

# THE EFFECT OF THE 1989-1990 POLITICAL TRANSITION IN HUNGARY ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING OF FOOTBALL TALENT

Géza Vincze<sup>1</sup>, Balázs Fügedi<sup>2</sup>, Henriette Dancs<sup>2</sup> and József Bognár<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Semmelweis University, Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Science, Budapest, Hungary*

<sup>2</sup>*Berzsenyi College, Department of Sport Science, Szombathely, Hungary*

Original scientific paper

UDC 796.332:327.8(439)“1989/1990”

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## Abstract:

From the beginning of the political transition in Hungary the changes and developments affecting sport did not occur in a premeditated fashion, but instead more as the associated results of certain economic, social and political events. As a result of the political transition, one of the most important factors in Hungary's lag in football talent development seems to be the weakness in management. The positions of talent development are best in the independent talent development (junior) clubs mostly because these clubs have no senior teams and therefore all attention is paid to the youth. The lack of success of the past 20 years or so in this sport clearly shows that Hungarian football is heading in the wrong direction. It is time to approach the issue of talent development in Hungarian football in a different manner. In this paper, we provide suggestions for improvement.

**Keywords:** *talent development, youth development programmes, junior leagues, Hungarian football*

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## Introduction

The presentation of national sport policy traditions and the corresponding consideration of possible directions, and their systematic comparison altogether can provide a truly sufficient foundation for understanding the present sporting life of various nations (Chalip, Johnson, & Stachura, 1996). It may be generally stated that there is no international sport policy standard which the post-socialist nations have adopted without alteration (Földesiné, 1996a; Krawczyk, 1992). By the beginning of the 1990s the various national (generally governmental) sport policies bore the marks of several decades of transformation and search for direction. Even in the more developed countries there have not been governmental and political sport strategies and concepts which could be copied automatically by those interested (Földesiné, 1996 b, c). During the greatly weakened dictatorship of the 1980s and 1990s in Eastern Europe, when changes in other areas of society accelerated, there were not really any grassroots initiatives in sport (Földesiné & Egressy, 2005). It is worth noting that from the beginning of the political transitions the changes and developments effecting sport did not occur in a premeditated fashion, but instead more as the associated results of the economic, social and

political events (Frenkl & Gallov, 2002; Hédi & Földesi, 2004). The period following the political transitions has proved in a lot of instances that the open funding of sport is clearly not in the interest of companies functioning as sponsors using state finances (Nyerges & Laki, 2006).

Based on the previously said it seems that in its present state Hungarian sport is incapable of functioning independently without state support. Hungary has been unable to qualify for international top competitions in classical spectator sports (football, basketball and tennis); the best results have been achieved in the fields less preferred by the media and sponsors (kayak-canoe, fencing and the modern pentathlon) (Freyer, 2004).

It is evident that the standard of Hungarian football is falling year by year (Frenkl, 2003; Szegedi, 2003). It is also demonstrable that those involved in football (coaches, players, league captains, the sport press, a section of the fans) all see the same road progress as a significant rise in the capital invested in the field and, at least as important, the upgrading of the role of young talent (Krausz, 2002).

Talent identification had been operating since the conception of organized competitive sport. Eastern block countries tended to have state-run, systematic talent identification (Bompa, 1996). Bompa also states that talent development is advantageous

for the individual athlete, coaches, and the sport.

Football, however, for some time did not become a profession, and truly "big business" and therefore there was no need for the sport managers or the clubs, as if racing with time, to try to involve younger players and raise trained football players. The Hungarian clubs began to involve secondary school students first in the 1930s, later even younger players. The sport's international results in the 1970s showed that in an organized and systematic framework it is sufficient to involve children at the age of 10-12 years, or even older. Today in Hungary children's football is a distinctly new phenomenon and furthermore it has begun to become generally accepted in Hungary (in the 1990s) as the sport has become professional.

The purpose of this study was to examine the progress and the characteristics of Hungarian football and of its talent development after the political transition of the late 1980s. As the 1989-90 political transition brought about critical changes in the relationship between sport and society, our aim was to study the resulting professional, economic, sociological and sociopolitical effects, specifically on talent development for the most popular sport in the country. Based on the study our stated goal was to sketch out, if only cautiously, a prospective as well.

