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SEPP BLATTER
TON UP FOR HOME
CLUB FC VISP

JAMES RODRIGUEZ
GERMANY WERE
WORTHY WINNERS



Pep Guardiola

THE PLAYMAKER

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The playmaker

Once upon a time, Barcelona developed a style of play that went on to take root all over the world. Pep Guardiola, Bayern coach since June 2013, is the central figure in the story's most recent chapters. Jordi Puntí reports from the Catalan capital on how it all began and the coaches who are trying to adopt the Spaniard's ideas.

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FIFA has initiated a pilot project in the Swiss league, supervised by Jiri Dvorak, aiming for speedier diagnosis of potential neurological damage sustained by players.

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Now 51, Bulgarian Petar Aleksandrov recalls how a fractured tibia actually set his career in motion.



The playmaker

Our cover picture is a portrait of Pep Guardiola from a photoshoot in Spain during the 2010 World Cup.

Christian Weber



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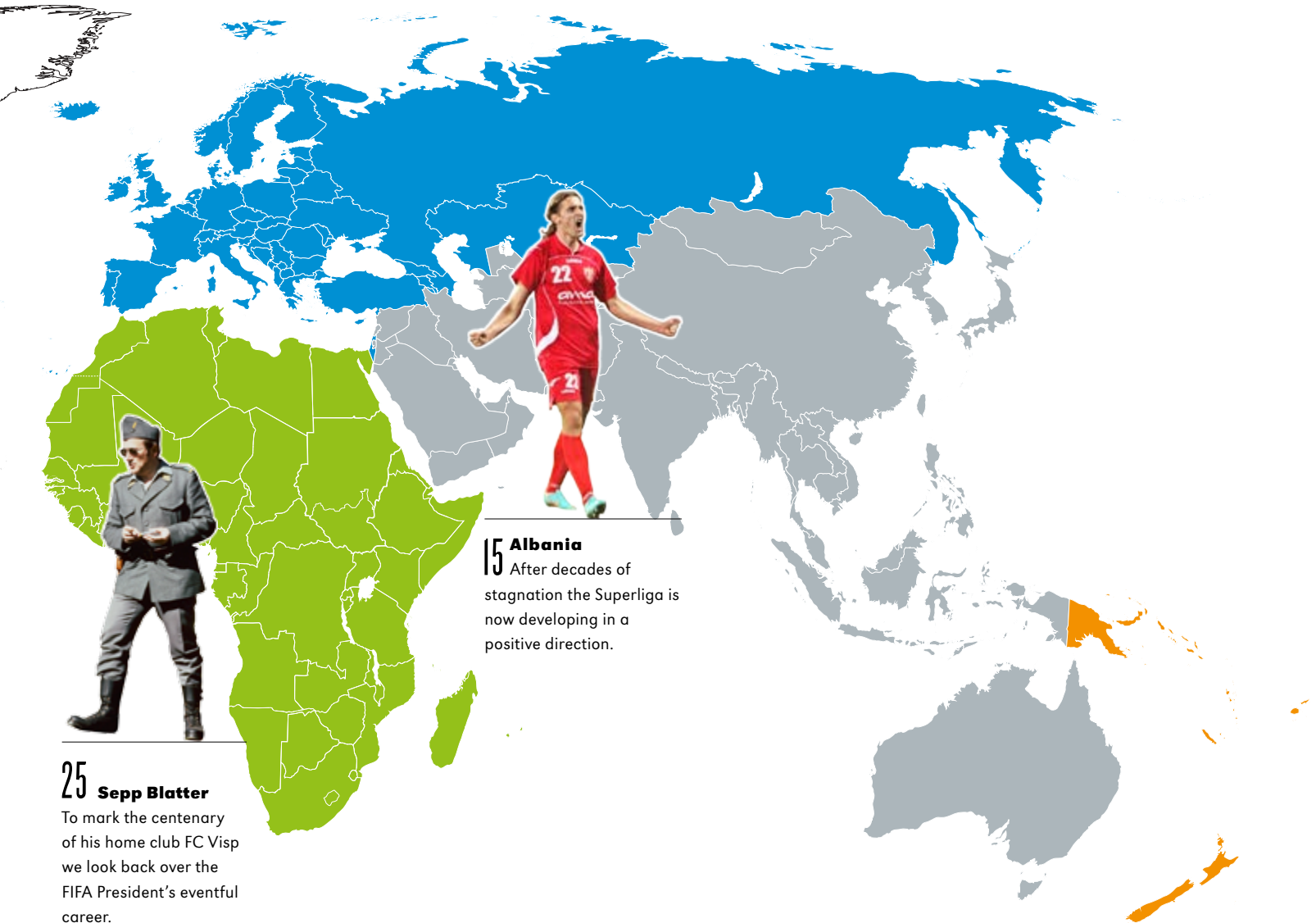
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To mark the centenary of his home club FC Visp we look back over the FIFA President's eventful career.

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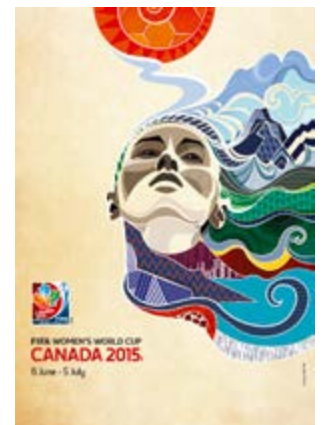
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FC Visp FIFA President Sepp Blatter (back row, fourth from right) as an U-19 player in 1953.

Where it all began

Possession-based football was not the dominant influence at the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, certainly compared to the 2010 edition in South Africa. Indeed, the fact that holders Spain fell at the first hurdle in Brazil now appears highly symbolic. Nevertheless, the style of play and approach developed by Spain and Barcelona, and maintained by such personalities as Pep Guardiola, has taken root throughout the footballing world. It remains a highly successful Spanish export, as Jordi Puntí argues in his report from page 6.

James Rodríguez of Colombia was the top scorer at the 2014 World Cup and recently joined Real Madrid. In the interview on page 18 the 23-year-old recalls being consoled by Brazil's David Luiz out on the field of play, and reflects that Germany were "worthy world champions".

A Swiss club is celebrating its centenary, and it is no ordinary club: FIFA President Blatter, who remains closely attached to his home region, once turned out for FC Visp in the Swiss canton of Valais. In the article from page 25 Sepp Renggli, a fellow traveller on the President's journey through life, discusses Sepp Blatter and his home club FC Visp, who are celebrating their milestone anniversary at the weekend with a programme including a match between a FIFA XI featuring Ronaldo, George Weah and Jean-Marie Pfaff and a FC Sion Cup Legends side with Jean-Paul Brigger, Stefan Lehmann and Yvan Quentin. ❧

Perikles Monioudis

The Guardiola effect

In a fast-moving world, Barcelona established a school of *tiki-taka* that has since been embraced across the globe – despite the dwindling appeal of possession football.

Jordi Puntí, Barcelona





Triumphant

Barça coach Pep Guardiola after the 2009 Champions League Final win against Manchester United in Rome.



In his element
Guardiola (l) with
Seydou Keita in 2010.

This summer, experienced Malian international Seydou Keita signed for AS Roma. The 34-year-old has encountered his fair share of clubs during his career – featuring for RC Lens in France before playing for Sevilla in Spain and then in China for Dalian Aerbin – but he enjoyed his greatest success at Barcelona. For four seasons from 2008 to 2012, Keita operated under the tutelage of Pep Guardiola and impressed him with his versatility and commitment to the team. This admiration was mutual, as the African revealed several days ago in an interview in Italy. When asked about his new boss, Frenchman Rudi Garcia, he replied: “Garcia is similar to Guardiola; he also likes his own team to play well, have possession of the ball and run the game. They have the same motto: results come from the style of play.”

It is unusual to compare two coaches with one another given that each teacher of the game takes his own unique approach, but the situation with Guardiola is somewhat different. His success and, in particular, his way of shaping teams have made an major impact and sparked something of a global trend. Guardiola and his assistant Tito Vilanova based their playing concept on a philosophy originally introduced by Johan Cruyff to Barcelona’s academy from youth sides all the way through to the first team, and modernised these principles to fit the requirements of contemporary football with the help of a generation of exceptional players such as Lionel Messi, Xavi, Sergio Busquets, Andres Iniesta and even Seydou Keita. By artfully advocating a playing style based on possession, short passing play and attack in which the ball is played forward from defence all the way to goal by means of pinpoint combination play, *Barça* captivated the footballing world. Guardiola was also assisted in his endeavours by a Spanish national team that relied on a similar system known as *tiki-taka*, which ultimately led them to victory in two successive

European Championships and at the 2010 World Cup in South Africa. From almost the very beginning, clubs on every continent began converting to the teachings of ‘Guardiolism’, signing players and – most importantly – coaches who were able to implement Barcelona’s playing philosophy. Every effort was made to find Guardiola’s disciples – former team-mates, colleagues or even erstwhile teachers who had worked with him in the past and aspired to a similar brand of football. It could be argued that this was the first time implementing a particular playing style was considered more important than good results.

One of the first clubs to experiment with this trend was the aforementioned Roma. In the 2008 season, Spaniard Luis Enrique was appointed to coach the team after spending three years as Guardiola’s successor in charge of Barcelona’s reserves, but the gamble did not pay off and he was dismissed after just a year. The situation may have been different had the club’s management deployed the scarcest commodity in modern football, patience; after all, Luis Enrique has not exactly underperformed since leaving the Italian side. After a season-long stint with Celta Vigo, he returned to *Barça* as first-team coach in May this year, and must now prove his commitment to a tradition with which he is extremely familiar.

Kick-off in Germany and Spain

Pep Guardiola has been at the helm of German champions Bayern Munich for 424 days. The Spaniard starts his second Bundesliga season today, Friday, without injured trio Schweinsteiger, Thiago and Martinez for the visit of Wolfsburg. This weekend also sees the first round of matches in the Spanish top flight, where champions Atletico Madrid are the last team to re-enter the fray when they face Rayo Vallecano on Monday. (tfw)



Worthy farewell

Barcelona fans thank PG for four trophy-laden seasons.

"The Harvard of football"

In 2003, a 27-year-old named Josep Gombau arrived at Barcelona, but instead of being expected to play, he was appointed to head up the club's football academy and work as a youth coach. In addition to these responsibilities in Spain, the former Amposta boss was also tasked with coordinating Barça's academy branches in Dubai and Hong Kong, and ultimately landed a job as head coach of Hong Kong top-flight team Kitchee in 2009 as a result of this connection to Asian football. Whenever Gombau is asked to reflect on his seven seasons with the Catalan club's youth system, he goes into raptures: "Being at Barça was like studying at the best university in the world. It was as if you were immersing yourself in the philosophy of football at Harvard."

