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## **ROLE OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT IN PREPARATION FOR FOOTBALL REFEREES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**

### **Introduction**

Football is the most watched sport in the world. It is obvious that the primary factor in the success of the teams is a good workout. It should be noted that football referees have been in this field neglected topic for a long time.

Successfully refereed football game is a guarantee of satisfaction for all stakeholders, players, officials, spectators, shareholders and especially football referees. Today, when the football incredibly accelerated and is under constant surveillance cameras and media, it is necessary to minimize errors in football referees. In football games managed at the certain level, it is necessary to work with referees constantly, i.e. prepare them both physically and mentally, to educate referees in perfect knowledge of the rules and game management.

Term game management can be seen as a technique and tactics to control the match and solve critical situations. In recent years, efforts to establish correct communication with all stakeholders before during and after the match becomes increasingly apparent. As I mentioned in an interview a couple of years ago two situations are never the same ([www.brnenskydenik.cz](http://www.brnenskydenik.cz)). There are many factors that enter the decision making process of a referee, all of which must be correctly analyzed and make a correct decision. These are ones of many reasons to train referees at increasing level to make constant improvement. (That is why several training programs for referees were created). For reasons stated above we implement findings from areas of sport management and human resources management.

According to Armstrong (2007) is HR management seen as a strategicly and logicly made approach to controlling the most precious possession within the organization - workers. It is people who work in organization and contribute to achieving the goals.

Another definition by Storey (1989) sees HR management as completion of mutually connected policies deriving from certain ideology and philosophy. Armstrong (2007) considers the main aim of management to control and determine the development, facilitate changes and reaching goals while exploiting certain sources through effective creative and responsible means. The foremost and crucial aim of HR management is the ability of a company to achieve its goals by employees through managing the company in effective ways (Armstrong 2007).

It is obvious that the aims described above are clearly applicable also for particular referee commissions whose aims are correctly carried out matches and education of

referees on the top level. Education programs, which will be presented, were created for this purpose.

### **Methods**

In this article we will use the description of basic education programmes, which are used for the training of football referees in the Czech Republic. It will also describe various groups according to the level of referees in competitions in which they manage football games and we will also describe various requirements that are imposed on these referees, their methods of training and testing their skills and abilities.

### **Results**

Individual football associations and the Union of European Football Associations UEFA are now significantly involved in the preparation resp. work with football referees. The UEFA conducts an educational programme UEFA CORE (Centre of Refereeing Excellence) and also contributes to the financial means to pursue other educational programmes within individual football associations.

### **Referee education**

#### **UEFA education**

UEFA education is carried out on the basis of UEFA Referee Convention which aims to improve the level of referees in all of 54 member countries of UEFA. This Convention consists of several parts: to establish a referee organization within each national association, this association has to be independent from government, league management, clubs, it must guarantee unified level of referees, referees-specialists, by presenting complex educational programme of referees from the basic level to professional footballers; they must constantly improve the state and quality of referees, referees-specialists; defines legal and professional position of referees in various member clubs.

(UEFA Referee Convention: Convention on Referee Education and Organization. *UEFA.com*).

#### **UEFA CORE programme**

UEFA CORE (Centre of Refereeing Excellence) is an educational programme for young international referees in European countries. Each country is a part of UEFA (54 countries) and has an opportunity to send three referees into this programme (one main referee and two assistants). The referees are usually younger than 32 years of age, they are in charge of the highest or the second highest league in their country, they have potential to become FIFA referees within a couple of years and they speak good English. At the end of the training each of the participants receives the UEFA diploma or the UEFA certificate of participation.

Many experts and advisors are committed to the programme. The programmes are managed by internationally recognised experts. Referee-specialist is a person who has been active for last five years and has various experience from areas, referee, instructor, observer, mentor. The programme uses assistance of fitness trainers who supervise the physical training. The experts offer counselling on injury prevention and treatment and healthy lifestyle. These programmes aim to bring up, prepare and improve referees (delegates, mentors) on international level.

The programme seeks to unify the interpretation of rules, so as the decisions are recognised in the manner of football rules and the spirit of the rules. The referees are like a team, The members support each other and their decision should be irreversible and unanimous (Elleray, D., 2011).

### **Programme Talent and Mentor in Czech competitions**

The state programme Talent and Mentor was introduced in Fall 2009. This programme is focused on development of young talented referees who are given the opportunity to develop and take advice from experienced top referees. The programme is assigned for referees at all levels from OFS, KFS to top competitions (Legiersky, B., 2009).