## Methods

As learning and understanding the characteristic marks of a given social group, and exploring their correlation is considered a scientific study, we turned to complex qualitative methods for a guide (Babbie, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). Since there are no prior empirical studies available in this specific area of research, besides meaning, an exploratory factor dominated this study. According to Patton (2002), qualitative research is inquiry into meaning and exploration, hence, in this study through fieldwork, document analysis and in-depth interviews we focused on what things meant and how they affected Hungarian talent development in football. Qualitative data collection and analysis progressed hand-in-hand, their integration and building upon one another were present throughout the entire process (Creswell, 1997; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Fieldwork

The first author of this study has devoted his entire life to football. As a football player, coach and politician he has worked actively on a continuous basis for the growth and advancement of the sport. As a participatory observer he has lived and continues to live together with the football community and directly and continuously takes part in its daily activities. He is not merely

present at the events, but has worked with and for the football community. He constantly collects and analyses data. His presence and activity have always been lead by the intent to improve, the entire football community has accepted him, placed their confidence in him and therefore he has been able to collect information firsthand.

## Document analysis

The systematic examination of the printed and written materials played an important role in the study. It was important to examine documents, because they provided a behind the scenes view of a lot of aspects that might have not been available through other means of data collection (Tenenbaum & Driscoll, 2005). First and foremost we gained access to all public and private recorded documents (archive sources) related to football following the political transition. The direction and management of the sport produces a huge amount of documents and among these we found interesting and important sources as related decrees, acts, accounts, committee meeting reports which were all taken into account during our research. Decisions on the direction and development of sport at all levels were significant for the study.

## In-depth interviews

In the interest of achieving the most complete answers to the goals outlined we prepared two-hour indepth interviews with decisive personalities in football, who possess experience and indispensable information on the state of football. During the selection of samples reliable professionals accepted in the sport were chosen and prepared based on these in-depth interviews: 14 definitive professionals (coaches, league captains), 6 former directors of the Hungarian Football Federation (HFF) (these directors played decisive roles in the development of the sport) and 3 "living legends" in football. All interviews were recorded, which provided indispensable assistance in the analysis.

## Results

Let us first describe the situation of talent development in Hungarian football. The assessment was carried out using Szegedi's classification (2003) of the following club types: professional, amateur associations and independent talent development clubs.

The main goal of the *professional associations* is to train highly trained valuable players for maximum profit. If these trained players later reinforce an adult team, then the club's budget is spared from buying players trained elsewhere (here, therefore, profit is directly apparent). A club may sell a player thereby generating a profit. It is a fact that there are very few capital-rich owners

who think in the long-term in Hungarian football. It seems clear that the position of talent development is in general poor in the hierarchy of the larger profit-oriented clubs. Talent development in many places is neither organizationally nor economically independent from the company managing the club and there the adult professional teams are treated exceptionally. The position of talent development is not only simply poor within the system, but also the club's internal structure makes it difficult to take advantage of external financial resources.

The situation of talent development is significantly better in the smaller, *amateur associations*. These clubs do not "produce for the market", i.e. it is not their goal to raise truly quality football players but instead, in connection to talent development, they organize recreational activities for young football players. Their other goal is to raise footballers for their own clubs: the percentage of own trained football players in these associations is significantly higher than in professional organizations. The management of talent development is not separate from the adult team; however, the local government (in contrast to the professional clubs) can be more confident because it is supporting the physical activity of local children.

The third type of club is the *independent talent development clubs*. The greatest advantage of these clubs is that most came about as grassroots civil initiatives and therefore they are not compelled to struggle with managing a large team nor do they have to blaze a trail in a "fossilized" club structure. The clubs following the political transition were formed by people who were for some reason dissatisfied with the (primarily) professional associations in their football community. Amongst the independent talent development clubs there are those which parents formed because they were unable to find satisfactory places for their children to play football. There are also clubs within these which were formed by reform-minded coaches as they felt that they were unable to realize their concepts in the "traditionally" functioning clubs. This new type of association proved popular, and following the political transition many independent talent development clubs were formed in many of the larger towns in Hungary.

It is clear based on both the specialist literature and our findings that the positions of talent development are best in the independent talent development (junior) clubs; these clubs have no senior teams and therefore all attention is paid to the youth (András, 2003, 2004). The status of the newly formed junior clubs is the least productive in the entire structure as they cannot count on local government sponsorship and they have no playing field (stadium). Nevertheless their talent development goals coincide with those of the professional clubs. As the majority of these clubs was established by reform-minded

people, the aim to raise and train "quality" players is present in almost all of them. It is for this reason that these clubs are noticeably market-orientated: their membership fees are somewhat higher in comparison to the other clubs, although they endeavour to provide quality training because it is important to them that their players achieve high ranking. As these clubs endeavour to manage football as a business it is these organizations which function the most professionally in the entire structure.

### **The effect of the political transition on talent development**

According to our interviews, one of the most important factors in Hungary's lag in football talent development is weakness in management. It is important to show what characterized this activity in talent development in the past. In the interest of a better understanding of the question the combined effect of the following historical and managerial factors on football are constructed in thesis form.