Gombau won two championship titles and two domestic cups with Kitchee and consequently caught the eye of the wider Asia-Pacific region. In 2013, he moved to Australian side Adelaide United, where he is now in his second season and undertaking a far more ambitious and more wide-ranging project – all oriented towards the Barcelona model. "With the help of my assistant Pau Marti, we've implemented a playing style at the club, even at youth level," Gombau confirmed. "We've exported several familiar features such as possession, pressing, build-up play from the back, switching wings. We're applying a philosophy in Adelaide that is 100 per cent Barça."

To reinforce this approach, United recently added Guillermo Amor to their coaching staff, a legendary figure at Camp Nou who notched up over 400 appearances for the team before spending several years as the

"We're applying
a philosophy in
Adelaide that is
100 per cent Barça."

Josep Gombau

club's technical director of youth football. Amor was a key midfielder for Barcelona before Xavi and even before Guardiola, and as such is an important pioneer of the style Gombau is trying to emulate in Australia. The Adelaide player currently tasked with the role of defensive midfielder is Isaías, a 27-year-old who, like his team-mate Cirio, came through Barcelona's youth system and is a symbol of the club's regeneration. "They are the extension of my ideas out on the pitch," their coach explained.

Australia's Hyundai A-League has developed into a formidable and fast-growing championship in recent years. "It's a very physical game here, very direct, with long balls to the strikers and lots of tackling back," Gombau explained, "but we want to play technically adept football

with plenty of passing play. We're a small club in Adelaide with no long history behind us, so our primary aim is to play good football that people enjoy watching. Then, of course, we want to win matches, but always while playing well." Luckily for Australian fans, the Reds' boss then conceded that there are other teams who also "play very good football, such as the champions Brisbane Roar, who play in a 4-3-3 formation, and Melbourne Victory."

Cruyff and Oscar in Tel Aviv

Josep Gombau's remarks in Australia could have been applied just as easily to Oscar Garcia Junyent's situation at Maccabi Tel Aviv. The attacking midfielder made his debut for Barcelona in 1993 during Johan Cruyff's reign as coach, having progressed through the youth ranks with



Barça coaches in their playing days Luis Enrique (l) and Pep Guardiola in 1997.

his brothers Roger and Genis. After hanging up his playing boots, Oscar began his coaching career by assisting his former coach at the Catalan club before working with Barcelona's youth teams. Before too long, Cruyff's son Jordi accepted a post as sporting director of Maccabi and recruited Oscar as head coach in time for the 2012/13 season. His unequivocal mission was to introduce the *Barça* philosophy to the club, and this revival soon paid dividends when Maccabi won the Israeli championship for the first time in ten years.

When international online sports newspaper *Vavel* asked Oscar which style he wanted his team to play, he demonstrated just how well his formative years in Spain have stayed with him: "I want football that all the players can enjoy and that involves both the attack and defence; football based on possession that is not an end in itself but is instead used to move into the opposition's penalty area," he explained. "We think this is the best way to win, because not only is it entertaining for the fans but the players enjoy it too." Although most of Maccabi's players hail from Israel, Oscar also has two Spaniards on hand to help illustrate his footballing ideology: goalkeeper Juan Pablo and defender Carlos Garcia.

Word of Oscar's success in the Middle East made it as far as England, and last season he was asked to take the helm at second-tier club Brighton & Hove Albion to implant *Barça*'s style there too. Although this was not an easy task in a nation and division characterised by pragmatic and physical football, the 41-year-old managed to guide Brighton to the Championship play-offs, but resigned after the Seagulls failed to seal promotion to the Premier League. Oscar received a number of offers from clubs including Celtic this summer, but ultimately opted for a return to Maccabi Tel Aviv. On the morning of his first training session back in

"It creates a huge butterfly effect."

Juanma Lillo

Israel's second-largest city, a large crowd of fans gathered to celebrate his return and have their photograph taken with him.

Guardiola's 'guru'

When Juan Manuel Lillo was hired by Colombian club Millonarios in Bogota, sports channel ESPN greeted his arrival with the following headline: "Guru to the Greatest". The article went on to state: "If Johan Cruyff is the oracle to whom Pep Guardiola turns, then Juan Manuel Lillo is the guru he has to thank for becoming the world's best coach." *Juanma* has managed an impressive number of Spanish clubs in a career spanning almost 30 years, but what sets him apart is his expertise and reputation as a highly intellectual football analyst. In 2005, he coached Dorados de Sinaloa in Mexico, where he linked up with Pep Guardiola, then in his final season as a professional footballer. His former team-mates recall how both men would engage in lengthy discussions about the sport after matches and would analyse each game from every conceivable angle. Whenever he reflects upon this period, Guardiola always says that he learned as much from Lillo then as he did during his subsequent meetings with Marcelo Bielsa.

Although he did not spend his formative years in Catalonia, Lillo shares their most famous club's predilection for attacking possession football. And there is no doubt that he has studied every last detail of his preferred playing style. When asked in an interview to comment on some of Barcelona's best players under Guardiola, he said: "If you watch one of *Barça*'s youth teams play, you'll hardly see any kids who do not control the ball with the foot furthest away from the player making the pass. This seems like an insignificant fact, but it creates a huge butterfly



Fast starter Guardiola won four trophies in his first year with Bayern.

effect, because when a player controls a pass with that foot, he needs fewer touches to distribute the ball and it expands his field of vision, enabling him to interpret play more effectively.”

When Lillo arrived at Millonarios at the start of this year, he was entrusted with the task of changing the club's structure and establishing a long-term and easily recognisable playing model, but has so far enjoyed only limited success. With a squad almost entirely comprised of Colombian footballers, Lillo's aim is to reconcile his ideas with the brand of football typical in this corner of South America. But Millonarios need good results more than anything else, and this has complicated the equation. The team's recent 5-0 slump to arch rivals Nacional knocked the fans' confidence in *El Profesor*. Some commentators had already criticised Lillo for his excessive experimentation, but the 48-year-old defended his approach by saying: “The most important thing is not results but the process, and a coach's work should be evaluated according to this process.” These were words from an earlier age and reflect his intellectual approach to football. Lillo arrived in Colombia labelled ‘Guardiola's guru’ but it remains to be seen whether the tag will be enough to keep him in his current role come the end of the season.

While Guardiola forges ahead at Bayern Munich, continuing to revise his ideas based on the Dutch ‘total football’ approach picked up during his time with Cruyff, more modest projects are emerging all over the world in an attempt to follow his example. In some ways, this is perhaps the greatest footballing triumph for a club that has won practically everything else: to have established an entire philosophy in a fast-moving world so often governed by results. ❁

Cruyff's legacy

Jordi Puntí

“Guardiola was born to coach,” said Juan Manuel Lillo, who managed him when he turned out for Dorados de Sinaloa. But Guardiola is far from the only player who learned his trade under Johan Cruyff and later went on to coach a leading team. There are many such examples, some boasting years of experience in the job. The list includes Ronald Koeman, currently in charge of Southampton, Julen Lopetegui (Porto), Albert Ferrer (Cordoba), Michael Laudrup (Lekhwiya, Qatar), Eusebio (Barcelona B) and also Sergi Barjuan and Hristo Stoichkov, although both are currently without a club.

In reality these former players are not only keeping alive the legacy bequeathed by Cruyff. Another Dutchman, Louis van Gaal, nourished and maintained a strictly defined house style during his spell at the Barcelona helm, handing Xavi his debut for example. Against this background, Van Gaal's arrival at Manchester United following his success with the Netherlands at this summer's World Cup could lead to a refocusing within European football.

But although Manchester United and Bayern ultimately aim for a similar style of play, the good folks at Ajax in Amsterdam, where it all began, know full well that Cruyff and Van Gaal are completely contrasting characters, like two sides of the same coin.

And just to complicate the pan-European story even further, let us not forget that one of Van Gaal's young assistants in his time as Barcelona coach between 1997 and 2000 was a certain Jose Mourinho. ❁

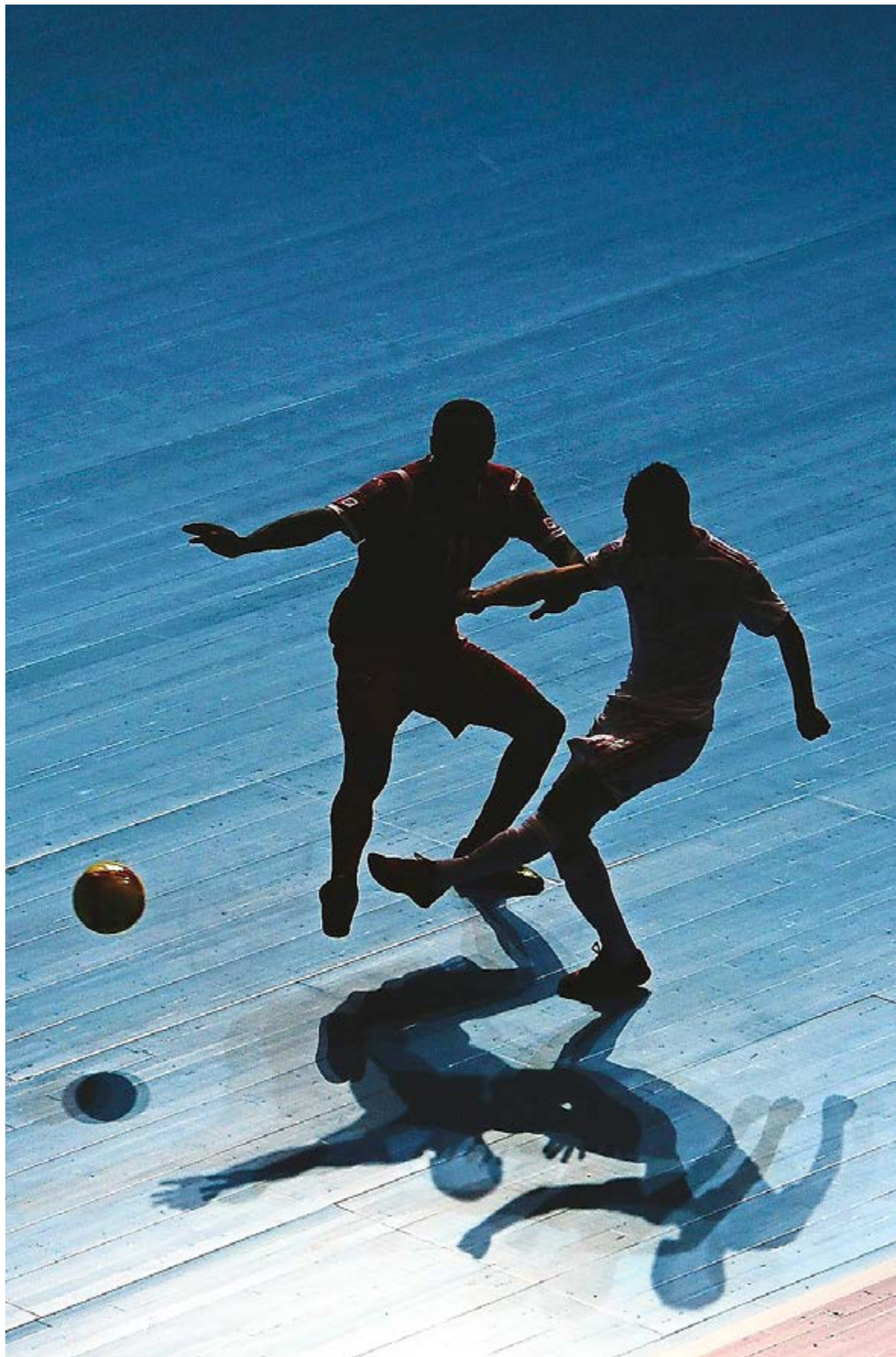


1992 Johan Cruyff (right) and Pep Guardiola.

Close connection
Tiki-taka and
futsal share many
traits.

