need to have an extremely comprehensive best-practice programme in all grassroot categories.

So where are we now? As you may recall, the six 'founder members' were Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Scotland – which is why they were the associations to host the regional workshops mentioned on the follow-



UEFA/FIFA Executive Committee member Viacheslav Koloskov with the participants at the workshop in Oslo.

UEFA VICE-PRESIDENT
GEOFFREY THOMPSON WITH
THE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS
IN MARLOW-ON-THAMES
IN ENGLAND.





ing pages. Others are now set to sign. At their next meeting in November, the working group from UEFA's Grassroots Panel will consider applications from seven other associations which have already been visited by grassroots experts. As we go to print, a further five applications are being processed. Hence the mood of optimism about meeting the target of 20 members before the December 2007 deadline. In fact, it is not unrealistic to speculate that the target could be reached by the time the 7th UEFA Grassroots Conference takes place in Helsinki next April.

It means that, although only a short period of time has elapsed, the UEFA Grassroots Charter system is up and running. "The decisive factor here," says UEFA's Technical Director, Andy Roxburgh, "has been a full and immediate acceptance of the UEFA Grassroots Charter and such a degree of enthusiasm – not only for the charter but also for grassroots football in general – that the project is running at a phenomenal pace."

GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL CONFERENCES



NEXT: The 7th UEFA Grassroots Football Conference will take place in Helsinki from 2 to 6 April 2007.



THE EXCHANGE
OF IDEAS WAS A KEY FEATURE
OF THE WORKSHOPS.

REGIONAL WORKSHOPS HELP TO LEVEL THE GRASSROOTS PITCH

AT THE UEFA GRASSROOTS CONFERENCE STAGED IN GENEVA LAST MARCH,
IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT A SERIES OF SIX REGIONAL GRASSROOTS WORKSHOPS WOULD BE STAGED
WITH THE FUNDAMENTAL AIM OF HELPING NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS TO FAMILIARISE
THEMSELVES WITH THE UEFA GRASSROOTS CHARTER IN THE CONTEXT OF SMALLER GROUPS.

The programme kicked off in Norway in May, continued in Denmark, Scotland and England during the summer, and has now been completed with workshops in the Netherlands and Germany during October. All of UEFA's member associations have taken part in one of the six events.

The basic objectives have been to outline and clarify the terms of the UEFA Grassroots Charter, to help associations to apply to become signatories of the charter, and to provide a forum where best-practice strategies can be

exchanged. And, of course, at grassroots level, 'best practices' mean the ones most suited to individual circumstances. The interchange of experience and data is sure to allow associations to 'level the grassroots pitch' by upgrading overall standards. All associations welcomed the charter and many have applied to join it.

Each workshop was opened by a member of UEFA's Executive Committee and the standard format included presentations by UEFA staff, by the association hosting the event, and by each of the participating associations, who were

invited to talk about aspects of grassroots football in their countries. All this was blended in with discussion and feedback sessions

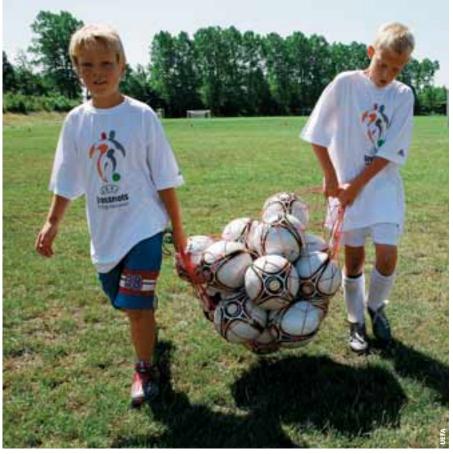
There have been immediate benefits from the series of workshops – not least in terms of a coherent grassroots philosophy. National associations now accept that there is more to grassroots football than the detection and development of elite talents. At the same time, more and more are coming to appreciate the wider value of grassroots football.



UEFA/FIFA vice-president Angel Maria Villar Llona with the workshop participants in Kilmarnock in Scotland.

UEFA TREASURER DR MATHIEU SPRENGERS AND FIFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER DR MICHEL D'HOOGHE WITH THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE MEETING IN ZEIST.





Learning about teamwork.

Associations such as the English and Norwegians have reported enhanced revenue through sponsorship, TV and attendances. Others, such as Belarus and Bulgaria, have seen how widespread participation at grassroots level receives plaudits from regional and national governments, especially in relation to their 'healthy lifestyle' agendas. Others have prompted reductions in anti-social behaviour (and the community costs required to deal with it). And many associations within what is sometimes a fragmented Europe report that football represents a significant and positive social force in terms of uniting communities.