Earlier we mentioned that the political transition brought about a negative development due to the fact that the state basically withdrew from the sponsorship of talent development on a wider scale. It is sufficient here to refer to the collapse and atrophy of the competition system within the school system.

By the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, the need for a manager-type coach was brought to the fore also in the field of talent development. In many areas of the world, regardless of whether a country is rich or poor, this question was given high priority with regard to talent development. In Hungary there was a plan to address the issue. Project leaders were named but, as it turned out, they were insufficient for the task at hand. This may be explained by the fact that the clubs, which were virtually left to their own devices, as the organisations responsible for development and realizing talent entrusted the matter of talent development to aging players who had very little or no background and practice in the field of management and coaching.

In addition the club managers thought they were thus able to hit two birds with one stone by providing an income for successful former players while at the same time exploiting their names to obtain children and sponsors. It may be clearly stated, however, that this concept proved fruitless in all aspects for developing talent.

Here we come to the point in which we could speak ironically of "the Hungarian football miracle" if the situation were not so dire. The real problem, which has a constant effect, occurs when talent development at a mass level is organized outside of the school system, and, in time, outside of the clubs as well. The latter occurs when the reduction of financial resources and other conditions brings

with it the appearance of such “saviours”, who see a business opportunity in selling ever younger players from youth development programmes.

A “modern day traffic in children” has begun, the point of which is to sell untrained, barely trained or, in an optimal case, half-trained youth (the category a given young player is assigned depends mainly on the age group) at home and abroad while at the same time some are provided to the given sport club section, thus legalizing their activity. Often the parent plays this role with their talented (or even untalented) child, which is at least understandable from a human perspective, but nonetheless extremely damaging to the sport. Even worse was the appearance and proliferation of the various “agents” who made the club directors and the parents believe that they would be able to make a good business deal out of the sale of the players. Most of these agents quickly targeted ever younger players because there they encountered the weakest resistance and the least amount of control or accountability. This destructive activity is still to this day clearly the most dangerous burden weighing on the youth talent development programmes.

In a normal case the training of managers takes years and is carried out at a university level because it requires complex knowledge which integrates a great amount of theoretical and practical scholarship. In Hungarian football, however, the “worn-out fighters” were given a crash-course after which they were given a field-marshal’s baton, i.e. they were named talent development coaches. The basic manager training operated by the Hungarian Football Federation provides an opportunity within two months for the pursuit of the activity at a high level and in an ethical manner. Going further, allow us to put forth a legitimate question: can we talk of manager-type coaches when Hungarian football neither wants to train them nor employ them?

Experience shows that in Hungary this role in general is confined to the case in which managers endeavour to improve the performance of children of well-off parents because then the parents will in some way or another support the team and perhaps the coach as well. This is the triumph of counter-selection. In the past there were three or four patronized players in a team of twenty, today this ratio seems to be reversed. In addition, in many cases talented, or seemingly talented players of 15-17 years of age try their luck abroad. In this way there are few left worth managing. The circle is thus slowly closed, because there is no trained manager, and there is scarcely anyone worth managing in the world of Hungarian football.

There remains a thread left in the story worth following. The significant reduction in those employed in youth development programmes and the removing of these individuals from the school system has greatly reduced the number and role of

physical education teachers in talent development. At the same time in the 1980s the well-trained physical education teacher-coaches possessing modern knowledge were displaced in the adult echelon by the “star players”. The formula was born, which no one has proved scientifically but it sounded good, according to which “a person can be a good coach only if he was formerly a great player.”

From here it was only a short step to the present dilettantish view which proclaims that it is not a problem in football if fewer children play it as in any case the quality of the training needs to be raised and then everything will be all right. Practice and theory in Hungary were harmonized, few play football but from those who do we will develop the new “golden team”. How wide the foundation is and how many children play football do not count because the result inevitably does not occur.

The political transition in essence buried the old structure of talent development, and brought little from the essential elements to the new. The state naturally is unable to, nor should it completely withdraw from the field of talent development from one day to the next. Rather it attempts to find cooperative partners, who are able to add to the dwindling resources, or incorporate new, external resources.

Every new situation brings with it new ideas, new concepts and recommendations for solutions. Naturally, this is true for exploring the possibility for football talent development programmes as well. The relative popularity in Hungary of football (participation in the 1982 and 1986 World Cups) for many enhanced the opportunity for founding an enterprise for talent development promising profit.

There are talent development clubs in Western Europe which maintain themselves by selling players. This is a straight business enterprise, in which the financial or expert investor risks the venture capital in the hope of future profit. Naturally, there were such ventures in Hungary as well.

