



UEFA
Grassroots
Programme

Editorial:
A Loss
of Significance



Spreading Roots
in the Community



Join us on
the Training Ground



Homeless Truths



Hitting the Targets



At the Service
of French Football



Sums and Summers

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As street football decreases, organised grassroots programmes increase.



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A close-up of the photo from Ukraine that won third prize in the Summer of Grassroots Football competition (see page 15).
Photo: FFU

A LOSS OF SIGNIFICANCE

EDITORIAL

**BY ANDY ROXBURGH,
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR**

When a national team's expectations are not realised and there is a failure to qualify for the finals of a major championship, the blame game starts. First it is the coach who is the target, then the system of coach education, then the influx of foreign players, and finally the efficiency of the association's grassroots programme is put into question. It is usually a global, superficial attack which does not examine the details.

Let us be clear about the purpose of grassroots development, particularly when we refer to children. The aims at this level of football are to encourage participation (numbers), to promote a love of the game, and to introduce the skills and basic concepts to a new generation – producing star players is a by-product of children's grassroots schemes. Of course, every big star starts out as a grassroots player, and the way the game is introduced is vital, but elite player development is a specialised sector which is mainly the day-to-day responsibility of the professional clubs. The grassroots environment is therefore a place for everyone who wants to play, where integration, social skills and personal development are fundamental. There is a problem affecting today's youngsters, however. During the last 50 years, the space for free play has gradually disappeared and street football, the natural learning environment of former heroes, has all but vanished due to a moving enemy – the car.

I vividly remember, as a child, playing with the ball, either alone or with friends, in a dimly-lit street outside my house, or on a manicured village green where my grandmother lived, or at the local amateur team's home ground (the lat-

ter became heaven when the groundsman left the nets up for a few hours after a match). There were no computer games, iPods or wall-to-wall satellite TV to distract us from playing with the ball – it was a real world of action and the virtual reality of today did not exist. Herein lies the challenge for grassroots developers in the 21st century. With all the distractions created by modern technology, the lack of open spaces, and the social dangers which confront our young, how do we organise children's football activities in a safe, structured way and still retain the joy, adventure and creativity that once was street football? The situation was summed up by Frank Engel, the DFB's Under-20 coach, when he stated at a recent UEFA event: "Football does not have the same significance as in the past – street football has simply fallen away." And Sir Alex Ferguson of Manchester United added to the argument about distractions and the demands on children's time, when he said: "Today, children don't have time for themselves, to spend with friends, just playing, practising and learning."

There is no doubt that in some countries, football's significance to children

and teenagers has diminished due to environmental and social changes, and therefore the grassroots game needs to be promoted dynamically, organised efficiently and developed professionally if participation is to be maintained (better still increased), and if quality is to be nurtured.

The national associations, and many of their top clubs, have recognised the need for investment in this area and with UEFA's help (i.e. the Grassroots Charter, the summer promotional campaign, mini-pitches, etc.), they have intensified their commitment to the grassroots of the game. There is no guarantee that these efforts will, even as a by-product, produce stars for the national team, but the work will foster interest in all aspects of the game and create a greater possibility of success at the top level. If we allow the roots of our game to wither, then there is no chance of producing the next generation of fans, referees, coaches, official or administrators, not to mention the youthful talents who could become tomorrow's heroes. Failure to 'water the grass' is simply not an option for UEFA and its member associations.



Grassroots football on the streets in Italy.



**GORDON COLEMAN,
COMMUNITY FOOTBALL
SPECIALIST.**

SPREADING ROOTS IN THE COMMUNITY

THE FIRST ISSUE OF THE GRASSROOTS NEWSLETTER FEATURED A PYRAMID IN WHICH GRASSROOTS ACTIVITIES FORMED THE BASE AND THE PRO CLUBS THE PEAK. THE STRUCTURE REMAINS ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED BUT, IN MANY COUNTRIES, THE DISTANCE FROM BASE TO APEX HAS, IN THE MEANTIME, DIMINISHED RAPIDLY. THE SOCIAL RELEVANCE OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL IS, NOWADAYS, UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED AND, AT THE SAME TIME, EVEN THE MOST COMMERCIAL-MINDED MEMBERS OF THE FOOTBALL FAMILY REALISE THAT DIRECT LINKS BETWEEN PRO CLUBS AND GRASSROOTS ARE AN EFFECTIVE FORMULA WHEN IT COMES TO BUILDING SOLID FAN BASES FOR THE FUTURE.