The workshops also demonstrated that grassroots structures are steadily being upgraded by, for example, establishing a grassroots committee, appointing a dedicated grassroots manager, developing a grassroots strategy, and, then,

formulating a dedicated grassroots budget incorporating commercial sponsors and public funding. With regard to the last item, some associations have successfully experimented with non-monetary partnerships with commercial concerns and the Ukrainian association, for example, has earmarked a percentage of all transfer fees involving non-locally developed players for grassroots activities. It was heartening to hear at the workshops that there is now widespread participation by former players, celebrities and politicians in the promotion of grassroots activities.

With street football being progressively forced into obsolescence, associations are now active in promoting replacements. The spectrum of activities mentioned in the article on the Summer of Grassroots Football bears witness to the growth of festivals, soccer schools, tournaments and school projects. Grassroots football is definitely on the move.



UEFA Executive Committee member Marios N. Lefkaritis with the participants at the Copenhagen workshop.





ONE MIGHT HAVE BEEN FORGIVEN FOR SUSPECTING THAT THE PEAKS OF THE FIFA WORLD CUP WOULD CAST A SHADOW OVER A LONG, HOT FOOTBALLING SUMMER. FAR FROM IT. WHILE THE TOP PROFESSIONALS WERE IN ACTION IN GERMANY, UEFA'S PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN 'THE SUMMER OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL' FLOURISHED ON PITCHES AND MINI-PITCHES ALL OVER EUROPE.

Originally introduced as a one-off initiative to mark UEFA's Golden Jubilee in 2004, the Summer of Grassroots Football has proved to be such a resounding success that it has become an annual feature. For the third successive year, UEFA supported grassroots events by supplying certificates

of participation and by offering each national association 100 adidas Grassroots Programme footballs and 150 T-shirts, plus an additional 50 footballs for each association's most valuable grassroots event and another 50 for the best disabled football event.



Having fun playing football in Denmark.

The Summer of 2004 had been acclaimed as a winner on the basis of half a million people taking part in grassroots activities. In 2005, the number of participants had risen to 1.3 million. Even though definitive data have still not been received from all 52 member associations, the summer of 2006 shattered previous records by attracting almost 2½ million participants. In other words, we're talking about a 'growth rate' of 450% since the concept was born in 2004.

Although the figures are hearteningly in line with UEFA's 'football for all' concept, the statistics are not the only compelling evidence. Even more encouraging was the sheer range of grassroots events organised between May and September.

Some need little or no introduction. The summer soccer schools in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, for example, attracted almost a quarter of a million participants. Elsewhere, the Summer of Grassroots Football was



FAIR PLAY IN FINLAND.



A serious tussle in San Marino.

populated by everything from small regional events to massive national contests. Once again, there was significant support from sponsors with, for instance, the McDonald's Football Celebration attracting 85,000 8 to 11-yearolds to Prague just as the World Cup was kicking-off. It was by no means the only major event to attract a 'big crowd'. In the Netherlands, well over 200,000 players took part in school and street soccer events; in Romania, the National School Sports Festival allowed 195,000 youngsters between 7 and 18 to play some football; and, in Russia, there was action for 72,000 between 11 and

15 in the 'Leather Football' regional club tournaments.

Strategies varied. In some cases, people were taken to events. In others, the events went to the people. In Croatia, for example, the emphasis was on local events – 74 of them offering football and/or futsal to players in every age bracket from kindergarten to veterans. In Armenia, almost 16,000 took part in tournaments played under the 'Football Without Limits', 'Cup of Hope' and 'Fun Football' banners. In Germany, the focus was also on local events which included

the Daniel Nivel Cup – named in honour of the policeman who was seriously injured by thugs during the 1998 FIFA World Cup. In Italy, while the national team was treading the path to glory, 60,000 'Piccoli Amici' from the 6-8 age bracket were enjoying some football of their own. In Finland, 'All Stars Football Carnivals' all over the country gave footballing pleasure to 60,000 children from 7-12.

However, for sheer diversity, Turkey and Ukraine warrant a special mention. Thirty events for 12-year-olds to veterans were staged in Adana and it was a similar story in other Turkish cities right the way through the alphabet to Van. Regional championships in the Ukraine offered football to 120,000 in the 14-17 age bracket and the same number again in adult categories. But no one was neglected. The 'Let's Bring Joy to Children' events in June attracted 50,000 kids, while the 'Have Faith in Yourself' tournaments gave footballing pleasure to amputees, Special Olympics players and those with visual or hearing deficiencies.