### **Góliát Football Club**

One of the new concepts was to form a training system organized on the school system. The first such concept realized was Góliát FC. The activity of the organization began at the same time as the political transition (five private individuals founded it in May of 1988), and therefore it is worth summarizing what goals it set out and what it has been able to achieve in football talent development.

Góliát FC’s main activity: within the framework of primary and secondary schools, for the entire school year it provides regular play and training sessions, in addition three times a year within the framework of football athletic activity, the opportunity for competition and selection. The association, from the time of its foundation, has built its

programmes on the social importance of teaching children a healthy lifestyle, learning to enjoy play and football, the traditions of Hungarian football, producing players to replace the greatly reduced number of players as well as on ensuring the conditions of coaching football within the school.

With an excellent concept the association wishes to build on the potentials within the school, utilizing the need for physical activity inherent within children in such a way that these are combined with the traditions of Hungarian football while at the same time providing the opportunity for regular training, competition and talent selection within the framework of the school. Between 1988 and 1999 the association carried out its activities based on a co-operation agreement with the Hungarian Football Federation. It is a fact furthermore that the association, now operating under the name Góliát-McDonald's FC received state support from the Fall of 1999 to the end of 2004. The club's budget by 2004 surpassed 100 million HUF (1 USD = 200 HUF). It is important to emphasize that according to official documents, in 1988 2,700 children were members of the club, this number in 2002 reached 40,364 and in the 2006/2007 school year 21,013 girls and boys aged from 5 to 14 were members of Góliát-McDonald's.

According to the official report of the Club it has provided regular sport activity for more than 150,000 children, among them during the past 18 years more than 15,000 children have been allocated free of charge to football club sections. From these children 7 have become members of the national team. The report is excellent for understanding why this formation is a dead end, and also it illuminates the fact that a good basic idea on its own is worthless if it is not paired with the necessary expertise.

The system covering the country and integrating those secondary schools which applied to the programmes (1,073 schools in 2002) showed a 10% efficiency rate (15,000 from 150,000) in the orientation of students to the football club sections. This means two things. First, the preparation of the children did not reach the standard which the junior leagues would require, therefore serious expert problems could be present. Taking into consideration that the club provided expert materials (video and written materials on football) to each coach, all of whom possessed the required educational background, the possibility arises that the advertised training was not held properly, or perhaps not held at all. Second, the children who were involved in the training did not show much motivation in pursuing a football career or the selection of these children was not satisfactory, although the latter is disputed by the fact that a child aged 5 to 7, if properly taught, by the time he/she is 12 to 13 years old that child will be at

such a level that he/she will be able to hold their own anywhere.

It is well known that it is in Hungary that the most national team players do not last for five international games on the national team. This makes more interesting the contrast of a total of 7 out of 150,000 players making the national team. The most significant assessment and indication of the success of the talent development programmes are how many players familiar with football from a given organization enter a senior team network, and how many become national team members. One can refer to the fact that the association made only the first steps to help them achieve their goal, to learn to enjoy the sport, but even so, the 0.0047% percentage is alarming. It is also worth noting that for 11 years the Hungarian Football Federation (HFF) aided the club's work in every field, i.e. it was given professional, organizational and financial support. The proportional results, however, are lacking.

### **Bozsik Programme**

The second type of talent development programmes is the Bozsik Programme which was initiated in 2001 and which was constructed upon three elements: 1) football in school: getting acquainted with and learning to enjoy the game, 2) club football: the training of talented players, and 3) the academy of elite players: the selection of the best from club training, the development of elite players.

Based on these three elements they planned and advertised for the involvement of a minimum of 100,000 new football players and targeted a long-term goal of 240,000 players. It is of interest, however, that in the third year of the programmes there were 100,000 players in the programmes.

The school programme providing the foundation for talent development targeted the participation of children between 6 and 11 years of age. This was realized within the Góliát McDonald's FC system in such a manner that the programme provided sessions on the teaching of and learning to enjoy football two to three times a week within the school system. Competition between the children does not appear here yet as a goal as this would be unnecessary and expensive. For this purpose they wished to use the competitions of the Student Olympics. The problem with this, however, is that the Student Olympics provides for competition primarily for the 11-12 age group, i.e. that from the six age groups targeted for participation the first five were excluded from the competition. The second question was in this case to which programme do the school activities go to the Góliát McDonald's FC, or to the Bozsik Programme? Perhaps both associations accounted for the same child? The third question is who instructs the children in the school? Obviously if this is realized under the Góliát system then

where does the Bozsik Programme come in? The suspicion from our interviewees arises that names are bought for 2,000 forint head money, which may be written into the report and to which they may refer as participants in the programme, only they are dealt with separately and their activities are carried out in other organizations.