In a search for examples, England might be one of our first stops. The social turbulences which surrounded English football provoked a thorough review of structures and facilities which, in turn, laid the foundations for the sort of community schemes that have, in the last couple of decades, become part of everyday life.

Although the structures of pro football in England have changed during that time, there has been sustained support from the Professional Footballers' Association, the Premier League, the Football League, government bodies and, of course, the national association. "Our role at The FA," says National Development Manager, Les Howie, "is to support the community schemes from a

technical development angle, helping to make sure that centres are staffed by people with appropriate, up-to-date diplomas and to act as an effective link between the regional associations and all the other partnerships."

Les is quick to emphasise that there's no prototype community scheme but rather a whole gamut of schemes ranging from the apocryphal 'man with a bag of footballs' to massive, streamlined projects – one of which came to UEFA's notice when a crowd of 29,100 turned up at the Stadium of Light in Sunderland to watch the 2001 European Under-16 final between Spain and France (won by a penalty converted by Fernando Torres). The locals were quick to point out that the record attendance was directly attributable to the symbiosis between Sunderland AFC and the local community.

Similar attendance figures are currently being registered – for much the same reason – by Nottingham Forest FC, a club which was champion of Europe in 1979 and 1980 and is currently trying to play its way out of League One, the third rung on the English pro football ladder. More importantly, the club has been rebuilding its future on the foundations of a scheme which Les Howie rates as good material for a case study, bearing in mind that it embraces city and more rural communities.

That's a cue to call Gordon Coleman, born in Nottingham, former pro player at Preston North End, qualified teacher, degree in psychology, master in business administration and member of the Forest family for the last 30 years or so. He's quick to emphasise that not every community scheme enjoys the same resources: Gordon leads a team that has just been expanded from seven to ten full-time Community Officers, each of whom runs a coaching team and designs his or her own activity programmes. "The club gives such wholehearted support that I have no excuses!" he admits. "Community schemes are generally underpinned by three basic types of funding: by sponsors, by grants from government-based organisations, or by self-generated income. If you go along the 'grant' path, you are led towards certain specific target groups. As our activities are all-embracing, we tend to rely on sponsors and self-generated funding – which means that our 'products' must be of saleable quality."

Nottingham Forest FC's 'products' come in a wide enough variety for the club to justifiably claim to have something for everyone.

First and foremost, a Schools Coaching Programme brings Gordon and his team of coaches into touch with more than 150,000 schoolboys and girls in



Gordon Coleman as team leader at Nottingham Forest.

**LES HOWIE,
NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
MANAGER AT THE FA.**



Some 15,000 young people join the courses at Nottingham Forest every year.

a year, throughout the region. But the scheme embraces some other interesting features.

Forest organise after-school clubs aimed at giving young people some safe, supervised 'after the bell' football during the vacant period before their parents return home from work. During school hours, the focus is on delivering the requirements of the educational curriculum, so in the after-hours slot, the emphasis is well and truly on fun football based on skill development and small-sided games. The after-school clubs operate in six-week cycles with around 500 children participating in 80 courses during the year.

The after-school theme is carried over into the holiday periods via courses designed to give boys and girls positive, healthy exercise during their breaks from the school routine. Every year, Forest use over 100 venues and, with an average of 150 children attending each course, some 15,000 young people take part each year. As Gordon says, the timetables on holiday courses permit much more 'serious' coaching work to be done in an enjoyable environment where the youngsters are told quite plainly that there is no obligation to be brilliant footballers. The emphasis is on skill development in small-sided

games along with steady progression and an introduction to a competitive environment.

Going back to less intensive options, Forest also offer Saturday clubs at selected Drop-In Coaching Centres every Saturday morning throughout the area. Activities include basic skills, coaching, tournaments, stadium tours, player visits and multi-activity days as well as lots of fun football. Participants are also given the chance to experience the atmosphere at one of the league matches at the City Ground courtesy of Nottingham Forest Football Club.

