

# The Significance Of Development Of Players In Professional Football — Case Study Based On Hungarian Survey

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## Aim of the research

In our paper we study the business functioning of professional football with the tools of business economics and within that the role of training players in the value creating process of football clubs. We investigate how development of professional Hungarian footballers and business processes of Hungarian clubs can be evaluated. We examine the development of Hungarian professional players and youth training of players who are planning a professional career. We also study the professional and civilian career opportunities of players. In order to have appropriate data we cooperated with the Organization of Professional Footballers (HLSZ) thus we obtained survey data from 200 Hungarian football players.

The relevance of the research question is proven by the relatively poor Hungarian results on the international transfer and in international professional football championships. Examining the training and career support of players can reveal the reasons behind these weak results. Studying the Hungarian case may be useful also for clubs operating in another league because we show how professional football clubs create value through buying and training players.

## Theoretical background

In the literature review we identified sport companies' value creating possibilities connected to players. The most important resources and value creating factors of football clubs are professional players, therefore clubs need to pay equal attention to keep their players, to sign new ones and to train young players. Transactions related to players' licences (buying and selling) happen on the players market, while development, training and youth training are connected to the real processes within the sport companies.

For football companies, development of players is the key to future professional and financial efficiency. Therefore, converting the corporate resources into consumer values can be interpreted in a special way, as development of the skills of a human being can improve the standards of the sport company's service, as well as increase the value of players' licence. In our paper we show the basic operations and main characteristics of transfer market, the "Make or buy" question of football clubs and other related literature to football transfer market. The novelty of our paper and its contribution to the literature of management and business administration lies in presenting the relevant connections between the different fields and the literature of value creating process management, strategic human resources management, professional sport and international business economics.

## Methodology, research design and data analysis

Our aim was to find out about young Hungarian professional footballers' prospects and to gain experience regarding their career management, as well as about whether clubs and academies organize their value creating processes effectively. In our paper it is not sport professional reasons that we would like to discover, but we would like to explore operations in the background, so we examine individual development and career opportunities with a management and human resource management focus. The research is based on an earlier secondary research which identified our main topics for the primer researches: education, development, career, self-care and strategic functioning. Among our methods the most important one is the anonym questionnaire research with 200 respondents. This was complemented by processing an audit report made by a foreign company commissioned by MLSZ (2016), and the expert workshop organized afterwards, within which I evaluated the findings with the relevant Hungarian stakeholders of football.

## Results

The results of the paper include the presentation of the main findings of the questionnaire, the workshop and the MLSZ audit. Our answer to the research question of the paper is that young professional Hungarian footballers' level of preparation for their future cannot be evaluated as appropriate. It is clear to them that they would need extra training but they do not sacrifice energy and time for these additional trainings and they neither receive support from their club or the federation. On the plus side, young players are studying in higher education or they have the plan to do that in the future. They also have positive attitude in self-care, however, their knowledge and the support of their clubs falls behind the required level in this field, too. Hungarian players' career support and preparation for professional life is not viewed according to its actual importance in the strategy of clubs and academies in this country.

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