Talent and Mentor should have enough qualities to achieve better referee performance. Both, talent and mentor, influence each other and consult not only the field situations but also possible problems concerning fitness and psychical readiness. The programme should lead to complex development in referees' personality (Legiersky, B., 2010).

The programme consists of: theoretical training, physical training, movement and position, techniques of match management, tactics of match management, game situations. Collina (2003) states that he prefers an active form of regeneration to relax.

An ideal mentor should be interested in young referee growth, pass on his experience, be an expert, have an individual approach and natural authority. At the same time, he should be objective, strict, fair and friendly, and take the referees opinion into account.

### **Educational programme for referees**

This educational programme is for young referees, ideally between 21-30 yrs. For further condition of performance growth in season 2013-2014 the lowest age limit was set on 21 years for the young referees in order to have had some experience from regional competitions. The candidates, who show interest in personal development and have clear vision of their future, are chosen by committee of referees

### **Programme plan**

The basic programme structure of the seminars for referees incorporated into regional competitions and those at different types such as Czech Steering Committee and Moravian Steering Committee is similar. It takes into consideration different level each referee is dealing with.

The programme is made to test football rules, theory of football rules, orders and football norms, the most frequent injuries in football, social network - threat for the future, football violence, racist behaviour, specialized English movement and game positions referees, nutrition and regeneration.

Bahr (2008) describes what nutrition composition, resp. time-frame of nutrition is necessary to use before, during and after the match. The theoretical lectures are completed with video recordings UEFA, SYNOT league, practice sessions in the field for theoretical feedback. UEFA DVD teaching materials are used called FUTURO III, which is an interactive tool for referee skills development. In several sections issues such as fouls judging, handling the ball, advantage, movement of referees, tactical misconducts, are presented.

First they deal with theoretical definitions which are later confronted with rules and consequently, when watching clips from matches, they confront their opinions with reality and correct solutions as offered by FIFA and UEFA. Practical exercises in the field with feedback on the routines of referees and their assistants, cooperation of referees in the field, physical readiness, training programmes.

The participants who are divided into three groups go through eight whole-day seminars. This programme is aiming to improve the qualities of referees. Newly, this year the referees drafted from Czech Steering Committee and Moravian Steering Committee manage chosen matches in the junior league. After that, a match video analysis follows.

The capacity of these programmes is limited, therefore referees should not prolong their stay extensively, in order for the others to have the opportunity to take part. Taking part twice should be the top limit, provided there are other referees willing to enrol.

### **University education at the Masaryk University Brno**

In 2011 a new study programme was established at Masaryk University in Brno. It is an undergraduate programme Physical Education and Sport, specialisation Referee in Collective Sports; Football Referee and Ice-Hockey Referee. The graduates should find their place in sports organizations dedicated to free time activities. Students should have basic abilities and skills necessary for optional graduate programmes as well as managing sport matches.

(<http://www.fsps.muni.cz>).

### **Referees in the Czech Republic**

There are over 4000 football referees registered in the Czech Republic (Nietsche, 2014). These referees are, according to their level, subdivided under individual managing organizations whose competitions they attend to. The football referees can be divided into four performance levels:

1. Referees in professional competitions - first and second league (FAČR)

2. Referees under the authority of Czech commission and managing commission of Moravia - Czech Football League and Moravian-Silesian Football League and Divisions (ŘKČ, ŘKM)

3. Referees under authority of regional commissions - regional championships class 1.A, 1.B (KFS)

4. Referees under authority of local commissions - local championships, classes 3 and 4 (OFS)

Management and education of referees depends on many factors. One of the main factors is implementing referees according to their licence and their participations in educational programmes. Referees at the local level are mostly experienced individuals - former active players who, given the age, do not expect any promotion to higher league (great deal of these referees have previous playing experience from these leagues in their former careers)

Their match referring does not typically involve too much mobility but their experience and forethought helps them to solve any situation accordingly.

The authority of these players has been gradually built up through the years and they know which personality in individual teams to cooperate with to ensure smooth game.

On the other hand, the young beginning referees are those who have only started building their authorities as they slowly gain experience. Field movement in these referees corresponds with their age, they take advantage of their condition as they try to be always in a good position. Most players try to put them under pressure in order to take advantage of them. It is always up to the referees to resist this pressure and keep their head.

If there are more experienced colleagues present at the match they tend to give advice to these referees and point out troublesome players, personalities in teams and useful tactics.

After putting referees into higher level they fall under KFS management, more requirements are made on referees. they should focus on diminishing the mistakes and deficiencies during the match.

At the adult matches, often a delegate is present who can often point out the mistakes the referee fails to notice and often gives good advice and solution to a particular problem, so he can focus on minimizing mistakes or reduce them completely.