One of the other salient features of the Forest scheme is that the stadium forms an integral part of the 'package' on non-matchdays as well. An Educational Resource Unit has been set up in partnership with Nottingham City Council's Educational Department with a grant from central government and sponsorship from private companies. This is a classroom facility at the City Ground itself – and the setting provides a motivating environment for young people brought in from primary and secondary schools, from underprivileged areas and so on. Gordon and his crew find that the application of footballing attitudes helps to

improve levels of literacy in a sport-orientated ambience where the pupils often don't realise they are learning.

The same concept has been adapted to an Educational Outreach Project run in conjunction with the Resource Unit and providing schemes of work based on Nottingham Forest FC for schools to use in curriculum time or in after-school clubs. The work covers all the usual subject areas in a fun and interesting way to encourage children to value their education. As a sort of follow-up to the educational angles, Forest also operate an Attendance and Good Behaviour Programme – a reward system offered by the club to young people who are regular attendees and behave well at school.

As Les Howie pointed out, community schemes come in all shapes and sizes – but the underlying philosophy is the same. The core value of the scheme is to help young people to develop into responsible adults with clear ideas about the importance of their roles within today's society.

Gordon and his colleagues at Forest are motivated by awareness of the important role played by the club in the lives of local people – and not exclusively due to the excitement and enjoyment provided by events on the field of play. The City Ground is now a focal point for the local community and the diversity of the activities which take place there forge stronger links with people throughout the city and the outlying areas. By reaching out into the community in so many different ways, the scheme can help to improve the values of the game and its status in society. In individual terms, the activities can achieve a great deal in boosting a young person's confidence and self-esteem. And, in sporting terms, those stronger bonds with the community can help to lay foundations for a resurgence of the club which once topped the European tree while, in a more global context, encouraging more people to play and watch football can only make positive contributions to the future of the game.



ROY HODGSON HAS MADE HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE UEFA TRAINING GROUND PROJECT.

JOIN US ON THE TRAINING GROUND

GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL UNDOUBTEDLY PLAYS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE GAME AROUND EUROPE AND THE REST OF THE WORLD – HENCE UEFA’S LONG-STANDING COMMITMENT TO GRASSROOTS CAUSES. ONE OF THE TOOLS NOW AVAILABLE TO PLAYERS AND COACHES THE WORLD OVER IS THE UEFA TRAINING GROUND, A WEBSITE THAT AIMS TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT WORK USING THE EXPERT SKILLS OF SOME OF THE GAME’S TOP PLAYERS AND COACHES. PAUL WOLOSZYN OF UEFA.COM OFFERS US A QUICK GUIDED TOUR OF THE SITE.

The Training Ground project was an idea that was first mooted in 2003. Four years in the making, it eventually came to fruition in May 2007, in the



Zlatan Ibrahimovic sets an example on the UEFA site.

week of last season’s UEFA Cup final between Sevilla FC and RCD Espanyol at Hampden Park. A small but dedicated team set out with the mandate of creating something that had never been done before – a one-stop resource for players and coaches of all ages and standards, from the aspiring child in his school team to the top level of professionals.

Top national-team coaches such as Lars Lagerbäck and Roy Hodgson have lent their expertise to the video-based project devised by UEFA’s Football Development Division in conjunction with uefa.com, passing on their advice and knowledge to answer a number of questions and dilemmas that most coaches will be faced with at some point during their careers, whatever level they are working at.

Do you adjust your game plan to deal with a striker possessing exceptional pace and trickery, such as Thierry Henry? If so, how do you do it? What are the options if one of your players is sent off? And how do you prepare your team for the second leg of a knockout tie that you start with a one-goal deficit – or a one-goal lead?

These are just some of the many conundrums answered by men in the front line – the game’s top coaches – with a view to sharing their experience with colleagues working at different levels within the game.

The pros and cons of various tactical systems are examined on the chalkboard, enhancing the web user’s understanding of an area often left unexplained. Meanwhile, the roles of players in different positions are also discussed, helping any budding coach decide which strategy would best lend itself to the team and where on the pitch squad members would be best suited to play.

Aside from coaches, some of the most recognisable players have been delighted to invest time in the Training Ground. Logging onto the Stars section of the website will bring you to a plethora of masterclass sessions featuring UEFA Champions League regulars such as Zlatan Ibrahimovic, Andrea Pirlo and Sol Campbell, who demonstrate the ins and outs of nuances such as beating your man, delivering the perfect free kick or becoming a commanding force in defensive heading.