Vic Hermans

FIFA futsal instructor Hermans was born in the Netherlands in 1953. His career included a spell with MVV Maastricht, and he also spent 23 years playing futsal. He captained the Dutch futsal national team for 12 years, and was named best player at the inaugural FIFA Futsal World Cup in the Netherlands in 1989. He has worked as a futsal instructor for a number of national associations, including eight years with the Dutch FA (KNVB), and as national coach for Hong Kong, Malaysia and Iran. (mpe)



The origins of tiki-taka

An interview with Dutch FIFA instructor Vic Hermans, who identifies futsal, the five-against-five indoor game, as the birthplace of tiki-taka.

Futsal is played indoors using handball goalposts and a smaller, heavier ball than in 11-a-side football outdoors. This is only a half-serious question, but why would anyone choose to play such a sport?

Vic Hermans: There are actually a number of reservations about futsal being an independent sport. The key point here is that you can't measure futsal against 11-a-side football.

Why not?

Futsal is a sport in its own right. One of the differences with the 11-a-side game is that it has regular intervals, like ice hockey. It's played at a fast pace and the players can constantly be substituted on and off. So futsal has its own rules and its own beauty.

You both play and coach the game. What makes it so appealing to you?

The intense speed and the necessary technical finesse that stems from that. You don't have as much time to control the ball as you do on a full-sized pitch; you need to pass quicker, run faster and be very well drilled tactically. Until recently slide tackling wasn't allowed, so you had to play with more skill than power. A short passing game is the key to success here.

In 11-a-side football, teams that are not so good in possession often prefer to play a long-ball game...

In futsal weaker teams also try their luck with the old English long-ball game as there is no offside indoors. However, in football as a whole you can only be successful these days with a technically-demanding short passing game.

Barcelona and the Spanish national team have proved that to the global football community in an impressive manner...

Barcelona ensure all of their players are well versed at playing four against four by the age of 12 and many Spaniards, such as World Cup winners Andres Iniesta and Xavi, started



At home indoors Football coach Vic Hermans.

out by playing futsal. The football they play out on grass today is a result of what they learned indoors. The team's starting point is always is to play at a high tempo in tight spaces and to always give the player in possession two options to pass to. That leads to the ball being played in triangles and consequently the players keep forming lots of triangles until a through-ball in behind the defence can be played to create a goalscoring chance.

Spaniards call that . Was it invented in futsal?

The short passing game, the Spanish , is the root of modern football and in futsal you learn it very well very early on. Four-against-four practice matches are played both in futsal and football. If you play with a 1-2-1 formation and add another 1-2-1 to that, it creates a midfield in the shape of a diamond that is used by many clubs. That's why futsal is very important in the development of football players.

Does that mean futsal is only interesting to youngsters?

It's especially interesting for children and adolescents, who tend to decide between the ages of 14 and 16 if they want to keep playing indoors or whether to play 11-a-side football outdoors. You have to view football as a sport for the masses because only 0.2 per cent of players worldwide are professionals. Of all the players who move up through the different levels in the training pyramid, only a small proportion make it to the very top. The vast majority of the ones that reach the upper levels quickly fall back down again. Futsal can offer them a career in football as a player or as a coach that they would not otherwise have.

Is that true for women's football too?

Women's futsal is growing – at least there they do not have as much competition through beach soccer as the men's game does.

When will futsal become an Olympic sport?

The 11-a-side game had a hard time [getting accepted]. Futsal won't become an Olympic sport in the foreseeable future but we're working on that. ☺

*Vic Hermans was speaking to
Perikles Monioudis*

This interview first appeared in the online edition of "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" on 11 August 2011 and has been reproduced here by kind permission of the publisher.

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ON THE INSIDE

Albania: Superliga

Albania's ongoing identity quest



Jordi Puntí is a novelist and the author of many football features in the Spanish media.

There are few leagues in the world that attract as little attention as Albania's. The country's Superliga gets underway this coming weekend, and all the indications are that the title fight will be another provincial affair between Skënderbeu, from the southeastern city of Korça, and northerners FK Kukësi, though Partizani and KF Tiranë, Tirana's big two, may have something to say about that.

The start of the new campaign will cause barely a ripple among Albania's football supporters. Known as *tifoz*, in tribute to the *tifosi* on the other side of the Adriatic, their allegiances are largely pledged to teams from beyond the country's borders.

As an afternoon walk through the streets of the Albanian capital or the coastal city of Durres reveals, football is a sport that is lived

and breathed in bars and bookmakers, which can house as many as eight TV screens simultaneously showing matches from the Italian, German, English and Spanish leagues. Betting slips and glasses of beer in hand, fans take a seat at large tables and soak up the action in front of them, switching their attention from an attacking move in Naples to a corner in Manchester, or from a great save in Valencia to the replay of a goal in Dortmund. Though the commentary from only one match can be heard at any one time – almost always in Italian – the fans cheer every goal they see, which can make for quite a lot of noise at times. When the final whistle sounds in Europe, some bookmakers switch over to the South American and Asian leagues, though the only fans who stay on are the diehards and nostalgic types whose families emigrated to such faraway lands years ago.

Another focal point for this interest in global football is the sizeable diaspora of players born in Albania or with ties to it. No sooner does a homegrown player begin to excel in the country's Superliga, than they are invariably spirited away to neighbouring leagues in Greece, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kazakhstan and from there to Europe's major championships, if they are lucky. There are several

players of Albanian extraction currently starring across the continent, among them Xherdan Shaqiri of Bayern Munich, Borussia Mönchengladbach's Granit Xhaka, Etrit Berisha and Lorik Cana of Lazio and FC Zurich's Armando Sadiku, and their progress is eagerly followed back home.

Back in the nation's stadiums, meanwhile, Skënderbeu will attempt to defend their crown in a Superliga reduced to ten teams this season. Coached by Albanian football legend Mirel Josa, the southeasterners have won the last four league titles, their only previous league triumph having come back in the 1930s. Thanks to some slick marketing, they are now the best-supported team in the land, and while they made few signings in the close season, they appear to be as strong as ever, having just beaten Flamurtari to win the Albanian Super Cup, courtesy of a goal from the 19-year-old Malian midfielder Bakary Nimaga.

In contrast, FK Kukësi, who have pushed them harder than anyone in the last two seasons, have overhauled their squad in a bid to finally land the title. Founded in 1930, Kukësi are not your average club. Promoted to the top flight for the first time in 2012 following a significant financial outlay, they have promptly become one of the nation's big guns. Their signings for the new campaign include the Croatian Pero Pejić, who top-scored in the league last season with Skënderbeu, Kosovan forward Kushtrim Lushtaku and Brazilian midfielder Pericles.

Such comings and goings are relatively new to Albanian football, which was in a state of lethargy for decades. Controlled by a totalitarian Communist regime, its coaches were corrupt and its international profile as low as could be. In recent years, however, most clubs have come under private ownership, with more money coming into the game as a result and players changing clubs, all of which has made the league a more open affair. The fact remains, however, that Albanian football is still searching for its identity, a problem that afflicts most of the players emerging from the academies of Tirana and Shkodra, where the game was first played in this remote footballing outpost. ☼



Super Cup triumph Skenderbeu Korça start out as favourites for the Albanian championship.



Fred has been unable to shrug off his critics since the World Cup.

Brazil's Serie A

Troubled waters



Sven Goldmann is a football expert at Tagesspiegel newspaper in Berlin.

The 2014 World Cup may be long gone, but Frederico Chaves Guedes, more commonly known as Fred, has been unable to stave off the critics in his home country since the tournament came to an end last month. The Brazil striker and Fluminense captain was once again the subject of a heated debate after Matchday 15 of the domestic Serie A championship, which had seen his side lose 2-0 to local rivals Botafogo in Brasilia and slip to fourth place in the league, seven points behind leaders Cruzeiro.

Fluminense had been gifted an opportunity to reduce the arrears when they were awarded a penalty moments before the final whistle, but the much-maligned 30-year-old failed to hit the target from twelve yards. Asked after the match how he would cope with this latest setback following the Selecao's ignominious World Cup exit at the hands of Germany, Fred merely aimed an insult at the reporter before disappearing into the changing room.

It wasn't just the missed penalty that had turned the crowd inside the Estadio Mane Garrincha against the striker. The way in which Fred rushed to his team-mate Rafael Sobis, who had won the spot-kick in controversial circumstances, and demonstratively kissed his boots brought back unpleasant memories of Brazil's opening World Cup match against Croatia. In that game, Fred had fallen theatrically inside the area and taken all the plaudits from his colleagues after the referee had pointed to the spot, which caused outrage among the world's press.

It also turned out to be the sole high-point of the tournament for Fred, who epitomises the type of football Brazil fans no longer want to be associated with. Supporters immediately targeted him as the scapegoat after the semi-final loss to Germany and even booed his every touch of the ball during the closing stages of the clash in Belo Horizonte. In the aftermath of the defeat, the national press listed all manner of statistics after it emerged that Fred's pass completion rate was worse than that of German goalkeeper



Fred epitomises
the type of football
Brazil fans no
longer want to be
associated with.

Manuel Neuer, and that the Brazilian had barely run any further than the Bayern Munich stopper.

Fred was briefly able to escape the attentions of the media by taking a break from football after the World Cup, but his penalty miss against Botafogo has thrust him back into the limelight for all the wrong reasons. As it happens, this isn't the first time his penalty-taking credentials have been called into question. Of the four penalties he took in 2014, Fred only managed to score one. ⚽



Thailand: Premier League

Nervy times at the top



Nicola Berger writes about football and lives in Zurich (Switzerland).