The backbone of the Bozsik Programme is the club activities. The U7 lower district, the U9 lower district and subcenter, the U11 lower district, subcenter and county players were selected. The U13 age group is provided a competition opportunity within district, county and regional athletic teams. The training and competition of the age groups between U15 and U19 takes place within the first and second league. The clubs participating in the programme must have a four-year talent development programme, which the HFF Professional and Coach Management Centre oversees, in which the detailed explanation of participation in the Bozsik Programme must be represented.

It is worth noting that the third element of the Bozsik Programme was not carried out. This was due to a professional review of the programme on the one hand, and on the other hand, to sponsors backing out. Similarly to our interviews, one of the prominent researchers of Hungarian sport science (Szegegi, 2003) found that schools and sport associations clearly formed the foundation of the programme but at the same time it often happened that the children were registered twice as participants in the programme: as school children and as association players. In addition it was clear that the integrated competition system counted as the greatest merit of the programme which in theory made it possible for the most talented and most motivated children to participate in the most intense and highest quality training, and thus, in time, to reach a higher level.

### Whose interest?

The programme, in providing an opportunity for the children to advance, would have provided a relevant solution to the organizational problems of Hungarian football. One aspect, however, was left out from the principles of the programme: the interest of the association. A number of small clubs were afraid that they would lose their talented players at a very young age and therefore they tried to "conceal" their best players. The programme according to Szegegi (2003) was based exclusively on the interests of "universal Hungarian football", forgetting that there are individual (club) interests, which were expressly harmed by the logic of the programme.

Knowing the facts it is easy to see that the main problem of the programme lies in its stated goals: it wished to realize mass and quality training within the same centrally directed framework,

under the same direction. Experience shows that this does not work because activities directed at a wide foundation require organization on different principles and different conditions than successful work with selected talented players. The lack of success in the Bozsik Programme is a proof that money, and money alone, and, with regard to football talent development a great deal of money, is not a guarantee for success.

Other than the Góliát and Bozsik programmes there were other initiatives, but either due to their financial background, or to their sphere of influence, or to their results they were unable to provide experience which would have warranted their presentation. The conclusions related to the aforementioned two programmes relate to these programmes as well.

The two models presented previously constitute the definitive experiments of the past 20 years in the field of football talent development in the search for new directions and methods, and for new organizational forms capable of replacing the sport school system within the new circumstances. What the assessed new formations have in common is that they targeted reaching and activating the mentioned age groups, so that from these participants they would be able to select the talent which would mean the beginning of an upward trend in Hungarian football. The experiments proved to be basically unsuccessful, although they were met with great expectations and, compared to other initiatives, they received a serious amount of funding.

### Assessing the political transition and its consequences in football

The consequences of the changes in the period since the political transition were expressed in six prominent subject areas which appeared in the course of interviewing the individuals taking part in the study in relation to football talent development. Some of these findings well coincide with those of earlier studies (András, 2003; Freyer, 2004; Földesiné & Gál, 2005; Szegegi, 2003; Vincze, 2006).

First, the appeal of the sport has declined greatly. Although many still play football in Hungary and it is evident that great anticipation precedes every match, it is apparent that the interest by both adults and young people in football has fallen. Those leading the sport as well as the clubs should be responsible for not allowing the press surrounding football to be full of scandals, violence and "unsolved affairs". This type of press often produces aversion even in those devoted to the sport.

Also, the integration of the clubs into society seems to be a paramount problem. Football clubs to this day have failed to form satisfactory ties with their members and base, i.e. they have been unable to function as civic organizations. The clubs are not

sufficiently transparent, their operation is virtually invisible to the outside world.

Another determining aspect is the facilities requirements. Many of the football pitches are in poor condition and there is a decline in pitches in general although the issue of football pitches is one of the most pressing problems facing football talent development. The state of the stadiums does a great deal of harm to the popularity of football, but the situation is perhaps even worse when one looks at the number and state of the training pitches: today children and young players train in conditions which in the 21<sup>st</sup> century do more to intimidate than to attract young people.

In addition, the state of the professionals (talent development trainers) in the field is rather poor. The majority of the trainers involved with young players do so for pay as a second job. Apart from this, ideally it would be the task of not only the Hungarian University for Physical Education or the Hungarian Football Federation to teach coaches new findings in coaching theory, nutrition, etc.

Another consequence is that the intermediary mechanisms between the various types of organizations function poorly. Co-operation between clubs is incidental, there are no professional contacts, it remains an unresolved problem as to how it would be worth it for the smaller associations to develop football talent. Due to the lack of organized relationships and to the poor operation of intermediary channels, nearly 40,000 football players at the age for talent development remained not reached by quality talent development training.

