



Vladimir Chorno-Ivanov

THE NATIONAL TEAMS

OF NATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATIONS

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Football is a living organism that is constantly evolving. The FIFA and UEFA competitions, including U-21 and youth tournaments, have become an integral part of the landscape of world and European football and an essential element for any national association managing at least four national youth teams. But there is a well-known formula for success too: strong clubs generate strong national teams.

This book examines the various facets of national youth teams within the National Team Institute of a national football association. It aims to provide a systematic description of the multiple factors which influence national team formation, selection, education & training and, consequently, national team performance in official competitions at both youth and “A” level.

The author analyzes the different practices, experience, expertise and statistics of leading European football associations in national team development and draws parallels with the Ukrainian path to “A” team formation.

This book is primarily recommended for coaches and managers working in UEFA and FIFA member associations, as well as for football experts and enthusiasts and for all members of our football family looking to develop their experience & knowledge in order to create a more competitive environment and contribute to improving our great game.

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“The main thing is the grandeur of the design”

— Joseph Brodsky, Nobel Prize in Literature

***“We can’t afford such a luxury as spending time on tasks
not leading to valuable results”***

— Lev Landau, Nobel Prize in Physics

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FOREWORD

*“...we must do our research very earnestly, with total honesty, not trying to proclaim an answer which we have not yet got but, when we have found a complete image of what we are searching for, the first thing we must do is to say: “This is true on the level on which I was up to today, now let me ask questions about it”.*¹

— Frédéric Joliot-Curie, French physicist, Nobel Prize in Chemistry

The history of the inaugural UEFA U-21 competitions for teams representing different UEFA national associations (hereinafter — NA) dates back to 1967. Years before the UEFA European U-21 Championship was firmly established, the Under-23 Challenge Cup had been played over a three-year span (1967–1970). Since 1972 UEFA had been running the Under-23 Championship under its auspices where later the age limit for player eligibility was lowered down to U-21 (referring to the first edition of the UEFA European U-21 Championship played over 1976/78 two-year cycle). The inaugural UEFA European U-18 Championship was launched in 1980/1981 season and followed by the UEFA European U-16 Championship in 1980/82 with a two-year competition cycle in mind back then that UEFA plans to return to in the coming seasons (Nation League system with promotion/relegation) with the first shift to be made for U-19 category with U-17 to follow. Seasons went by and age categories “got one year older” too in 2001/2002 thus, having marked UEFA’s shift to U-17 and U-19 tournaments.

At FIFA level, youth tournaments entered football life in 1974, the year João Havelange was elected FIFA president and took the reins of Zurich Office with the implementation of World youth football championships included in his election campaign. Thus, FIFA U-20 World Cup was launched in 1977 and followed by the FIFA U-17 World Cup in 1985. FIFA U-16 World Cup editions were played in 1985, 1987 and 1989.

The list of youth football tournaments will be incomplete without the Summer Olympics that hosted the inaugural U-23 football tournaments in Atlanta in 1996 with U-20 or U-21 FIFA Confederation Championships as qualifiers (par exemple, for UEFA’s NA teams).

That said, six different youth and U-21 tournaments are played under the FIFA and UEFA auspices. Today, 55 UEFA member associations and 211 FIFA member

¹ On the Light That Shineth in the Darkness — 30 October 2014 by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (Author), Avril Pyman (Editor), Elena Sadovnikova (Editor), Kelsey Cheshire (Editor), Veronique Magnes (Cover Design). Product details: Language — English; Paperback — 136 pages; ISBN-10: 0993119301; ISBN-13: 978-0993119309

Please note, that some links may be unavailable due to modifications and amendments being made by FIFA, UEFA and FIFA member associations to their official Internet sources from time to time.

associations take part in five different youth competitions (with U-20 and U-21 Confederation competition cycle as Olympics qualifiers). In practical terms, it means almost an all-year-round competition process.

FIFA and UEFA U-21 and youth competitions have become an integral part of the landscape of world and European football and an essential element for any national association managing at least four or five national youth teams, i.e. U-16, U-17, U-18, U-19 and U-20 or U-21 with national “A” team being on top of it. In my opinion, division as such gives strong and fair grounds to discuss institutional nature of NA football operations as far as national youth teams are concerned, where, certainly, we need more comprehensive approach to establish direct links between grassroots and children’s & youth football and professional football — all together leading to the establishment of National Team Institute within NAs operating under systematic analysis and solid rules & regulations. And this is because every NA’s “A” team success is most probably rooted in national youth team development and depends on excellence of youth programs in professional football clubs, on knowledge and coaching skills especially of those working with young players and so on and so forth with every “stop” through national youth pathway to succeed.