In Thai football it is customary for home fans to chant the names of the visiting team's players at the end of a game as a sign of the mutual respect that is so important in local culture. However, when it comes to getting results or to league survival, good manners tend to be swiftly forgotten. When relegation-threatened side PTT Rayong replaced head coach Chaoyong Khumpiam with Phayong Khunnaen on 6 August it represented the 22nd managerial change in the league this calendar year. At Rayong alone there have been three newcomers on the touchline since December 2013.

Thai clubs tend to have a twitchy trigger finger because no less than five teams are relegated from the top flight into the semi-professional Division One at the end of each season. The battle to avoid the drop was a heated affair last year, with riots breaking out in October after a defeat for Pattaya United, who were eventually relegated.

Pattaya's most well-known player was Rod Dyachenko, formerly of MLS side DC United, and indeed the Thai Premier League is filled with players from countries with stronger domestic championships. Back home they would only be substitutes even in the anonymity of the lower leagues but in Thailand they can become stars – even if the English Premier League is far more widely followed than the domestic game. Among the more famous players currently lacing their boots in Thailand are 30-year-old German Bjorn Lindemann, formerly of Paderborn and now at Suphanburi; 29-year-old Honduran Georgie Welcome, once at Arsenal and Monaco but now running out for Tero Sasana, and 31-year-old Dane Sebastian Svard, a one-time Borussia Monchengladbach player now with Songklah United. Each team is permitted to have seven foreigners in their squad but only five are allowed on the pitch at any one time.

Of the aforementioned trio only Welcome still has a chance of lifting the title. The striker hit the winner in Sasana's 2-1 victory over Chainat last Saturday to keep the side within touching distance of league leaders Buriram. Fellow pursuers Muangthong United and Chonburi are not out of the race yet either, but with seven rounds of matches still to play defending champions Buriram are

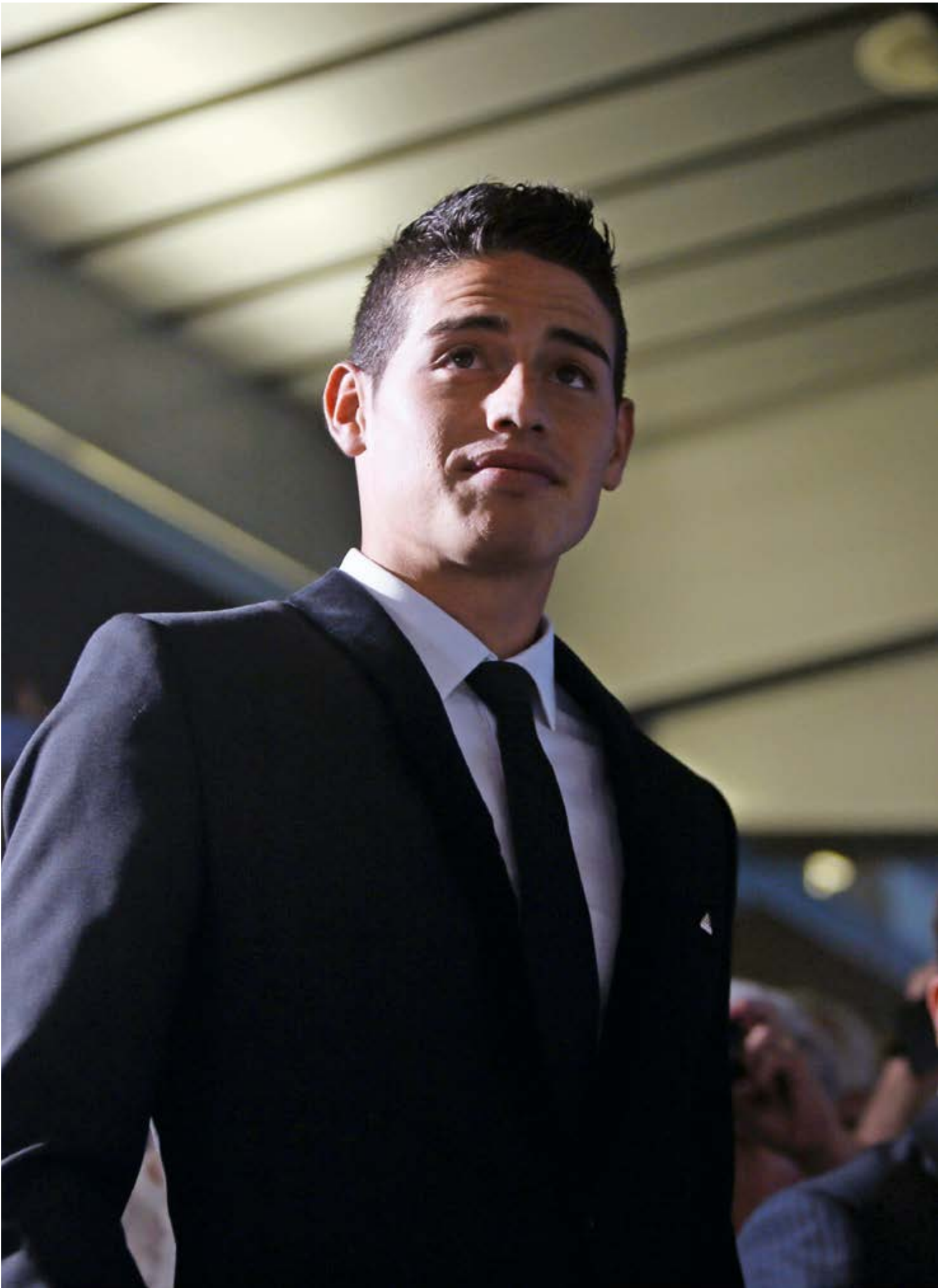
Buriram dismissed their coach after a run of five straight victories.

favourites for glory once again, having lifted eight trophies in the last three years.

Yet success alone is not enough to guarantee job security at the league frontrunners. After being installed in April this year, 44-year-old Serbian coach Bozidar Bandovic, erstwhile strategist at Olympiacos, was dismissed in June after a run of five straight victories with the side in third place. His Brazilian successor Alexandre Gama has been charged with the task of winning the club's fourth league title. ⚽



Georgie Welcome The Honduran has designs on winning the league title with Tero Sasana.



Hugo Ortuno / Demotix / Corbis / Dukas

“I’ll never forget what David Luiz did”

James Rodriguez is currently one of the most coveted footballers in the world. In an interview with FIFA, Real Madrid’s new star discusses his best World Cup goal, his role in the Colombia squad and the latest addition to his trophy cabinet.

Two months have gone by since Brazil 2014 started. Has your achievement sunk in yet?

James Rodriguez: I had a great tournament and I was able to help Colombia make the quarter-finals. We wanted to go even further but we came up against Brazil. They’ve got some great players and our dream came to an end.

You scored no fewer than six goals.

Which is your favourite and why?

I like all six. They were all important because they helped the team to win games. Every one of them was special because scoring goals in such a big competition is unique.

The users of FIFA.com voted your goal against Uruguay the Goal of the Tournament. How many times have you seen it since then? If you tried that move another 100 times how many do you think would go in?

I’ve seen it about 20 times. I always try it in training. You try 100 times and it goes in twice. This time it went in, and right in the corner too, although personally I prefer the one against Japan. It was classier and had a little more magic about it. It was a nice goal.

Did the absence of Radamel Falcao cause you to take on a more prominent role in the attack?

He scores a lot of goals and he’s very important for us. We really missed him. But I’ve always tried to score goals as well as create them.

At the end of that match against Brazil, David Luiz came up to console you and asked the fans in the stadium to give you a round of applause. What did that mean to you?

My dream was to make the semi-finals and even the final, and David Luiz just tried to lift my spirits. That’s what players and colleagues normally do, but it is something that I’ll never forget.

Did the way in which Brazil went out of the tournament against Germany give you cause to regret Colombia’s elimination even more?

No, that’s football. Every day is different. One day you do well and the next not so well. The only thing is, they lost heavily, which can happen sometimes.

Do you think Germany were deserving winners of the World Cup?

Germany are worthy champions, and they’ve got some great players. The four sides that got to the semis all deserved to be there.

You were only six when Colombia last played in the world finals, in 1998. Do you remember anything about that tournament?

I remember a little of France 1998. The whole team and the whole of Colombia were dreaming of reaching Brazil. We wanted to make history and we did that. It’s something that will be there forever.

Did you follow the tournament after Colombia were knocked out? And did you

keep an eye on Thomas Muller and Lionel Messi, who were also in contention for the adidas Golden Boot?

I tried not to follow it so closely, but it was impossible because I wanted to win the Trophy. The Golden Boot is a dream come true.

Where are you thinking of putting your adidas Golden Boot?

It’s going home and that’s where it’s going to stay. It’s for life! ☺

James Rodriguez was speaking to Carlos Hierro

Name

James David Rodriguez Rubio

Date and place of birth

12 July 1991, Cucuta, Colombia

Clubs

Envigado, Banfield, Porto, AS Monaco, Real Madrid

Colombia national team


27 caps, 11 goals

Major honours

Four national league titles (in Argentina and Portugal), Portuguese Cup winner, Europa League winner



First Love



Place: **Bangkok, Thailand**

Date: **14 July 2013**

Time: **3.06 p.m.**



Out cold Uruguay's Alvaro Pereira was knocked unconscious in the World Cup meeting with England, but ignored medical advice and resumed playing.

The doctor's decision is final

Concussion is an increasingly important topic in football. FIFA Chief Medical Officer and neurologist Jiri Dvorak calls for doctors' positions to be strengthened and general awareness of the issues to be raised.

Jiri Dvorak

Zero tolerance: The future of Head Injuries in Sports" was the editorial title of the special issue of British Journal of Sports Medicine 2013, following the fourth international consensus conference on "Concussion in Sports" at the home FIFA. The main objective was to support the physicians acting at the side-line or on the field by offering expert consensus based on current and recent scientific evidence facilitating the decision making process in particular to the return to play.

The first Consensus Conference was held in Vienna 2001 followed by the second conference in Prague in 2004. The third and fourth conferences were held at the Home of FIFA Zurich in 2008 and 2012.

Special edition for children

The continuous scientific collaboration with the involved partners and experts has raised awareness within the International Sports Federations, stimulated research output and outlined the recommendation for a return to play following a sustained concussion. The practical tool SCAT 3 (Sports Concussion Assessment Tool) has been improved since 2004 and been enhanced by the special edition for children.