LARS LAGERBÄCK, SHOWN HERE WITH THE SWEDISH NATIONAL TEAM, HAS ALSO GOT INVOLVED IN THE TRAINING GROUND PROJECT.



The Courses area of the site provides a comprehensive e-learning section on anti-doping topics, attacking the subject via different scenarios highlighting how to avoid the pitfalls that can lead youngsters down the wrong path. There is also a Disability in Football course and a detailed Injuries Guide providing advice on how best to prevent them and helping players and coaches alike to understand exactly what they are and how long you can expect to be sidelined with them.

UEFA's Technical Director, Andy Roxburgh, believes the Training Ground is an important tool to help promote football development around Europe. "Modern technology is a great means of communicating messages and for educating people. The Training Ground is a great extension to the UEFA extranet which is available to the professionals in the associations and will allow anybody who is involved in grassroots activities to come on to the site and learn more about training, tactics and specialist skills."

Metaphorically speaking, the cones are laid out on the Training Ground at monthly meetings of a four-man team comprising Andy Roxburgh, Robin Russell (prime mover in establishing the UEFA Coaches Circle extranet and other online coaching tools), David Farrelly (Head of Content at uefa.com) and Peter Sanderson, the Features Sub-Editor who has been out on real, rather than virtual, training grounds with the crews who have filmed the material displayed on the website. The team's aim is for the Training Ground to inspire footballers, young and old, to go to the local park, develop their talent, get fit and, most importantly, enjoy a bit of football. Hopefully the site can reach out and inspire millions of grassroots players around the world.

In order to make the site as interesting and as user-friendly as possible, it was decided early on that it would be almost exclusively video-based. One of the objectives was to bring role models onto the Training Ground so that youngsters are encouraged to develop the qualities that have taken the star performers to the top of the game. Even if they can't match their role models for talent, they can learn how to understand and enjoy the game more.

The team has been heartened by the will to help and the enthusiasm of stars like Kaká, Andrea Pirlo and Juan Román Riquelme. Once the aims and dimensions of the project had been explained to them, they were 100% behind the idea and, totally at ease on their clubs' training grounds, provided some excellent footage to get the website up and running.

After an original launch based on a handful of features, the Training Ground now offers nearly 100 videos – a figure that is growing week by week, and which will continue to grow. The expansion of the site will also see even more emphasis on interactivity and a good blend of didactic material with fun features. Users will be encouraged to send in their own videos to measure themselves against their heroes in so-called Star Challenges such as the popular Crossbar Challenge, where Andrea Pirlo and Finnish women's international midfielder Anne Makinen are two of the big stars to have tried to hit the crossbar from a distance as many times as they can from ten attempts.

From a coaching point of view, the website aims to be able to be the first online source to help with the theory side of UEFA-endorsed coaching

diplomas. In order to prepare for this, coaches can learn drills and tactics via the website, calling up international technicians like Roy Hodgson, Lars Lagerbäck or the immensely successful youth coach Ginés Meléndez, who has now become the Spanish association's Coach Education Director.

With plans also enabling coaches to print out drills or download them onto a handheld computer to take out onto the training pitch, the Training Ground could be a genuinely useful tool for technicians throughout Europe. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating. So sample it yourself by visiting www.uefa.com/trainingground.



How do you imitate Thierry Henry?



**CROWN PRINCE FREDERIK
OF DENMARK CONGRATULATES
SCOTTISH CAPTAIN PAUL SMITH.**

HOMELESS TRUTHS

IN AUGUST 2005, AT THE EVENT IN MONACO WHICH RAISES THE CURTAIN ON A NEW SEASON OF UEFA CLUB COMPETITIONS, THE ANNUAL CHARITY CHEQUE WAS PRESENTED TO THE ORGANISERS OF THE HOMELESS WORLD CUP – AN EVENT THAT’S THE BRAINCHILD OF MEL YOUNG, HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF STREET PAPERS – A NON-PROFIT-MAKING COALITION OF STREET PAPERS ON FIVE CONTINENTS WITH A GLOBAL CIRCULATION OF 26 MILLION.