The Republic of Ireland was also the scenario for a homeless street league, a wheelchair competition and an inner city futsal tournament. In Northern Ireland the 'Girls Only Roadshow' was one of the many, many opportunities offered to girls and women in a hearteningly large number of countries. The vast spectrum of events organised in Turkey included five-a-side games played at 20 venues using futsal rules.

In other words, the 2006 Summer of Grassroots Football offered something to everyone. Taking the top four places at the FIFA World Cup represented a success for Europe. But, at grassroots level, it was also a summer to remember.



FOOTBALL PROVIDES
A WONDERFUL LEARNING
ENVIRONMENT.

GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL THE SOCIAL BENEFITS

EXTRACTS FROM AN ESSAY BY PROF. KLAUS-PETER BRINKHOFF ON THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF FOOTBALL IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

It was stated at the grassroots conference which was held in Nyon earlier in the year 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 in prisons". This is one of the reasons why international, national and local governments, authorities, associations and sponsors are increasingly ready and willing to make significant contributions to grassroots football projects.

When it comes to demonstrating the physical benefits to be gained from football – such as tackling the issue of child obesity – it is relatively easy to provide compelling medical evidence. But how does one scientifically demonstrate the social benefits? What data can be presented when approaching potential partners in grassroots projects? These are among the questions raised by Professor Klaus-Peter Brinkhoff in an essay, of which we are highlighting some salient extracts.



Football helps young people to integrate and to keep fit.

In order to critically analyse the initial hypothesis about social support functions and the protective forces of sport, a subtly differentiated analysis is required. ... Abundance and sheer variety of options now determine the everyday experience of a large percentage of the population. Instead of coping with supply deficiencies, environmental risks and psychological burdens have become major challenges. Modern-day children and teenagers have experienced a rapid change in the conditions of growingup – a process which has become far more accelerated than previous generations have known. ... The changed conditions not only offer new opportunities for children and teenagers but also a new variety of burdens and threats which their parents were not exposed to. Particularly for adolescents, there are therefore many new physical, emotional and social pressures, accompanied by fears of failure.

The interaction of these different factors is the main cause of the fact that, despite high living standards and advanced social safeguarding systems, the percentage of children and teenagers with social problems, emotional disturbances and physical impediments continues to grow. Expansion of marketing pressures and the psycho-social costs which teenagers have to face due to the increasing impor-

THE GREAT FEELING OF BELONGING TO A TEAM.





Football has an important role to play in society.

tance of educational qualifications help to explain that earlier maturing entails other potentially damaging side effects. That is why chapters could be written about:

- Psycho-social burdens associated with family-related and school-related stress
- Deficiencies in physical and motor development
- Disorientation and aggressiveness of the youth consumption market
- Consumption of alcohol and tobacco
- Consumption, mis-use and abuse of illegal soft and hard drugs
- Social disintegration based on the disintegration of social relationships
- The social conditions which breed child and teenage violence
- The social messages transmitted by sophisticated multi-media
- Ethnic conflicts or political extremism

Symptoms of disturbed youth development, expressed by social behaviour patterns or concrete health impairments, often correspond with continuous pressure situations in the everyday life of children and teenagers.

Some researchers emphasise the broadening of horizons and the variety of options for individual life. Others emphasise the enormous 'explosive force' generated by age-specific, collective and social identity issues and support systems. They highlight disorientation and uncertainty and firmly state that social integration can only be guaranteed if there are specific forms of social support. Initial studies suggest that football is able to render social support in various ways.

No other sport is such a dominant force in childhood and adolescence. Organised sport, as opposed to other forms of structured youth work, is also more readily accepted by teenagers than other forms of social support. But what contribution does football make when it comes to developing an adolescent into an integrated member of an adult society?

Mastering the typical adolescent crises and constructing an identity are core issues. In this respect, an important training field for personality and identity development is provided by the team structure within a football club. Results of research clearly indicate that young people in a sports organisation can be distinguished in a positive way from teenagers who have either left the organisation or who have never been members. Current research arrives at the conclusion that adolescents in sports clubs bear lighter loads of physical, psychological and social stress than their non-sporting classmates. Participation in a football club offers opportunities for positive expression and the possibility to dismantle certain negative stresses. Even with regard to psychosomatic complaints, they can be positively distinguished from their peers.