The management of footballers with head injuries and the decision as to when to allow them to return to play remains largely a matter of medical judgement and decisions. Football doctors who are responsible for the players of a team have a special relationship, the same as a doctor-patient relationship. They are also considered to be responsible for the well-being

of players including their fitness and at the same time having expertise knowledge of the consequences of the injuries including concussion. They are also responsible for the appropriate assessment, management, the return to play decision and finally the follow-up treatment. This decision should not be over-ruled by non-medical persons with inferior medical knowledge such as managers or coaches. The decision of the responsible doctor must be respected by the player's coach and the recommendation enforced.

The doctors are also educated in a way that if there is doubt regarding the condition of the player (patient), then he or she should not be allowed to return to play. "When in doubt, sit them out". This was the slogan promoted during the first Consensus Conference

“Decisions should not be overruled by non-medical persons with inferior medical knowledge such as managers or coaches.”

in Vienna 2001. This basic approach is fully supported by the chairman of the FIFA Medical Committee Dr Michael D’Hooghe.

Red card for elbowing

Based on the statistics since 1998 from all FIFA Competitions, concussions are quite rare, with an average of one to two concussions per two competitions. However, there were five documented cases of concussion at the World Cup finals in Brazil. The reasons for this increase must be carefully evaluated. The application of the red card sanctioning elbow to head kicks was introduced prior to the FIFA World Cup 2006 in Germany which resulted with less head injuries. However, during the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil™ the head to head collisions have increased which are potentially equally as harmful as elbow to head.

F-MARC (FIFA Medical Assessment and Research Centre) is continuing the research on head injuries and concussion. A prospective study has been initiated for 2013 with most of the professional clubs of the Swiss Football League by performing the baseline examination prior to the season and comparing this with any potential head injury/concussion which might occur during the following season. In a collaborative multi-centre project, F-MARC is analysing the neurological impairments of former elite male and female players.

FIFA is not alone in tackling the issue of head injuries and concussion. In particular with the development of prevention measures, other International Federations are joining the efforts of FIFA. In particular the National Football League (NFL) has asked FIFA for its experience on the management and prevention of concussion acknowledging a track record of more than 15 years of research on this situation.

Responsibility required

From 23-25 August 2014, a “Think Tank” meeting on concussion will take place in New York. Representations from FIFA, IRB, NFL, AFL, NHL, FEI and NCAA will discuss the best practice for diagnosing, along with the management treatment of head injuries and concussion. This occasion will also be used to reinforce the recommendation of the Concussion in Sport Group, by strengthening the position of the team doctors on one side and at the same time enhancing educational programmes worldwide. Education should be extended and adapted, not only for the national team and club doctors of the different sports but also for managers, coaches, para-medical personnel and players/athletes. Doctors are not always present and not every coach might realise the consequence of an inappropriate decision for the player who has suffered a concussion. ☺

The weekly debate.

Anything you want to get off your chest? Which topics do you want to discuss? Send your suggestions to: feedback-theweekly@fifa.org



Managing head injuries

We all remember the World Cup Final very well indeed. The only man with gaps in his memory is one of the winners, Germany midfielder Christoph Kramer, who was knocked out in a 17th-minute collision with Ezequiel Garay of Argentina, suffered concussion, and later asked: “Is this the final?”

The decisive factor is how those involved react to this kind of incident. The German team doctors assessed the situation correctly. Kramer initially showed no symptoms of concussion, but a little later he realised something was wrong and asked to be substituted. Coach Joachim Low did not hesitate even for a moment, sending out an important signal and demonstrating that the player’s health and the doctors’ opinion matter more than sporting considerations. That is fully in line with the principle: “When in doubt, sit them out”.

This topic has the highest priority for FIFA. We have worked with international associations and the IOC since 2001 to formulate clear recommendations and procedures. As an example, from 2006 onwards the International Football Association Board has insisted on tougher and more forceful penalties for elbowing. Since then the number of incidents involving elbows and the associated injuries has noticeably gone down.

But this can still only be a start. FIFA is running a pilot project in the Swiss top flight this season, supervised by our Chief Medical Officer Professor Jiri Dvorak. The project will monitor players’ cognitive abilities and is intended to help speedier diagnosis of structural brain damage sustained by players. In parallel with this research, we must – sooner rather than later – also discuss an additional substitution. That would give coaches greater personal leeway, as they could react more quickly and decisively in the case of injury.

Best wishes, Sepp Blatter



instinct takes over

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Visp's most famous son

From the Swiss Alps to the summit of world football, via a successful stint in athletics, FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter has enjoyed a long and varied career. It all began in Visp, where the local football club celebrates its 100th anniversary this weekend.

Sepp Renggli, Zurich

Switzerland is made up of 26 cantons, but none of them are quite like Valais. It is home to the Matterhorn, the most beautiful girls in the country, according to Rainer Maria Rilke, and also FIFA President Joseph S. Blatter. Furthermore, the Valais has produced the forger Joseph Samuel Farinet, Saint Bernard dogs, the first Swiss cardinal, FC Sitten, hotel pioneers Ritz and Seiler, several elite ski racers, raclette, France's second-longest river, the Aletsch glacier, the highest mountain in the country and the majority of Swiss wines. Switzerland's third largest canton is also guarded by 34 mountains that each stand at over 4,000 metres, a range of peaks higher than exists elsewhere in the rest of Europe combined. The Valais, often disparagingly dubbed 'Switzerland's Wild West', has a population roughly 1,000 times smaller than the USA yet has just

37 stars fewer on its flag. The only thing Valais has still to produce is a Pope, unless you describe Blatter as a kind of football Pope.

When 'Seppli' was born on 10 March 1936, FIFA had 56 member associations, including Switzerland and therefore also FC Visp. It was at that provincial club that Blatter began his football career, rising from youth player to feared top-flight striker, reportedly earning the nickname of 'the Uwe Seeler of Upper Valais'.

Quick-witted youth

That the ambitious youngster was able to establish himself at his hometown club was due his teenage cunning. In the changing room, the team coach asked who could shoot with their left foot and Blatter did not hesitate to reply. "It wasn't completely true," he recalled later. "But as a 14-year-old it was the only chance I had to make it into the under 18 side."

Blatter went on to make the most of his opportunities, both on and off the pitch, ascending to the FIFA throne on 8 June 1998. From that seat of power in the world game, Blatter has endeavoured to inject new impulse into the sport. The ball may still be round but there have been numerous changes since the era of Sepp Herberger. Blatter travels a great deal more, visiting Samoa, the Cook Islands, Nepal, Djibouti, Montserrat and Dominica. The laws of the game are obeyed by everyone, be they Zulus, Shiites, Muslims, Jews, Kurds, Creoles or any other race - and they are also, reluctantly, followed by Blatter's numerous detractors. Football is a simple game that only becomes complicated once you attempt to explain the active and passive offside rules to your wife.

In his youth Blatter was also a keen athlete and enjoyed a successful track career. In 1956 he became Valais sprint champion over 100



Smiling for the camera Seppli in the arms of his mother Bertha in 1936.



In uniform Blatter during his time working at the Beau Site hotel in Zermatt.



Panoramic The town of Visp lies in the heart of the Swiss Alps and

metres with a winning time of 11.7 seconds. In the six seconds a goalkeeper used to have to handle the ball, Blatter would have reached the halfway line in his heyday.

However, he did not allow himself to be distracted from football, although he did set a furious pace with his academic studies. After gaining his high school leaving certificate, Blatter worked in a newspaper editorial office before embarking on a degree in economics and obtaining diverse posts as secretary, director and president. A talented writer, he financed his studies by writing sports reports for the newspaper *Walise Bote*, earning 15 Rappen per line. In between times Blatter also worked in a hotel cellar in Saas Fee, but the strain of carrying wine crates was soon too much for his slight frame. It was there that he learned that some wines are lighter than others. Before departing his beloved home canton for good, Blatter worked as Head of Public Relations of the Valaisan Tourist Board, as Spokesman for the Swiss Athletics Association and as General Secretary of the Swiss Ice Hockey Federation. Blatter's father refused to allow him to play ice hockey, claiming the game was too rough and Blatter later took that advice on board when President of FIFA: instead of using the coarse ice hockey term of 'sudden death' to describe the deciding goal in extra time, Blatter opted for the more humane 'Golden Goal'.

Swiss timekeeping

Towards the end of the 1960s Blatter moved into the watch industry, becoming Director of Sports Timing and Public Relations of Longines. Upon seeing that it was only athletes who seemed to be improving their times, Blatter resolved to bring better times to FIFA too. He gained access to the venerable Villa Dewald at Sonnenberg in Zurich, where then-FIFA Secretary General Helmut Kaser employed 11 people, and - in order to offset expenses and to observe who arrived late to work - lived in the same building. In 1975 Blatter became FIFA employee number 12, a fact that still rankles with him today as the 12th man in a football team is a substitute. Today the number of FIFA employees in the Home of FIFA, built at a cost of 240 million Swiss Francs on the Zurichberg, is almost 40 times as big - easily enough for two dozen football teams with substitutes.



is surrounded by 34 mountains standing at over 4,000 metres.

Under the leadership of Brazil's Joao Havelange and his successor Blatter, FIFA has grown to become the world's largest sports association, with 1.289 billion Swiss Francs in reserves and 65 million net income in the last accounting period. Added to that is the windfall from the 2014 World Cup: 1.9 billion Swiss Francs.

The smart Valais native, a colonel in the Swiss army, multilingual, eloquent, quick-witted, savvy, jovial and by no means introverted, accomplished many feats that seemed impossible. He even went to battle against standing in football stadiums. Although Blatter possesses a remarkable natural stamina on his feet, in a similar way to the immovable Matterhorn, he was in favour of abolishing standing room in football for safety reasons. Thanks to the World Cup and television deals, the football industry earns millions across the globe. Blatter was a living example of globalisation before it became an economic catchphrase. Sometimes numbers can lie though: according to statisticians a man with his head in a sauna and his feet in a fridge would have an average body temperature.

In 1975, Blatter's first year at FIFA, the organisation had 144 member associations. In 2014, 39 years into his stay, there are 209; more than are included in the United Nations, a fact Blatter happily recounts in German, French, English, Spanish, Italian and in Valaisan dialect. As long as there is some benefit in doing so, the powers that be at FIFA would turn the Cayman Islands, Anguilla, New Caledonia and anywhere into sovereign football states. Over 300 million men, women and children play football the world over and this weekend they will do likewise in Visp, where one of the most spectacular careers in world football began 65 years ago. ⚽

Valais welcomes the world

FC Visp centenary. 'Muhleye' sports ground, 22-24 August 2014. Saturday 23 August, 18:00: celebrity match: FIFA XI versus FC Sion Cup Legends, featuring Ronaldo, George Weah, Jean-Marie Pfaff, Sunday Oliseh, Petar Alexandrov, Stephane Chapuisat and Jean-Paul Brigger among others.