At that point, the 2005 finals had just been played in the Scottish city of Edinburgh and UEFA had been among the supporters of the event since its inception. It had previously been staged in the Austrian city of Graz in 2003 and had travelled north to the Swedish port of Gothenburg in 2004. After Edinburgh the finals went to Cape Town and, earlier this year, the fifth edition, staged in Copenhagen, underlined the social importance that grassroots events of this nature can attain.

The important thing about the Homeless World Cup is that it’s not just fun to play but also has long-lasting benefits. Each final tournament has been followed up six months later, so there is a statistical basis for the homeless truths which have emerged. The surveys have yielded consistent results. A vast majority of the participants – over 90% – say that the event gives them a new motivation for life; over 70% claim that taking part has changed their lives for the better; and over 70% have

continued to play football (in fact there have even been cases of homeless players joining professional clubs in playing and coaching capacities). Almost 90% have improved their social relations and conditions; almost half have upgraded their housing; around 40% have decided to further their education; over one third have subsequently found regular employment; and one in four have admitted to successfully addressing a drug or alcohol dependency. In other words, it’s worth doing!



That was certainly the attitude in Copenhagen during the summer, when some 500 players arrived to play some football in 48 national teams. You might think that this figure represents little more than a drop in the grassroots ocean. But the event has been steadily spreading its roots over the last five years and it’s worth bearing in mind that, apart from the finalists, thousands of homeless people had taken part in trials and training schemes.

To pick its squad, each country invites homeless people for trials, through advertisements in the street papers, posters and notice boards in hostels. The Danish hosts illustrate graphically the growing significance of the event. Their national team coach, Janek Florian Majewicz, recalled: “In 2002, we invited all homeless people to participate in a national championship in order to select a

Intense action from the Homeless World Cup.

**A LARGE CROWD
FOLLOWED THE
HOMELESS MATCHES.**



national team for the World Cup in Graz. Eighteen teams participated. Immediately it became an annual event, based on regional tournaments from which the best teams qualify for the final round. This year, more than 4,000 played and from this group, I selected the national team." In Denmark, homeless football is organised by OMBOLD, an organisation trying to bring drug addicts, alcoholics and other groups back on the right track. Janek, for 18 years a player at KB København (the oldest club in Denmark and on the European continent), is a sports consultant for OMBOLD.

At the Copenhagen finals, 14-minute games were played on two city-centre pitches measuring 22.7m x 16.7m. At the Homeless World Cup, each team remains in the competition for the full week, with results deciding whether they go up or down the ladder. Half a dozen cups are presented at different levels and each player receives a medal.

The event in Copenhagen emphasised that there is more to it than football. One of the poignant moments came when the Danish team was lining up for the national anthem and an older lady appeared on the pitch to take a close look at the footballers. "Is that you, Mum?" one of them asked. It was. They hadn't seen each other for 17 years. She had seen the name in a media report and thought it might be her long-lost son. The following day, mum was back with her sister and the player's younger brother for an emotional family reunion.

This wasn't the only emotional 'pitch invasion'. The Danish team went on to play for a bronze medal and, before the game, one of their players, 42-year-old Kenny Christensen, appeared on the pitch carrying a bunch of red roses and called for his girlfriend Pia to join



him. With the crowd chanting her name, she finally made it onto the pitch – to listen to a proposal of marriage. She accepted on the spot – or on the centre spot, to be more precise. For the record, the Liberian team weren't on the guest list for the wedding – they beat Kenny & Co. for third place!

The final turned out to be a right royal occasion with the Danish Crown Prince Frederik and the country's Social Minister, Eva Kjer Hansen, among the crowd. They saw Scotland beat Poland 9-3 to take the trophy and the head coach of the Scottish team was David Duke, who had been a player at the 2003 Homeless World Cup in Graz – an event which changed his life. He stayed in football and has completed several coaching courses.

The referee of the final was Kim Milton Nielsen, the Danish official who has handled more UEFA Champions League matches than anyone else. "The quality of the game was very good and the

behaviour of the players excellent," he commented. "No red card was shown, only the blue card a few times – which meant that the player was dismissed for the rest of the game but could be replaced by a team-mate after two minutes. I very much liked the rule that no outfield player was allowed into the penalty area; this was strictly reserved for the goalkeeper. It also helped to increase the entertainment that, at least, one player must remain in the opponents' half. It was a great pleasure to be part of the event." The participants thought so too. To put the icing on the cake, all the leading cooks and chefs in Denmark volunteered to produce food for a memorable final banquet.

