

Foot PASS Deutschland: Managing Performance in the Bundesliga through the Certification of Youth Academies

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Abstract

Introduction

In an effort to ensure the future (success) of German (Club) Football, the German Football Association (DFB) and Professional Football League (DFL) have decided to follow the Belgian and Finnish lead by introducing the quality and performance management system 'Foot PASS', especially for the objective evaluation and certification of the Bundesliga clubs. In that way, they want to emphasize the importance of a high-quality youth academy with regards to a (more) efficient development of 'home grown' talent. Besides, by this project, they will try to guide the clubs and their directors of the youth academies in particular, through the unavoidable process of professionalization.

Theoretical Background

According to Chappelet and Bayle [1], 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 federations are trying to professionalize their system and the various links in the chain in order to improve communication and the implementation of their actions. For this, referring to these scholars, among others, providing services to members can reinforce the quality of the distribution network and the legitimacy of the federation. Such practices as offering seals of approval and supporting services to clubs are implemented and justified in order to preserve an environment that in part has been escaping the control of the national sport federations. This implies proposing tools or operational principles aimed at helping decision makers and managers in their practices regarding strategy, control, performance evaluation, operations, or both of the latter of these.

Methodology

At the core of the project is the "Professional Academy Support System" (PASS) which can be considered as a relevant framework to measure the actual and potential performance of a youth academy in a team sport club. Actually, the instrument is made up of seven checklists with relevant indicators regarding the enablers (CSFs) to evaluate the potential performance of the youth academy on the one hand and a performance measurement to evaluate the actual results or effectiveness (EFF) of the club with regard to youth development at the other hand. The 7 quality targets or dimensions are [2]:

- 1) strategic planning (STRA),
- 2) organizational structure (ORG),
- 3) talent development and training procedures (DEV),
- 4) supporting activities (SUP),
- 5) internal marketing (INT),
- 6) external relations (EXT) and
- 7) facilities (FAC).

Last season (2007-2008) this quality system has been used for the objective assessment and certification of 36 'Leistungszentren', i.e. the youth academies for the various Bundesliga clubs: 18 of the Bundesliga, 16 of the 2. Bundesliga and 2 of the Regionalliga. All data are collected during standardised documentary and practical audits, conducted by 3 teams of independent and highly experienced auditors.

Results and Discussion

Table 1 shows the average scores of the 36 participating clubs on the different dimensions of Foot PASS. In general, the average total score (TOT) is almost 55%, with a maximum of 73,5% and a minimum of 25,0%. The highest scores are found for strategic planning (STRA), organizational structure (ORG) and facilities (FAC). At the other hand, lower scores were found for talent development and the football training system (DEV), supporting activities (SUP) and internal marketing (INT). With an average score of 50% and almost half of the clubs with a shortage (<50%), the effectiveness (EFF) of these youth academies is still a point of interest in terms of throughput of home grown players. In this context it is important to note that there is a strong correlation between this particular score (EFF) and the total score (TOT). Furthermore, significant differences ($p = .05$) between first and second league clubs are found for the total score, strategic planning, the football training system and facilities.

Based on the total score and the sub scores on the different dimensions, 4 clusters were

N=36	TOT	STRA	ORG	DEV	SUP	INT	EXT	FAC	EFF
Mean	54,7	76,6	61,3	51,3	55,3	44,5	58,4	63,6	50,0
Max	73,5	100,0	90,2	67,8	84,2	75,7	88,0	98,4	92,5
Min	25,0	48,4	31,0	29,2	18,4	9,4	11,8	21,1	2,6
Median	55,9	75,8	55,0	52,2	55,2	44,9	59,6	64,4	55,9
Shortages	12	1	10	14	12	21	14	6	17

Table 1: Percentage scores and shortages on the different dimensions of Foot PASS (N=36)

made with regards to the certification. Table 2 shows some descriptive statistics concerning the total score of the clubs in the different clusters. Significant differences ($p = .05$) between the groups can be found for all dimensions.

Cluster	1	2	3	4	Total
Median	71,6	60,0	55,2	44,3	55,9
Mean	71,4	60,3	54,6	40,8	54,7
Range	3,9	5,5	7,2	23,3	48,5
N	7	9	8	12	36

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of the 4 clusters concerning the total percentage score

References

- [1] Chappelet, J.-L., & Bayle, E. (2005) Strategic and Performance Management of Olympic Sport Organisations. Champaign: Human Kinetics.
- [2] Schoukens, H. & Van Hoecke, J. (2005) Scoren met jeugd. Succesvol runnen van een jeugdopleiding [With youth to the top. Effective management of a youth academy]. Antwerpen: F&G Partners.