Uniformed once more As regimental commander Blatter oversees emergency drills on Simplon.



Eye for goal The 'Uwe Seeler of Upper Valais' (bottom right) fired FC Visp to sporting glory.



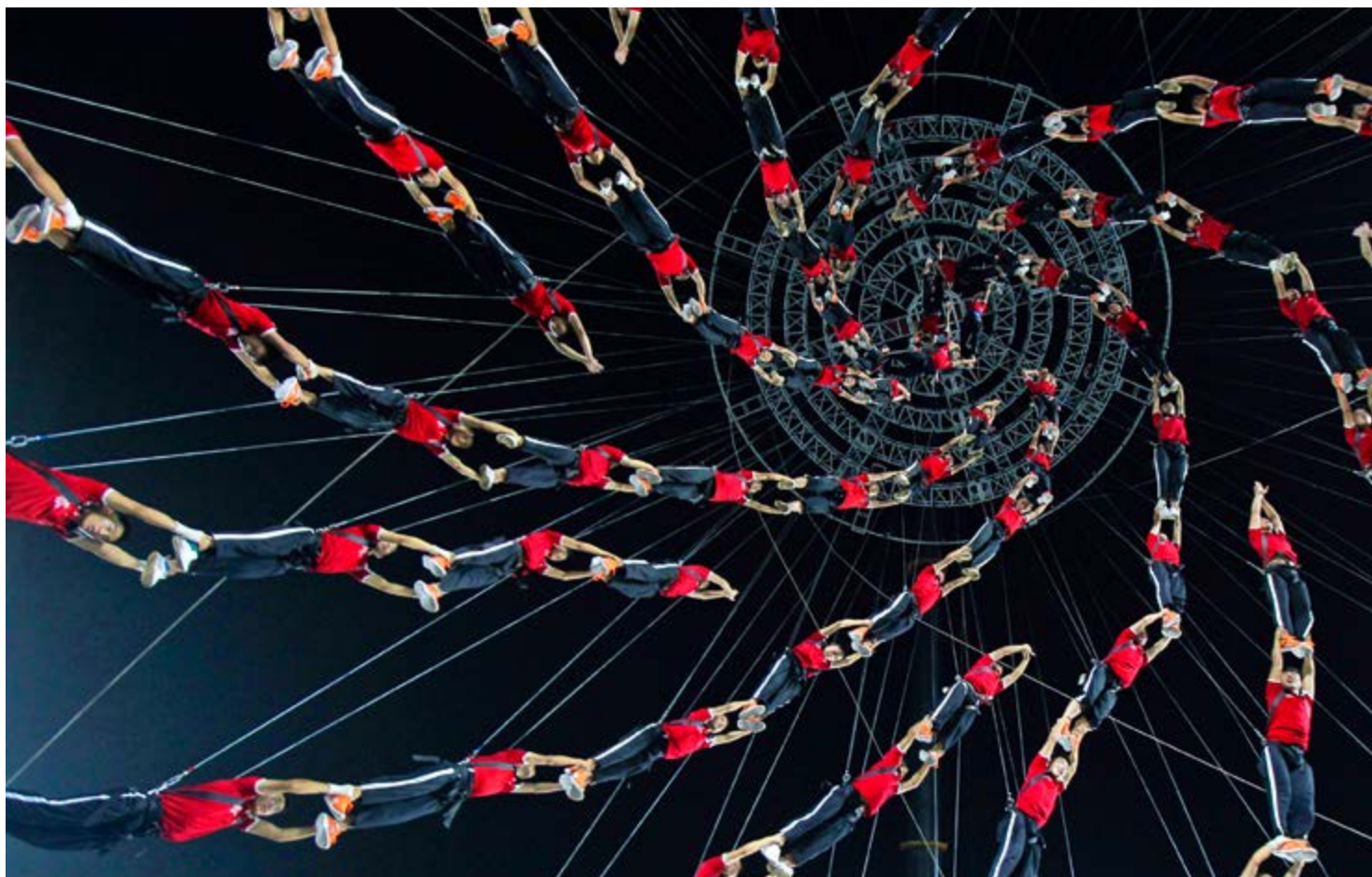
Connecting every fan of the game

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in the Emirates A380 Onboard Lounge.

#AllTimeGreats
youtube.com/emirates

Hello Tomorrow





It stopped raining at last, although it was not yet dry as the torrential downpours gave way to a low-lying mist trapped in the narrow alleyways. There were vast puddles too, reflecting the lights of the big city. The streets were peppered with mascots and logos, because the city was excited about its tournament. Banners encourage everyone to “Share the Games, share our dreams”. The Olympics are in town – not the grown-up version but the youth edition. That made no difference to the Chinese hosts as money was clearly no object for the opening ceremony, an imposing spectacular in no way inferior to its predecessor at the 2008 Beijing Games. Acrobats, artists and volunteers performed smoothly synchronised routines in the Arena to the delight of the enthusiastic crowd and the athletes, some 3,808 young men and women from all over the world who will spend the next few days giving their all in the quest for medals. The heavens opened at the start of the ceremony, but the Olympic flame proved impervious to the weather and will burn over Nanjing until 27 August. ❄

Dominik Petermann

The people of Gelsenkirchen have had enough of playing second fiddle in the Bundesliga. Schalke 04 have finished as runners-up four times since 2001, and have ended the season one place further down the table three times in the past six years. Fans are once again asking the same question this year: will Schalke win their first German championship title since 1958? Although the season has not yet begun, there is already a growing sense of disquiet in this particular corner of the Ruhr region. Their team have already crashed out of the German Cup at the hands of third-tier side Dynamo Dresden, and now illness and injury give even greater cause for concern. Coach Jens Keller has been without eight of his squad during this summer's pre-season preparations, reminding many supporters of the way in which the team seemed to fall apart under a growing list of absentees during the last campaign. Now sporting director Horst Heldt has responded by appointing a nutritionist and drafting a new code of conduct. Players must regularly visit an ophthalmologist and dentist, and are also required to take a midday nap between their two daily training sessions. ❄

Alan Schweingruber

On the rare occasions when a footballer is seen leaping over an obstacle – and not dribbling his way around it – the obstruction in question is usually an advertising hoarding and the leap is to celebrate a goal. More often than not, the player receives a yellow card for his troubles. Kariem Hussein celebrated many times during his short career in the game. At just 16 years of age, the young Swiss national with an Egyptian father was already plying his trade at fourth-tier outfit FC Tagerwilen and it seemed only a matter of time before he made the step up to the professional stage. However, Hussein opted for a very different career path. At 19, he took part in the regional middle school high jump championship, leaping over the 2.01-metre mark without much prior training. Hussein now specialises in the 400-metre hurdles, one of the most challenging disciplines in athletics that combines technique with physical ability. Last week, he won gold at the European Athletics Championships in Zurich and celebrated his triumph in the manner expected of a professional athlete – although perhaps not of a professional footballer. ❄

Thomas Renggli



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FIFA is committed to developing football for the benefit of all. Our mission is to:

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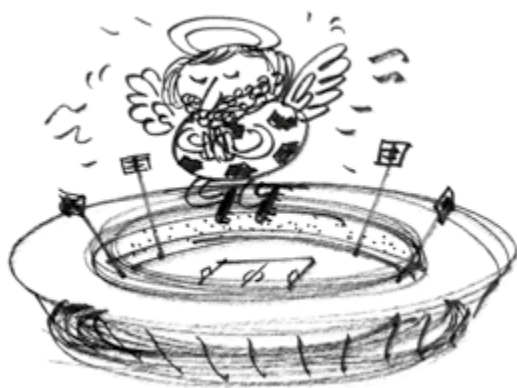
FIFA's primary objective is to develop the game of football in our 209 member associations. The FIFA World Cup™ gives us the resources we need to invest USD 550,000 per day in football development across the globe.

Touch the world

FIFA's aim is to touch the world through its international football competitions and events, uniting and inspiring people everywhere.

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Football is much more than just a game. Its universal appeal gives it a unique power and reach which must be managed carefully. FIFA believes it has a duty to society that goes beyond football.



Behind the fence

Perikles Monioudis

How do you deal with defeat? You learn from it, coaches say. It eats away at you, but only for a short while, say the players. Either way, mental exercises in sport have developed significantly over the last few decades and players are no longer only given media training to learn the right answers and phrases; above all they are instructed to go into the next game with a clear head. 'Free your mind' is the mantra but it is frequently only a hypothetical phrase or a description of the desired mental state. The question remains: How do you deal with defeat?

Artistic pursuits are among the more private efforts used to control one's thoughts, to tease them towards maximum motivation and concentration and to leave pangs of self-doubt and other fear-induced reflexes behind you at the decisive moment. There are guitar-playing midfielders who dabble in acting, strikers who occasionally DJ in clubs, defenders who write poetry and also goalkeepers who paint. Rudi Kargus falls into that last category.

Born in 1952, Kargus was one of Germany's finest goalkeepers in the 1970s. While at Hamburg he won the German Cup in 1976, the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1977 and the league title in 1979. He quickly earned a reputation as a 'penalty killer' due to the fact that he saved 23 (or 24 depending on the source) of the 70 spot-kicks he faced in goal.

Nevertheless, Kargus lived in the shadow of another outstanding custodian of the era: Sepp Maier, a World Cup winner in 1974. Kargus only made three international appearances, although he was a member of the Germany squads at both the 1976 European Championship and at the 1978 World Cup. When he left

Hamburg in 1980 he began a kind of staggered decline: at his next three clubs he was relegated from the Bundesliga three times.

How do you deal with defeat? In the mid 90s Kargus tried his hand at painting and gradually developed his own artistic language that worked: he painted large, representational art using oil on canvas and the entire colour palette, with motifs that were often closely related to football. He has exhibited his paintings in galleries since 2005. His work 'Schattenallee' (Alley of Shadows) appears to show fans climbing up a chain-link fence behind a goal. What is he trying to tell us? ☺

The weekly column by our staff writers

Biggest wins in international matches

- 1 Australia 31-0 American Samoa**
11/04/2001
Coffs Harbour, Australia
World Cup qualifier
- 2 Australia 22-0 Tonga**
09/04/2001
Coffs Harbour, Australia
World Cup qualifier
- 3 Korea DPR 21-0 Guam**
11/03/2005
Taipei City, Chinese Taipei
Friendly
- 4 Kuwait 20-0 Bhutan**
14/02/2000
Kuwait City, State of Kuwait
Asian Cup qualifier
- 5 PR China 19-0 Guam**
26/01/2000
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
Asian Cup qualifier
- Iran 19-0 Guam**
24/11/2000
Täbriz, Iran
World Cup qualifier
- 7 Tahiti 18-0 American Samoa**
08/06/2000
Papeete, Tahiti
Polynesia Cup
- 8 Dominican Republic 17-0 British Virgin Islands**
14/10/2010
San Cristobal, Dominican Republic
Caribbean Cup
- Iran 17-0 Maldives**
02/06/1997
Damascus, Syria
World Cup qualifier
- Australia 17-0 Cook Islands**
19/06/2000
Papeete, Tahiti
Oceania Nations Cup
- 11 Australia 16-0 Cook Islands**
28/09/1998
Brisbane, Australia
Oceania Nations Cup

Source: FIFA

(FIFA, Fact-Sheet, FIFA Competitions Biggest Margin Victories, 14.08.2014)

T H E N

Copenhagen, Denmark



1960

A goalkeeper dives headlong into a huge muddy puddle to make a save.