With the sixth edition in Melbourne already written into the diary for 2008, the Homeless World Cup is a striking example of how street soccer can be a catalyst for lasting social improvements among the ranks of the underprivileged.



Sportstyle

**PER RAVN OMDAL,
A KEEN ADVOCATE OF
GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL.**

HITTING THE TARGETS

ANYONE WHO HAS ATTENDED A UEFA GRASSROOTS EVENT WILL KNOW THAT THERE ARE (AT LEAST) TWO THINGS YOU CAN GUARANTEE WHEN NORWAY'S PER RAVN OMDAL STEPS ON STAGE. FIRSTLY: PASSION. SECONDLY: A REMINDER OF THE PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE IN GRASSROOTS WORK OF SETTING AND ATTAINING TARGETS. SO AT LEAST WE CAN LOOK HIM IN THE EYE WHEN HE ASKS FOR AN UPDATE ON UEFA'S GRASSROOTS CHARTER – WHICH HE OFTEN DOES.

In fact, a mention of Per Omdal might be the cue to call a time-out and make a brief presentation of the new structures which have been put in place under the aegis of new president Michel Platini, with a view to giving new impetus to development

programmes and grassroots projects. Over the years, Per Omdal has emerged as a guru as well as a leader in the grassroots field, so it was good news when he was asked to chair UEFA's new Development and Technical Assistance Committee with Franz Becken-

bauer as his deputy and István Kisteleki of Hungary, Paul Philipp of Luxembourg and Zvezdan Terzic of Serbia forming a triumvirate of vice-chairmen.

The brief of the new committee embraces a variety of important roles



UEFA-pliwoods.ch

The Development and Technical Assistance Committee. In the front row, from left to right: Iljo Dominkovic, István Kisteleki, Zvezdan Terzic, Per Ravn Omdal, Michel Platini, David Taylor, Franz Beckenbauer, Trevor Brooking. Standing: Isak Mikladal, Jerzy Engel, Anton Ondruš, Mordechai Shpigler, Janis Mežeckis, Raimondas Statkevicius, Campbell Ogilvie, Andy Roxburgh.

**THE TURKISH FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
IS THE LATEST FA TO SIGN THE UEFA GRASSROOTS CHARTER.
THE ASSOCIATION PRESIDENT, HALUK ULUSOY,
SHOWS OFF THE CERTIFICATE ALONGSIDE MICHEL PLATINI.**



Jim Fleeting, a member of the Grassroots Football Panel.

within the technical, assistance and coaching fields. But Per and his team are also responsible for overseeing grassroots and player development, and for monitoring progress of the Grassroots Charter. They are supported by the Jira Panel, UEFA's technical instructors and – more to the point for those involved in the grassroots field – the newly formed Grassroots Panel which is being led by UEFA's Technical Director, Andy Roxburgh.

A list of the Grassroots Panel members may not make the most riveting reading in the world but it's worth presenting the experts who, for the next two-year term of office at least, are aiming to maintain or increase the momentum of grassroots growth right across the European continent:

- Rui Caçador (Portugal)
- Arnaldo Cunha (Portugal)
- Gaioz Darsadze (Georgia)
- Jim Fleeting (Scotland)
- Hansruedi Hasler (Switzerland)
- Willi Hink (Germany)
- Piet Hubers (Netherlands)
- Timo Huttunen (Finland)
- Miriam Malone (Republic of Ireland)
- Otakar Mestek (Czech Republic)
- Stig-Ove Sandnes (Norway)
- Kelly Simmons (England)
- Thomas Slosarich (Denmark)

The panel, which met for the first time in November, has traced out three prime priorities. In reverse order, they are: to voice opinions on all grassroots topics, to contribute to UEFA's grassroots events and activities, and to promote, protect, further develop (and adapt as appropriate) the Grassroots Charter. The idea behind listing them in reverse order is to lead us into a review of the current status of the charter and to return to our starting point of 'setting and attaining targets' from which we were sidetracked by the mention of Per Omdal.