Moreover, the intermediary mechanisms between football and other social subsystems do not always function efficiently. Although in many places clubs cultivate good relations with the local governments and schools, the funding for sport activities by the local government remains at an extremely low level in many regions and communities. Even less resolved is the role of the state in football talent development, and in the area as a whole.

The lack and insufficient functioning of an intermediary sphere is an outstanding problem. It seemed clear in the course of the interviews that sufficient mediation and connections would mean an efficient operation of talent development. In Hungary the relationships between amateurs and professionals have not been sufficiently developed although in most cases the clubs co-operate in a spontaneous manner. In regions where talent development for professional football functions poorly (therefore they are unable to organize their own training), and where amateur teams consider football purely a recreational activity (and they do not consider it their function to promote the professional career of their best young players) organized relationships between professional and

amateur clubs are unlikely to form. Relationships work much better in regions where there are independent talent development clubs as they are organizations which were formed expressly for the purpose of providing quality training for young players. These clubs are the ones which train their players for achievement.

Today it is evident that many elite teams are – now traditionally – endeavouring to produce more talent which they have developed themselves. These elite clubs maintain far more active ties with the smaller clubs in their area.

## Discussion and conclusions

The major European clubs have been developing vertically integrated networks in order to compete effectively in the global football market (King, 2003). It does not seem to be the case in Hungary. Several researchers (Földesiné, 1996c; Laskai, 1997; Takács, 1996) agree that the political parties following the political transition have for all intents and purposes not established their own networks and sport policy or governing strategy. Instead the parties simply assumed the central governing concept which has proved a failure, and which was later associated to political personalities (Hamar, Peters, Van Berlo, & Hardman, 2006). The personality-based government from the beginning battled (successfully) with the grass-roots development of the sport profession and although it succeeded in bringing about the 1996 Act on Sport, this was not supported by a sufficient funding structure and therefore the paternalistic sport policy remained and was not replaced by sport featuring in the state central budget (Földesiné, 2003). All these aspects have greatly affected today's football.

One of the most important concepts related to football talent development is to reintegrate talent development into the school system, primarily in relation to the 6- to 12-year-old age group. Based upon our findings, selection for club talent development teams should take place at age of 13.

It should be also highlighted as imperative that the establishment of a network to cover the entire country, which 1) would be coupled with a modern training programme, and 2) the state would provide the basic funding, and, finally, 3) a central governing body would carry out the development of trained talent.

Another key point in talent development is that "football school" should be organized by a prominent talent development specialist to which parents would pay an appropriate membership fee. Also, the facilities should be provided in some form free of charge to co-operating partners (the state, co-operating clubs, local government, etc.) who would then be relieved of most of the burden of talent development. The remaining costs would be covered by the sale of the players. This assumes, or rather requires,

the involvement of an investor or a sponsor because the most of the clubs would not have any remaining resources to cover the residual costs.

It would be also essential that a talent development programme financed by one or more sponsors, in which the parents also contribute to covering the costs of the programme, and which has a goal or system of goals that is socially justifiable or worthy of support within its operation, thereby basically acting as a civil initiative.

Talent development in Hungary is being carried out in undeserving circumstances (there scarcely remains a base in the country truly suitable for quality training!) and has been entwined with business. A good example of this peculiar formation is that now parents are being asked to pay for sport activities which had been provided free of charge for decades (and they were choosy from the outset, so that today youth sport activity has become the privilege of the rich!). Another example, coaches accept money from parents to favour their children, thereby continuing and reinforcing the peculiar counter-selection which is destroying the sport. At the same time the funding of sport has developed to the point at which very few put very little into "the big pot", but even more put nothing in and still do so today.

In light of the opinions voiced by those involved, the professionals and the prominent representatives of the sport, we may offer the following summary.

Becoming acquainted with and learning to enjoy football in schools should be built first and foremost by physical education teachers and should aim at the 6- to 13-year-old age group and not have the children of this age group train outside the school structure at external football associations. Within the school framework every child showing an interest should receive the opportunity to master the basics of the sport, to become acquainted with his/her own skills and talents and to practice regularly.

The funding (at times significant) allocated to football talent development was used poorly and inefficiently because if money entered the system, it was used first to build and finance a national network, thereby leaving little left to develop and bring to a competition talent. The 2004 annual budget of the Bozsik Programme bears out this conclusion.