N O W

Mureck, Austria



2014

Hannover 96's Leon Andreassen makes a splash after scoring at a training camp.

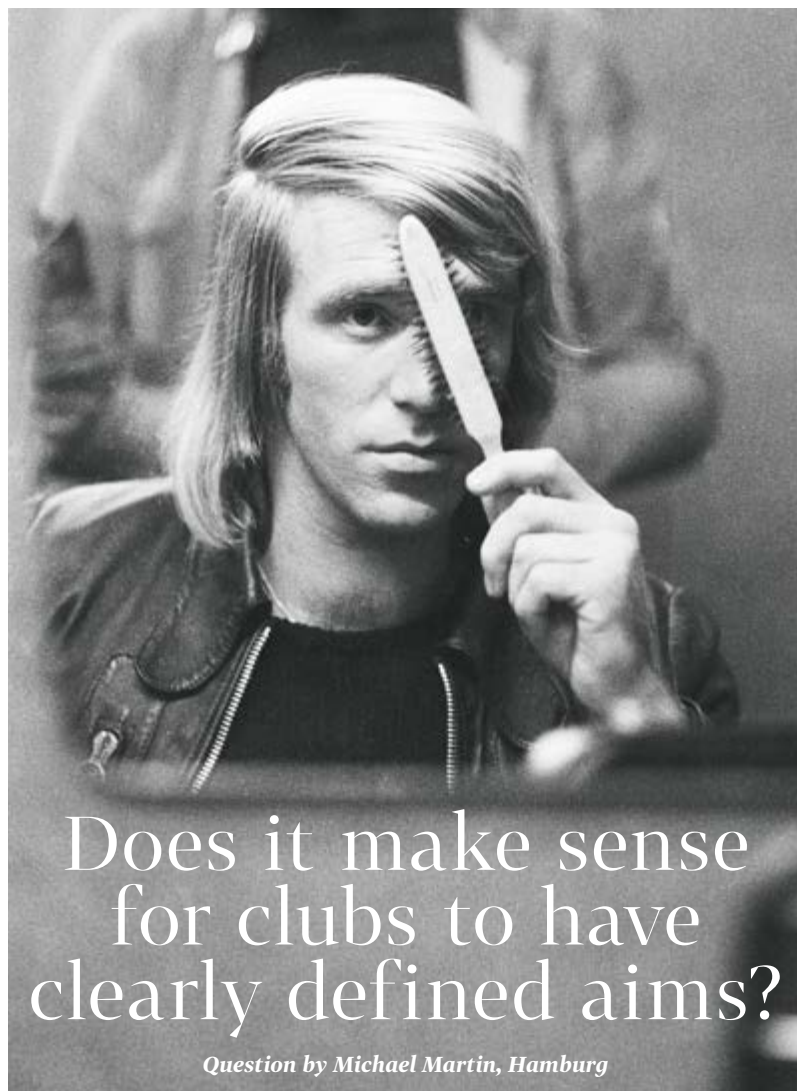


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Question by Michael Martin, Hamburg

Gunter Netzer Our columnist, aged 28.

Having clearly defined objectives is part and parcel of being at a professional club. They do make a lot of sense as they provide a framework for the forthcoming season that both the club and the fans can work towards. It's important to keep the aims realistic though.

A side based in a city with a huge population to support them tend to have certain aspirations, but setting spectacular targets doesn't help you win games. I don't see any gain in the club's board aspiring towards a specific position in the table either. It might make for a good one-off headline but it can have a negative impact in the longer term. People connected with the club can tell how genuine a statement of that kind is.

Football is an economy too, but when it comes to planning, the football business has its own way of working. Any team's situation can change in a flash with injuries to key players, so clubs have to be able to adapt their ambitions. Psychologically it's absurd to stick to certain objectives just to put players under pressure, although different rules apply at top

teams like Real Madrid and Bayern Munich, where winning the league title is always the target.

In my eight years as general manager at Hamburg our motto was: "We want to win everything, and if we can't do that then we'll take what we can." What I mean by that is footballers can be expected to have a healthy sense of responsibility. Laying down over-the-top objectives is unnecessary. ❄

What have you always wanted to know about football? Ask Gunter Netzer: feedback-theweekly@fifa.org



Perikles Monioudis

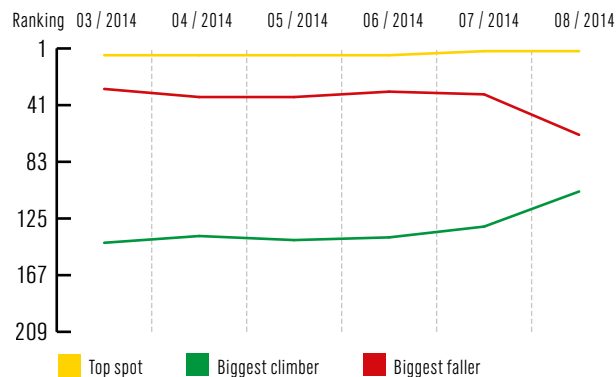
Rewards for loyalty exist even in the world of football. There are certainly plenty of reasons to award such an accolade, such as an important anniversary for a long-serving club member. There are also many factors in the life of a professional footballer that could cause them to leave a team besides just money: a new sporting challenge, playing at another level, moving to a strange and exciting new country or aiming for silverware are all legitimate reasons for any player to seek pastures new.

The moral criteria are admittedly very different for fans; for example, it is not normal to encounter someone who supports one club to start with, another later in life and a third after that. The average football enthusiast remains devoted to the club whose home games they dutifully attended hand-in-hand with their father as a child. Once a club is in your heart, it stays there forever – at least in most cases.

Differing yardsticks are applied to each group. The unwritten rules of football generally do not permit fans to change teams, but will tolerate the same from players – most of the time at least. There are certainly instances where past favourites are met with less than universal approval when returning to their old club with their new one, but transfers only tend to generate this kind of vitriol when the player moves to a team's biggest local or championship rivals.

The medal for loyalty pictured above forms part of the FIFA Collection, and the 'Fidelity' inscription suggests it must once have been awarded in England. Today it has only an abstract connection with the attribute it acknowledges, as it now languishes in a casket for posterity, remaining forever true to itself and its function. ❄

Rank	Team	Change in ranking	Points
1	Germany	0	1736
2	Argentina	0	1604
3	Netherlands	0	1507
4	Colombia	0	1495
5	Belgium	0	1407
6	Uruguay	0	1316
7	Spain	1	1241
7	Brazil	0	1241
9	Switzerland	0	1218
10	France	0	1212
11	Portugal	0	1152
12	Chile	0	1100
13	Greece	0	1092
14	Italy	0	1069
15	Costa Rica	1	1023
16	Croatia	1	964
17	Mexico	1	942
18	USA	-3	937
19	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0	925
20	England	0	915
21	Ecuador	0	910
22	Ukraine	0	901
23	Russia	0	899
24	Algeria	0	880
25	Côte d'Ivoire	0	840
26	Denmark	0	818
27	Romania	1	740
28	Scotland	-1	738
29	Venezuela	1	724
29	Sweden	0	724
31	Serbia	0	723
32	Turkey	0	711
33	Nigeria	1	673
34	Hungary	4	656
35	Czech Republic	0	650
36	Ghana	2	648
36	Armenia	5	648
38	Egypt	-2	645
39	Slovenia	-2	643
40	Austria	3	624
41	Wales	3	623
42	Tunisia	0	617
43	Honduras	-3	596
44	Japan	1	593
45	Slovakia	1	584
46	Iceland	1	573
47	Paraguay	1	564
48	Iran	1	563
49	Montenegro	1	553
50	Sierra Leone	14	533
51	Uzbekistan	1	528
52	Peru	7	522
53	Norway	0	512
54	Cameroon	-1	507
55	Finland	0	502
56	Jordan	1	500
57	Korea Republic	-1	499
58	Burkina Faso	0	493
59	Senegal	3	491
60	Mali	0	488
61	Poland	0	482
62	Libya	1	475
63	Panama	-30	474
64	Guinea	-13	471
65	United Arab Emirates	0	464
66	Republic of Ireland	4	448
67	Oman	2	447
68	Israel	-1	439
69	South Africa	-3	438
70	Albania	-3	437
71	Bolivia	0	434
72	Bulgaria	0	429
73	Azerbaijan	0	413
74	Cape Verde Islands	1	411
75	Angola	4	408
76	FYR Macedonia	-2	407
77	Benin	14	405



78	Congo	4	395
79	Australia	-3	391
80	Trinidad and Tobago	4	384
81	Morocco	-2	381
81	Uganda	6	381
83	Saudi Arabia	-5	377
84	Zambia	-7	375
85	Jamaica	-2	373
86	Botswana	13	371
87	Togo	1	365
88	Palestine	-3	363
88	Belarus	-7	363
90	Zimbabwe	8	358
91	Iraq	-2	357
92	Qatar	-6	348
93	Estonia	-1	344
93	Congo DR	3	344
95	Northern Ireland	-6	341
95	Georgia	1	341
97	China PR	-3	334
98	New Zealand	3	330
99	Moldova	3	325
100	Latvia	3	324
101	Rwanda	8	318
102	Gabon	-9	311
103	Lithuania	1	306
104	Kenya	-9	305
105	Lesotho	26	302
106	Malawi	15	295
107	Bahrain	-2	289
107	Mozambique	7	289
109	Luxembourg	-1	288
110	Tanzania	-4	285
111	Kuwait	-4	280
112	Ethiopia	-2	275
113	Equatorial Guinea	-2	270
114	Namibia	-2	269
115	Lebanon	4	263
115	Sudan	0	263
117	Haiti	-4	262
118	Niger	-19	261
119	Liberia	-4	260
120	Tajikistan	4	252
120	Central African Republic	-3	252
122	Canada	-4	250
123	Guinea-Bissau	13	242
124	Cuba	-4	233
124	Aruba	-1	233
126	Dominican Republic	-1	230
127	El Salvador	-6	223
128	Philippines	0	221
129	Burundi	-3	217
129	Afghanistan	0	217
131	Kazakhstan	-4	213
131	Suriname	0	213
133	Mauritania	0	204
134	Guatemala	0	203
134	St Vincent and the Grenadines	1	203
136	New Caledonia	0	199
137	Turkmenistan	3	197
138	St Lucia	0	195
139	Vietnam	-10	192
140	Cyprus	-1	184
140	Chad	0	184
142	Grenada	0	182
143	Madagascar	0	179
144	Kyrgyzstan	0	176