When the Grassroots Charter was launched in 2005, the target was to have 20 national associations on board by the end of 2007. To briefly recap, the six founder signatories of the charter were Denmark, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Scotland – each of whom staged, during 2006, a regional grassroots workshop to share expertise and set benchmarks. In hindsight, these events represented a considerable step forward, as many of the ideas and principles either have been or are being implemented in other national associations.

This has helped to generate a piece of news that allows Per Omdal to sleep easy: the target was reached. By the time the Grassroots Panel met in November, 21 national associations had become signatories to the charter and six of them had moved beyond their initial 1-star status thanks to activities in sectors such as women's football, social programmes, disability football and so on. Of the six founder members, five have now acquired 5-star status and the sixth country, Denmark, is currently one star behind for the simple reason that disability football projects are run by Danish government agencies rather than by the national association.

The success story, however, doesn't stop there. The sheer enthusiasm which national associations are injecting into grassroots activities and the determination to raise standards of instruction within grassroots spheres have combined to allow the pace of growth to increase dramatically. Indeed, Per and his colleagues on the Development and Technical Assistance Committee have been able to see that the Grassroots Charter is outpacing the coaching and refereeing conventions in terms of growth.

The further heartening news as we move into 2008 is that promising results in the evaluation processes suggest that a significant number of national associations could have their applications endorsed within the next few months – to the extent that a target of having 30 signatories by the time the EURO 2008 final kicks off in Vienna has to be regarded as attainable. That's one way of wishing the members of the Grassroots Panel a Happy New Year.



LUC RABAT OF THE FFF.

AT THE SERVICE OF FRENCH FOOTBALL

TECHNICIANS FROM THE FRENCH FOOTBALL FEDERATION (FFF) TOOK PART IN AN ANNUAL SEMINAR AT THE FERNAND SASTRE NATIONAL TECHNICAL CENTRE IN CLAIREFONTAINE FROM 17 TO 20 SEPTEMBER. FOR FOUR DAYS, THE PARTICIPANTS RECEIVED INFORMATION AND DIRECTIVES FROM THE NATIONAL TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT BODY (DTN).



French technicians at Clairefontaine.

As well as a preliminary overview of the previous season, interventions from national coaches and committee work, the stage was used to discuss how to improve grassroots football and monitor talented players, with numerous coaching activities run by FFF technicians in the regions, for the benefit of the clubs and the players.

The DTN has fixed ambitious objectives in the framework of its national coaching policy: to maintain the stan-

dard and influence of French football in European and world competitions; to better develop football education for young players – local, departmental, regional and national club football; to accord particular attention to “target groups”, i.e. women and girls and people with disabilities, and to “target areas”, i.e. sensitive urban areas and rural areas; to support different football activities (futsal, beach soccer, two-a-side football, etc.); to adapt FFF technicians’ training to the evolution of the

relevant careers, in line with the economic and social environment.

The DTN continues to train coaches, educators and managers.

The aims are: better education, better coaching, better teaching, improved delivery, greater accessibility, more reflection, enabling the entire country’s club footballers to play better. Never forgetting the purpose which is to make them more competitive in an



KNVB/Jan de Koning

educational, social, health-related and safety-oriented context. These goals are all intrinsic to the desire to improve the skills of the technicians, educators and coaches – all of which is a fundamental part of the country's sporting aims, involving its 154 technicians, 80 of whom are technical advisors provided by the Ministry of Health, Youth and Sport.

In 2006/2007, over 1,000 training courses were organised by the leagues' and districts' technical teams, in the regions and departments. Over 20,000 candidates signed up and 16,748 completed the courses; they will help develop and provide better services for young footballers in French clubs and football academies.

The BEES 1 training programme (UEFA B licence), a vocational qualification enabling the holder to coach professionally, has been followed by 468 people in 34 continual assessment courses.

35 ex-professionals undergoing retraining, monitored by the French professional footballers' union (UNFP), took part in the BEES 1 training programme at the Fernand Sastre national technical centre.

107 educators have received the FFF's football coaching qualification (UEFA A licence) as a result of two national training programmes at Clairefontaine.

14 coaches have applied for the FFF's professional football coaching qualification (UEFA Pro licence) and 26 for the trainer's certificate. They are currently taking part in enhanced training courses spanning two seasons, run by national coaches.

Over 50,000 instructors with FFF qualifications are registered at 16,813 French clubs.