Trends in family and working conditions have increasingly moved young people away from firm social relationships and environments. Engagement with a football club counteracts this trend and has highly positive social integration effects. On the one hand, the football club can integrate children and adolescents into a structured youth culture based on peer groups. On the other hand, the youth culture and peer groups provide a better launching pad towards adult status. Teenagers in a football club normally break through the 'ghetto of their peers' earlier than non-players and rapidly develop adult ethical and moral concepts.

Having said that, there is evidently great scope for a wide field of research activities. Scientific discussion concerning the role of sport in general and football, in particular when it comes to personal development, represents a great challenge for future studies, both in terms of theoretical and practical research.



TOURNAMENT
IN GERMANY FOR DISABLED
PLAYERS.

DISABILITY FOOTBALL GATHERS MOMENTUM

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A TEN-STEP PLAN TO ENHANCE DISABILITY FOOTBALL STRUCTURES;
AND THE DESIGN OF A UEFA GENERIC DISABILITY FOOTBALL E-LEARNING COURSE TO BE POSTED
ON UEFA.COM. THOSE WERE THE TWO MAJOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA WHEN UEFA'S WORKING GROUP
ON DISABILITY FOOTBALL MET IN THE GERMAN CITY OF LEVERKUSEN IN SEPTEMBER.

The working group, emanating from the UEFA Grassroots Football Panel, discussed a ten-point plan aimed at allowing national associations to advance the development of disability football. The importance of the subject has been underlined by EU estimates that 18% of the continent's population have some form of disability. People with learning difficulties form the largest group. But the plan also contemplates football for people

classed as deaf or hearing impaired, blind or visually impaired, those suffering from cerebral palsy, and amputees. The ultimate objective is, quite simply, to enable footballers with disabilities to enjoy their football and reach their full potential.

The first challenge facing most national associations is that the various categories of disability football often fall under different administrative and organisational umbrellas. So the crucial first steps are to audit disability football activities within the country and to develop or improve links with disability sport organisations, making it clear that the aim is hand-in-hand relationships. Communication channels need to be established and regular meetings are normally productive.

The next steps could be to set up an advisory group — a panel of experts in disability sport able to report and offer advice to the national association. Specific target groups, based on national parameters, can then be pinpointed and, in conjunction with disability groups, clubs and local



SOME 6,000 SPECTATORS WATCHED THE THIRD-PLACE MATCH BETWEEN GERMANY AND SOUTH AFRICA IN THE INAS-FID WORLD CUP IN GERMANY THIS SUMMER.





organisations, festivals can be arranged based on 11-a-side or small-sided games. These festivals are at their most effective when embedded in local clubs, rather than dependent on the national association.

Further structures can be built on the foundations of the local festivals, such as: local training opportunities pegged to the festivals; templates to authorise other bodies or clubs to develop regional and/or national competitions from the local festivals, along with criteria for their approval by the national association; and the development of 'player pathways' able to lead talented players into elite regional or national squads.

But development projects require leaders or coaches – and this is where the proposed e-learning course on uefa.com could represent a major step in the right direction. The plan is to

have a disability football course online by early 2007. The aim is to provide direct assistance in the education of coaches and leaders, to support UEFA-approved national association coaching courses, and to give proper relevance to aspects such as 'Ethics and Attitudes' and 'Working with Young People'.

The proposed course would focus on topics such as:

- Understanding of disabilities
- Impact of disabilities on activity
- Adapting existing practices to the various forms of disability football
- Maximising opportunities
- Child protection and safety issues
- Realistic goal-setting
- Case studies and problem scenarios
- Action plans for coaches

The course, in its initial stages, would be in English and 'students' would be able to enrol via the Training Ground site on uefa.com. This proposed project will make it easier to compile a database of coaches working in disability football and promoting contacts between them. The inclusion of the disability e-learning course will also enrich the overall content of the Training Ground site — and, hopefully, will also enrich disability football as a whole.



The UEFA Grassroots Working Group on Disability Football.

EVERY PICTURE



Grassroots football is all about joy and enjoyment. That's why the old saying about pictures being worth a thousand words is especially appropriate. For the third successive year, a UEFA Grassroots **Photography Competition has** been pegged to the UEFA Summer of Grassroots Football project and the results have been a stunning tribute to the pleasures of playing football. The sheer variety of the images does full justice to the variety of grassroots football itself and captures the spirit of the grassroots game.

The winner receives – in addition to a diploma – a prize of 50 adidas footballs, while the two best runners-up get 25 footballs each. But sorting out a winner is a tough proposition – and the images received during the 2006 competition were of such high quality that many of them will be used in UEFA presentations and displays. So, congratulations to everybody who took part.





TELLS THE GRASSROOTS STORY











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