

THE CLASSIFICATION OF YOUTH ACADEMIES IN GERMAN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CLUBS

Author:

Jo Van Hoecke

email:

jvhoecke@vub.ac.be

Co-authors:

Schoukens, Hugo Simm, Stefan Isakowitz, Marcel De Sutter, Robbie

University:

Double PASS, Spin-off Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Faculty:

Department of Sport Management and Policy

Abstract

Introduction and aim of the paper

Last decade the development of home grown players for the professional game can be considered as a key strategic issue of the German Football League (DFL). Since the season 2001/02 clubs of the 1. and 2. Bundesliga are obliged to establish an Academy / Centre of Excellence ('Leistungszentrum') to prepare the most talented youngsters for a professional career in football. Therefore clubs have invested more than half a Billion Euros in this period to organize their 'R&D-department' in an appropriate way (Deutsche Fussball Liga, 2011). To increase the efficiency of these investments, together with the German Football Association (DFB), the Bundesliga has also implemented the quality and performance management system 'Foot PASS'. In this way, first and foremost, they want to guide the clubs and their managers through the unavoidable process of professionalization. Moreover, since 2007 this auditing system is also used to classify the academies and to distribute the money from the UEFA Solidarity Fund (7.5 Million Euros in 2009/10).

The aim of this paper is to present the overall results of the second evaluation and certification with Foot PASS 2.0 last season (2010/11).

Literature

According to Chappelet and Bayle (2005), the expression "managing performance" means defining, measuring, controlling, and managing the performance of an organization or a network of organizations. This latter is definitely the case for a national sport organization for which the quality of services and partnership relations is considered as an essential operational performance factor. In this way, many national sport organizations are trying to professionalize their system and the various links in the chain in order to improve communication and the implementation of their actions. Through offering such a quality system to clubs or other training structures, a federation's ability to control the sport system can be greatly strengthened. Behind this idea is the emergence of a system close to that of franchising by the federation that unifies and favours the development of the sports in question based on a more qualitative, uniform approach. This supposes a clearly defined and global strategic project on the part of the federations and one that is formalised and shared by its various components (Chappelet and Bayle, 2005).

Methodology

After a first round of 50 audits and re-audits with Foot PASS 1.0 (2007-2010) a new version of this Professional Academy Support System has been developed (Van Hoecke, et al., 2010). Foot PASS 2.00 is based on an adapted framework with 8 dimensions which provides key indications of performance of an academy in a professional football club. These key functions are: 1) strategic and financial planning (STRA), 2) organizational structure (ORG), 3) talent identification and development (DEV), 4) athletic and social support (SUP), 5) academy staff (STAF), 6) communication and co-operation (COM), 7) facilities and equipment (FAC) and finally 8) effectiveness (EFF) which consists of key performance indicators to measure the actual productivity of an academy.

Last season (2010/11) this new quality system has been used for the objective evaluation and certification of 23 clubs; more precisely 14 clubs of the Bundesliga and 9 clubs of the 2. Bundesliga which were audited for the first time in 2007/08. All data are collected during standardised documentary and practical audits, conducted by two teams of independent and highly experienced auditors.

Results

Table 1 shows the average scores of the 23 participating clubs on the different dimensions of Foot PASS. In general, the median of the total scores (TOT) is 55.1%, with a maximum of 70.0% and a minimum of 27.8%. In comparison with the first audit, we see that 60% of the clubs has improved significantly. The highest scores are found for strategic and financial planning (STRA) and facilities (FAC). On the other hand, lower means and medians were found for talent identification and development (DEV), athletic and social support (SUP). Despite the indicated increase of local players in a number of clubs, the productivity of more than half of the evaluated academies is still a point of interest. In this context it is important to note that there is a strong correlation ($p=.01$) between the score for effectiveness (EFF) and the total score (TOT). Furthermore, significant differences ($*p=.05$; $**p=.01$) between First and Second League clubs are found for the total score (*), as well as for the availability and quality of the staff (**) and facilities (*).

Based on the total score and the sub scores on the different dimensions, 4 clusters were made as a basis for the certification. Table 2 shows some descriptive statistics concerning the total score of the clubs in the different clusters. Significant differences (* $p=.05$; ** $p=.01$) between the groups can be found for six of the eight dimensions (STRA*, DEV**, STAF**, SUP**, COM**, FAC**).

References:

Chappelet, J.-L., & Bayle, E. (2005) *Strategic and Performance Management of Olympic Sport Organisations*. Champaign: Human Kinetics.

Deutsche Fussball Liga (2011). *10 Jahre Leistungszentren. Die Talentschmieden des deutschen Spitzenfußballs*. Frankfurt am Main: Deutsche Fussball Liga.

Van Hoecke, J., Schoukens, Simm, S., & De Bosscher, V. (2009). Measuring the performance of professional youth academies: The case of the Bundesliga. In: Westerbeek, H. & Fahlström, P. (Eds.). *Proceedings of the 17th Conference of the European Association for Sport Management*, 173-175. Nieuwegein: Arko Sports Media.

Van Hoecke, J., Schoukens, Simm, S., Isakowitz, M., & De Sutter, R. (2010). Refinement of the Foot PASS model for a high quality certification of professional football clubs. In: *Proceedings of the 18th Conference of the European Association for Sport Management*, 167. Prague: EASM.