Luc RABAT
FFF national coach

PROGRAMME OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR OF FFF TECHNICIANS, WORKING IN FRENCH DOMESTIC AND OVERSEAS LEAGUES AND DISTRICTS

- Overview of the 2006/07 season and key activities
- Manager training:
 - Coach 1 in 3 age ranges: 6-7 year olds, 8-9 year olds, and 10-11 year olds
 - Goalkeepers' coach
 - Football academy director
 - Futsal coach
 - Urban neighbourhood activity leader
- Educator monitoring (jobs, status, retraining, etc.)
- Football policy in a school environment (secondary school and college)
- Football activities (6 -11 years old) and football academies
- Women's football and its expansion
- UEFA Grassroots Charter
- Partnership with adidas: football academy quality label
- Football educators' association
- General assembly of the FFF technicians' union
- DTN directives for 2007/08



UEFA

Grassroots activity in France.



FROM ENGLAND, THE BEST
PHOTO OF FOOTBALL FOR PEOPLE
WITH DISABILITIES.

SUMS AND SUMMERS

ANYBODY INVOLVED IN FOOTBALL WILL BE FAMILIAR WITH ADAGES ABOUT SUCCESS BEING DIFFICULT TO ATTAIN AND EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO SUSTAIN. BUT IT WOULD BE REALISTIC TO SAY THAT, SINCE UEFA PUSHED THE BOAT OUT IN 2004, THE BLOSSOMING SUCCESS OF THE SUMMER OF GRASSROOTS FOOTBALL CAMPAIGN HAS EXCEEDED EXPECTATIONS.



1 DENMARK

The concept was initially floated as a one-off celebration of UEFA's jubilee year. The fact that half a million grassroots players had enjoyed some summer football was striking enough to provoke a repeat performance in 2005, when the number of participants climbed steeply to 1.3 million. Since then, the campaign has steadily gained momentum. In four summers, the number of participants has increased fivefold to reach a magic figure of 2.5 million.

Ukraine has emerged as a 'dominant force' in summer grassroots activities with, once again, hundreds of thousands taking part in events designed for age groups ranging from 10-year-olds to seniors. Similar figures emerged from Russia thanks, in great part, to youth football tournaments aimed at three age groups from 10 upwards.

Numbers are not everything, of course – although it is certainly encouraging that UEFA has received data from no fewer than 51 of its 53 member associations. Indeed, some of the most heartening and heart-warming features are to be found among the lower numbers on the Summer of Grassroots activity chart. They provide evidence

3 UKRAINE



2 POLAND



that minorities are not being overlooked. Far from it. Within the global picture, there are small but significant details: Special Olympics events; a wide variety of activities under 'disability football' umbrellas; football for veterans; football in health camps, children's homes and boarding schools; beach soccer; football for prisoners, refugees and the homeless; and, in addition, an encouraging number of events specifically aimed at bringing young girls into the football family. And, of course, there was a healthy percentage of good, honest Fun Football events.

It goes without saying that UEFA seeks no credit for the summer programmes devised and implemented by the national associations – many of them with significant support

from commercial sponsors or local, regional and national governing bodies. UEFA's role is also to provide support and encouragement. In 2007, tangible support was upgraded in terms of the material sent to national associations. As usual, T-shirts, caps, ball nets and adidas footballs were distributed but, for the first time, each national association received 50 adidas futsal balls – 25 of them of adult weight and the other 25 the lighter children's version – in addition to specially branded lapel badges, pens and stickers. The aim was to underline the value of futsal at grassroots level and many associations responded in style by organising specific futsal events, with Portugal staging a futsal marathon open to players of all ages.

UEFA has also been encouraging diversity by offering framed certificates for the Most Valuable Grassroots Event, the Best Veterans Event, the Best Futsal Event and the Best Disability Football Event within each association. The photo contest – a winner in previous summers – was an invitation to send images representing the joy and the value of grassroots football. Prizes have been awarded to the winners and the runners-up, following the decisions taken by the Grassroots Panel at its meeting in November. The eyes of the world might focus on EURO 2008 next summer, but the aim of the footballing family must be to capitalise on the spectacle in Austria and Switzerland and to encourage even more people to join the millions who already enjoy their Summer of Grassroots Football.



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