On regional level, there is a rule of compulsory video-recordings of the matches which gives referees even better feedback on their performance. Referees of regional championship should be proficient enough to set the strategy and management of the match along with movement and positioning, leading the team of referees and avoiding possible conflicts.

Referees falling under Czech Steering Committee and Moravian Steering Committee are to be physically prepared as the teams are expected to be. Comparing to KFS referees, where there are two seminars and one physical test yearly, these referees

have four physical tests and two seminars each season. Also the preparation for matches tends to be more thorough. TOP-KP referees undergo the same procedure as KFS and additionally they take part in seminars and physical tests on the level of Czech Steering Committee and Moravian Steering Committee. They also have a chance to be present at matches as referee - assistants on the level of adults and youths.

The referees of Czech Steering Committee and Moravian Steering Committee do not take part in Football National League but they are present at junior and youth matches. Referees of OFS, KFS and Czech Steering Committee and Moravian Steering Committee only take part in seminars and physical testing. During seminars they get familiar with findings of sport-technical commission, disciplinary commission, changes in rules, problems and how to solve them, i.e. hosting services, unsuitable behaviour of officials, spectators leaving the game.

During seminars there are tests from rules that differ in difficulty according to ones level (OFS, KFS, Czech Steering Committee and Moravian Steering Committee). These referees do not have much chance for further education unless put into some of the educational programmes (VPR, Talent a mentor). Each of them is responsible for own individual training as they must meet requirements at the testing.

They have seldom any experience with psychological preparation. It would be suitable to put lectures on psychology on the programme, such as preparation for matches in long, middle and short term perspective, self-regulation of psychical state along with relaxation techniques. In physical tests a pre-match warm up should be scheduled or have a short demonstration with an expert.

The SYNOT League and Football National League referees are divided into two categories - the main referee and the assistant referee. The referees meet twelve-times a year at seminars and four times at physical tests. These referees are treated by specialists in particular areas i.e. UEFA-bound lecturers, fitness trainers, sport science specialists, tactical and mental preparation specialists. The seminars focal points are: match video analysis, taking lessons from mistakes, fitness decision tactics (theory, practise), mental preparation, media communication, nutritional habits and lifestyle. Referees - assistants practise offside situations via camera recordings. Referees on this level sign an ethical codex. They are under pressure of psychological demands as many of the matches are broadcasted. They feel they are under constant surveillance where any bigger mistake is analysed in media. That is the reason why suitable psychological preparation is scheduled at seminars and the top experts are present.

### **Discussion**

Referees who are involved in education programmes, unlike the referees attending merely seminars, have the advantage of professional growth. It is also up to an individual referee if he exploits these offers. If he is already taking apart in these programmes he should be initiative and work on his carrier to use this chance because there are other referees who are deprived of this. These have only a limited chance for further education. If they want educate themselves they must wait to work up the opportu-

nity to slip into these programmes i.e. pass the exams and to be accepted to Masaryk University and find the necessary information on the internet.

The education of referees abroad (those who are part of UEFA) and derive their approach from UEFA conventions about football referees support, have four main tasks in education when using the best findings of referee education. Recruitment and keeping referees, system of work with referee observers, upbringing of talented referees and educating referees from beginners to top level. Education of referees in the Czech Republic and abroad follows direction and rules of UEFA convention. There are differences in number of referees and allocated finances which are proportional to the size of individual football competitions.

The aim of the education is also arranging meetings of experts, UEFA members, who can mutually learn from each other, share their experience from various areas which can be generally beneficial for upbringing the level of their expertise. The Czech Republic has taken the education of referees far ahead as it has been made part of university education and it is only Masaryk University in Brno that can take pride in presenting the unique study programme - The Referee of Collective Sports at Faculty of Sport Studies

([www.rozhodci-ks.cz](http://www.rozhodci-ks.cz), [www.rozhodci-fotbal.cz](http://www.rozhodci-fotbal.cz)).

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### *ROLE OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT IN PREPARATION FOR FOOTBALL REFEREES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC*

*In our article we present the preparation of football referees, who are duly registered under the banner of the FACR - Football Association of the Czech Republic. We deal with referees who participate in various educational programmes and seminars led by teachers and other practitioners.*

*The main communication represents the structure of competition in the Czech Republic, a way of organizing football referee and course preparation at individual levels of performance, which is unique within Europe. Introducing individual education programmes that the FACR used for education and training of referees. We also describe the content of curricula for football referees. An integral part of the article is also showing the claims that are arbitration subject to performance levels.*