The Hungarian Football Federation prescribes a list of tasks for the associations (primarily for the first and the second league) for which it is unable to provide financial support. The other problem is that the Federation expects continual training of talent from the associations while at the same time it takes out talented players (selected team members) from the associations' preparation and training system for long periods of time in order to prepare adult team members. In the event of failure the opportunity is a given to pass the burden of responsibility. It is a serious problem in attitude that they wish to assign football talent development mainly to the 45-50 first and second league clubs which, taking into account the 14- to 18-year-old age group, this means at most 5,000 players. This naturally does not lead easily to the desired and hoped for advancement of Hungarian football to the European front line. The events and lack of success of the past 20 years clearly show that we are heading in the wrong direction. It is time to approach the issue of talent development in Hungarian football in a different manner.

Learning and understanding the Hungarian issues and problems, it might be interesting for other countries to make their own talent development programme better. The financial, political and sport matters may be different for each country but the goal is similar: make youth football better and more popular in society. Hopefully, all those interested may find useful ideas to adapt for their own situations.

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Submitted: October 12, 2007

Accepted: May 9, 2008

Correspondence to:  
Prof. Balázs Fügedi, PhD  
Berzsenyi College, Department of Sport Science  
Szombathely, Hungary  
Phone: 00-36-70-313-1722  
E-mail: fuedi@bdtf.hu

## UČINCI POLITIČKIH PROMJENA U MAĐARSKOJ 1989.-1990. NA RAZVOJ I TRENIRANJE NOGOMETNIH TALENATA

### Sažetak

#### Uvod

Prezentacija nacionalnih sportskih politika i odgovarajuće promišljanje mogućih pravaca razvoja te njihova sustavna usporedba zajedno mogu biti uistinu dovoljno snažni temelji za razumijevanje sadašnjeg stanja sporta u različitim državama. Čak ni u razvijenijim zemljama ne postoje vladine sportske strategije, politike ni koncepti koje bi zainteresirane zemlje mogle automatski preuzeti.

Čini se da mađarski sport, u stanju u kojem se danas nalazi, nije sposoban funkcionirati neovisno, tj. bez potpore države. Mađarska se već godinama ne uspijeva kvalificirati na velika međunarodna natjecanja u klasičnim sportovima koji privlače gledatelje (nogomet, košarka, tenis); najbolji rezultati postižu se u sportovima koji su manje interesantni medijima i sponzorima, kao što su kajak-kanu, mačevanje i moderni pentatlon.

Danas je nogomet kod djece u Mađarskoj postao sasvim novi popularan fenomen i, štoviše, postaje općeprihvaćen (u 1990-ima) od kada je postao profesionalan sport.

Cilj je našeg istraživanja ispitati napredak i karakteristike mađarskog nogometa i razvoj nogometnih talenata nakon političkih promjena. Budući da je politička tranzicija donijela kritične promjene u odnosima između sporta i društva, naš je cilj bio istražiti profesionalne, ekonomske, socijalne i sociopolitičke učinke, osobito na razvoj talenata u najpopularnijem sportu u zemlji - nogometu. Na temelju ove studije zacrtali smo i cilj da skiciramo, premda vrlo oprezno, kakva bi mogla biti perspektiva ovog sporta.

#### Metode

Kvalitativna studija je ispitivanje značenja i utjecaja; stoga smo se, u našoj studiji, radeći na terenu, analizirajući dokumente i vodeći vrlo detaljne intervjue, fokusirali na značenja određenih stvari i na to kako su utjecale na razvoj talenata u mađarskom nogometu. Istovremeno su se prikupljali i analizirali kvalitativni podaci, potom su se integrirali i tako se stvarala mreža podataka i značenja tijekom čitavog procesa. Prvi autor ove studije, kao sudjelujući promatrač, živio je i dalje živi unutar nogometne zajednice te je direktno i trajno vezan za njene dnevne aktivnosti.

Reguliranje i upravljanje sportom proizvodi veliku količinu dokumenata, među kojima smo našli interesantne i vrlo važne izvore, kao što su odluke, zakoni, računi, zapisnici sa sastanaka odbora koji su uzeti u obzir u našem istraživanju. Odluke o pravcu i razvoju sporta na svim razinama bile su važne za naše istraživanje.

Vrlo istaknute, pouzdane profesionalne djelatnike s dugogodišnjim iskustvom u sportu izabrali smo za provedbu detaljnih intervjua: 14 profesionalaca (trenera, ligaških kapetana), 6 bivših ravnatelja Mađarskog nogometnog saveza (HFF) (navedeni ravnatelji odigrali su odlučujuće uloge u razvoju ovog sporta) i tri nogometne "žive legende". Sve smo intervjue snimali.