145	Maldives	0	174
146	Korea DPR	1	167
147	Syria	-1	161
148	Gambia	0	157
149	Antigua and Barbuda	0	156
150	India	1	143
150	Malta	0	143
152	Singapore	2	140
153	Guyana	2	136
153	Indonesia	0	136
155	Puerto Rico	1	134
155	Malaysia	-4	134
157	Thailand	0	126
158	Swaziland	1	125
159	St Kitts and Nevis	-1	124
160	Myanmar	0	121
161	Hong Kong	1	118
162	Belize	-1	117
163	Guam	11	102
164	Pakistan	1	100
165	Montserrat	1	99
166	Nepal	-2	95
167	Liechtenstein	0	94
168	Dominica	-1	93
169	Barbados	0	92
170	Bangladesh	-7	87
171	Tahiti	0	85
172	Laos	-2	84
173	Solomon Islands	2	83
173	Bermuda	0	83
175	Nicaragua	0	78
175	Comoros	-3	78
177	São Tomé e Príncipe	0	72
178	Sri Lanka	0	71
179	Chinese Taipei	-1	70
180	Seychelles	2	68
181	Turks and Caicos Islands	0	66
182	Curaçao	1	63
183	Faroe Islands	1	61
184	Yemen	-4	59
185	South Sudan	1	43
186	Macau	18	41
186	Vanuatu	1	41
188	Mauritius	-3	37
189	Fiji	-1	31
190	Mongolia	-1	29
191	US Virgin Islands	-1	28
191	Samoa	-1	28
193	Bahamas	-1	26
193	Brunei Darussalam	-1	26
193	Timor-Leste	-1	26
193	Tonga	-1	26
197	Cayman Islands	-1	21
198	American Samoa	-1	18
199	Andorra	-1	16
200	Papua New Guinea	-1	14
201	Cambodia	-1	13
201	British Virgin Islands	-1	13
203	Eritrea	-1	11
204	Somalia	-1	8
205	Djibouti	0	6
206	Cook Islands	0	5
207	Anguilla	0	1
208	Bhutan	0	0
208	San Marino	0	0

“If I go back now, then I’m staying there”

Prolific striker Petar Aleksandrov scored 100 times for Slavia Sofia in 170 games. He reached the World Cup semi-final with Bulgaria in 1994 and was twice crowned top scorer in Switzerland. His latest success is gaining citizenship there.

Communism entailed a strict set of rules, even for footballers. Players were only permitted to transfer to overseas clubs once they turned 28, and even the most attractive offers could not change that.

In 1987, when I was 24 years old, I scored 13 goals in four games for Slavia Sofia during a training camp in the Netherlands. This prompted PSV Eindhoven to bid two million euros for me, but the offer fell on deaf ears. The fact that my salary at Slavia back then was around 150 Euros per month shows just how high their bid was.

The principle of protecting homegrown talent ceased to apply just two years later. During a derby game against Levski Sofia, I broke my right tibia in a collision with their young goalkeeper Zdravko Zdravkov. It was incredibly unlucky, as Zdravkov was only playing because Levski's first-choice keeper Borislav Mikhailov was injured. An old hand like Mikhailov – who was later our captain at the 1994 World Cup – would never have thrown himself into a collision so impetuously.

Suddenly, I faced an uncertain future in football. No doubt mindful of the old adage that ‘a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush’, Bulgaria’s authoritarian top brass allowed me to move to Belgian club Kortrijk for \$250,000. Looking back now, I realise that serious injury was the first important turning point in my career, as it indirectly opened up the rest of the footballing world to me.

The next key moment was the time I spent at Swiss club Aarau between 1991 and 1994. Despite being huge outsiders, we won the championship in 1993 and had in Roberto Di Matteo a player who would go on to forge an international career as both a player and a coach. Despite this success, I returned to Bulgaria, this time to Levski, to fight for a place at the next World Cup.

I had made a name for myself in Switzerland by then, and six months later I was contacted by representatives from Neuchâtel Xamax. At that time I was almost 32 years old and somewhat surprised to still be receiving offers from abroad. I said to myself: “If I go back to Switzerland now then I’m staying there.” Times had changed in Bulgaria since the fall of communism and there was no longer any sense of solidarity or shared identity.

With this in mind, I returned to Switzerland and did not regret my decision. After returning,

I was twice the Swiss league’s leading goalscorer, with Xamax in 1995 and with Lucerne in 1996, but most importantly, I found a new home. A year ago I underwent the naturalisation process, which includes an exam to test your knowledge of the country. I scored 41 out of a possible 45 points, and will receive my Swiss passport in the next few weeks. ☺

As told to Thomas Renggli

Name

Petar Aleksandrov

Date and place of birth

**7 December 1962,
Karlovo, Bulgaria**

Position

Striker

Main clubs played for

**Slavia Sofia, Kortrijk, Aarau,
Levski Sofia, Neuchâtel Xamax,
Lucerne**

Bulgaria national team

26 caps, 5 goals

Clubs served as assistant coach

**PAOK, St. Gallen, Grasshopper
Club Zurich, Bulgaria, Lucerne**

In Turning Point, personalities reflect on a decisive moment in their lives.



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NEW THINKING.
NEW POSSIBILITIES.

An international Super Cup, the Pope and a missing shirt number – test your knowledge!

- ① The final of the U-20 Women's World Cup will be played at Montreal's Olympic Stadium, but which country's "Super Cup" has already been contested there?



B Italy



D Germany



R France



S Spain

- ② At this summer's U-20 Women's World Cup 2014 in Canada, the final round of group games had to be held at the same time, as usual. But according to the match schedule, Brazil - Germany kicked off at 16:00, while USA - China PR got underway at 17:00. How many minutes separated the start of the two games?

12 AUG 2014 - 16:00 Local time
GROUP B
Olympic Stadium
Montreal

E 0 min

O 30 min

12 AUG 2014 - 17:00 Local time
GROUP B
Moncton Stadium
Moncton

A 60 min

I 120 min

- ③ The Pope's beloved football club has just won the Copa Libertadores, but which 2014 World Cup match did all of the men in this picture follow with great interest?



A Round of 16

E Quarter-final

I Semi-final

L Final

- ④ At the World Cup, one player is wearing a shirt without a name and number, but this is within the rules. Which position is he playing?



D Team captain

L Goalkeeper

K Striker

R Substitute on the bench

The answer to last week's Quiz Cup was **FLAG**

Detailed answers on www.fifa.com/theweekly

Inspiration and implementation: cus

Send your answer by **27 August 2014** to feedback-theweekly@fifa.org.

Correct solutions to all quizzes published from 13 June 2014 onwards will go into a draw in January 2015 for a trip for **two to the FIFA Ballon d'Or on 12 January 2015**.

Before sending in answers, all participants must read and accept the competition terms and conditions and the rules, which can be found at:

http://www.fifa.com/mm/document/af-magazine/fifaweekly/02/20/51/99/en_rules_20140613_english_neutral.pdf

There is much talk about a fourth substitute at the moment, but have substitutions always been allowed in football?

Frank Baer,
St. Gallen (Switzerland)

No. Prior to 1967 substitutions were fundamentally not permitted in competitive international matches. The one exception was qualifying for the 1954 World Cup, when each team was allowed to replace one injured player, albeit only in the first half. The English FA introduced the option of making a single substitution in 1965, but also only in the case of injury. Following a change to the international regulations one substitute was allowed from 1967, a figure which increased to two the following year. This arrangement remained in force until 1994. Starting with the 1994/95 season the goalkeeper could also be substituted in addition to the two permitted replacements, and since 1995/96 the number of substitutes per team and match has been three. (*thr*)

Which of the following new signings in Spain's Primera Division will make the greatest impact?



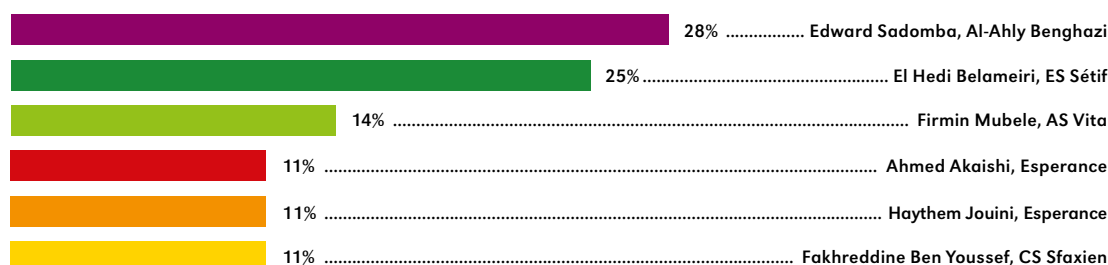
Take your pick from the following players:

- Antoine Griezmann (Atlético Madrid)
- Toni Kroos (Real Madrid)
- James Rodriguez (Real Madrid)
- Ivan Rakitic (Barcelona)
- Guillermo Ochoa (Malaga)
- Mario Mandzukic (Atlético Madrid)
- Luis Suarez (Barcelona)

Cast your vote at
www.fifa.com/newscentre

LAST WEEK'S POLL RESULTS

Who will finish top scorer in the CAF Champions League 2014?



WEEK IN NUMBERS

4

Racing Montevideo substitute Agustin Gutierrez scored a remarkable four goals in 14 minutes to snatch victory from the jaws of defeat in the Apertura opener away to Danubio. "Agustin strikes like a rapier and is deadly in front of goal," said coach Mauricio Larriera after the 22-year-old's match-winning exploits.



42

Until the first match of this season Manchester United had not lost at home on the opening weekend in the English top flight for 42 years. Back in 1972/73 a team including legends Bobby Charlton, George Best and Denis Law fell to a shock 2-1 reverse against Ipswich Town. Swansea City stunned the Red Devils last Saturday with a win by the same score at Old Trafford.



6

In an exceptional individual performance, Claudiu Keseru scored all the goals as he led Steaua Bucharest to a 6-0 victory over Pandurii Targu Jiu, breaking a club record previously held by his coach. Back in 1994 Constantin Galca netted all five in Steaua's emphatic 5-0 success against Brasov, a record that stood until his 27-year-old forward went one better.