#### Rezultati

Razvoj talenata u Mađarskoj provodi se u nedopustivo lošim uvjetima (u državi jedva da postoji mjesto na kojem se uistinu mogu provoditi kvalitetni treninzi), a čudno je prepleten s poslovima. Dobar primjer ovog vrlo čudnog oblika rada jest da se od roditelja zahtijeva da od sada plaćaju sportske aktivnosti svoje djece koje su bile besplatne desetljećima unatrag (te su djeca prolazila kroz prirodnu selekciju talenata od samog početka; danas je, međutim, trening djece i mladih postao privilegija bogatih). Drugi primjer loše prakse u sportu djece i mladih je taj što treneri uzimaju novac od roditelja kako bi forsirali njihovu djecu da bi uspjela u tom sportu; time se podupire poseban oblik protuselekcije, čime se uništava sam sport. Istovremeno, sustav financiranja se razvio do točke u kojoj vrlo rijetki pridonose financiranju sporta.

Prvo upoznavanje s nogometom i učenje kako u njemu uživati trebalo bi se najprije i ponajviše dogoditi u školama pod vodstvom nastavnika tjelesne i zdravstvene kulture te bi takvi programi trebali prije svega obuhvatiti djecu u dobi od 6 do 13 godina koja ne bi trebala trenirati izvan školskih programa, odnosno u sportskim klubovima. U okviru školskih programa svako bi dijete zainteresirano za sport trebalo dobiti priliku za usvajanje i usavršavanje osnova određenog sporta kako bi i samo upoznao svoje sposobnosti i talente te steklo naviku da redovito vježba.

Financijska sredstva (ponekad značajna) dodijeljena za razvoj nogometnih talenata malo i neučinkovito su se koristila u navedene svrhe jer se novac koji je ušao u sustav najprije koristio za izgradnju i financiranje nacionalne mreže, te je na taj način ostajalo vrlo malo za razvoj talenata i njihova natjecanja.

Ozbiljan je problem i stajalište Mađarskog nogometnog saveza koji sredstva za razvoj nogometnih talenata želi podijeliti između 45-50 klubova prve i druge savezne lige, koji ukupno imaju najviše 5000 igrača, uzmu li se u obzir igrači u dobi od 14 do 18 godina. Takva politika Saveza, naravno, ne vodi željenom napretku mađarskog nogometa i približavanju najjačim europskim klubovima. Događaji i nedostatak uspjeha u posljednjih 20-ak godina jasno pokazuju da se krećemo u pogrešnom smjeru. Vrijeme je da se problemu razvoja talenata u mađarskom nogometu pristupi na drugačiji način.

## Diskusija i zaključci

Jedan od najvažnijih koncepata vezanih uz razvoj nogometnih talenata jest da bi se razvoj talenata trebao ponovno vratiti u školski sustav, prvenstveno za djecu u dobi od 6. do 12. godine. Temeljeno na rezultatima naših istraživanja, selekcija za daljnji razvoj talenata unutar klubova trebala bi biti organizirana za djecu stariju od 13 godina.

Također bi kao imperativ trebalo naglasiti uspostavljanje mreže koja bi prekrila cijelu državu i koja bi: 1) radila u skladu s modernim trenažnim programima, 2) kojoj bi država osigurala osnovna financijska sredstva za rad i, naposljetku, 3) osnovalo bi se centralno upravno tijelo koje bi provodilo razvoj treniranih talenata.

Sljedeći ključni detalj u razvoju talenata je da bi "nogometne škole" trebali organizirati i voditi istaknuti specijalisti za razvoj nogometnih talenata kojima bi roditelji plaćali odgovarajuću članarinu za svoju djecu. Isto tako, objekti za treninge trebali bi biti besplatni za takve organizacije uz pomoć države, suradnih klubova, lokalne samouprave i drugih),

koje bi u tom slučaju bile oslobođene velikog financijskog tereta. Ostali troškovi pokrivali bi se prodajom igrača. Takav način rada pretpostavlja ili, bolje rečeno, zahtijeva uključivanje investitora ili sponzora, budući da većina klubova ne bi imala dovoljno sredstava za pokrivanje preostalih troškova.

Bilo bi jako važno da program razvoja talenata financira jedan ili više sponzora te da ga pomažu i roditelji pokrivanjem određenih troškova. Tako organiziran programa rada, s jasno iskazanim ciljem ili ciljevima rada, bio bi socijalno opravdan i vrijedan truda i potpore za svoje akcije, stoga bi na taj način zapravo mogao djelovati kao udruga građana.

Upoznavanje i razumijevanje mađarskih problema moglo bi biti interesantno za ostale zemlje kako da učine svoj program razvoja talenata još boljim. Financijska, politička i sportska pitanja mogu biti drugačija za svaku državu, ali cilj je u osnovi sličan: učiniti nogomet djece i mladih boljim i popularnijim u društvu. Nadamo se da će svi zainteresirani za ovu problematiku pronaći korisne ideje koje bi mogli primijeniti u svojim specifičnim situacijama.