The analysis presented in this book is an attempt to describe multifaceted mosaic of football connecting numerous NA national youth teams. It is also an attempt to systematise multiple factors which influence national team formation, selection, education & training and, consequently, national team performance in competitions at both youth and “A” level.

Furthermore, given analysis presents an outlook of different practices, experience and expertise of leading football associations in national team development. At the same time, it is an outlook of work done in Ukraine too, as Ukraine has also gained its unique work experience over the years just like 54 other UEFA member associations have.

Last but not least, this book is titled “The National Teams”. However, FIFA Regulations provide for other definitions, i.e. “association teams” in FIFA Regulations on Status and Transfer of Players and “representative teams” in FIFA Statutes. Notwithstanding given terms, I decided to use the term “national teams” because this is exactly the one I have been using over the years of my multitasking jobs at the Ukrainian FA in correspondence with foreign colleagues. That is why the book cover reads “The National Teams”.

Hopefully, the suggested analysis in “The National Teams” will be of interest to all those working with national youth teams within national football associations and they will find given facts & figures useful. I like to think about football as a living organism which never stands still and is constantly evolving, so our large football family is in need of constant experience & knowledge exchange that will create more competitive environment and contribute to improving our great game and achieving better results.

You are very welcome!

HISTORICAL PARALLELS

“There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.”

— Mark Twain

To win matches in the top international tournaments, national “A” teams (hereinafter — NAT) need competent coaches, skilled and effective management, strong clubs and a highly competitive domestic championship. They also need talented football players with considerable experience of international youth and U-21 national team games. As Ginés Melendez² points out “international football players” develop mainly through the national youth pathway (i.e. national youth team system a.k.a. National Youth Team Institute here), attending national youth team schools.

Spain “A” is a shining example. In particular, in the “starting eleven” for the UEFA EURO 2008 final match, only a naturalized Brazilian Marcos Senna had not passed through all stages of the Institute of the National Youth Teams of Spain. Almost every Spanish footballer who had played in 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa had in their profiles the highest titles both at the club and national youth team level. Iker Casillas, Xavier Hernández and Carlos Marchena were FIFA U-20 World Cup champions (1999), Andres Iniesta and Fernando Torres became winners of the UEFA European U-16 (2001) and U-19 (2002) Championships, David Silva, Sergio Ramos and Raúl Albiol won the UEFA European U-19 Championship (2004), Juan Mata and Gerard Piqué were the winners of the UEFA European U-19 Championship (2006) and Javier Martínez won the champion title and the gold medal at the UEFA European U-19 Championship (2007). In the meantime, let us take a look at the statistics of the youth European championships starting from 1991/92.

	U-17 winners	Finalists	U-19 winners	Finalists
2018/19	Netherlands	Italy	Spain	Portugal
2017/18	Netherlands	Italy	Portugal	Italy
2016/17	Spain	England	England	Portugal
2015/16	Portugal	Spain	France	Italy
2014/15	France	Germany	Spain	Russia
2013/14	England	Netherlands	Germany	Portugal

² Ginés Melendez is a former technical director of Real Federación Española De Fútbol, and was previously head coach of the Spanish national youth teams, several times European champions (Annex 3).

2012/13	Russia	Italy	Serbia	France
2011/12	Netherlands	Germany	Spain	Greece
2010/11	Netherlands	Germany	Spain	Czech Republic
2009/10	England	Spain	France	Spain
2008/09	Germany	Netherlands	Ukraine	England
2007/08	Spain	France	Germany	Italy
2006/07	Spain	England	Spain	Greece
2005/06	Russia	Czech Republic	Spain	Scotland
2004/05	Turkey	Netherlands	France	England
2003/04	France	Spain	Spain	Turkey
2002/03	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Portugal
2001/02	Switzerland	France	Spain	Germany
2000/01	Spain	France	Poland	Czech Republic
1999/00	Portugal	Czech Republic	France	Ukraine
1998/99	Spain	Poland	Portugal	Italy
1997/98	Republic of Ireland	Portugal	Republic of Ireland	Germany
1996/97	Spain	Austria	France	Portugal
1995/96	Portugal	France	France	Spain
1994/95	Portugal	Spain	Spain	Italy
1993/94	Turkey	Denmark	Portugal	Germany
1992/93	Poland	Italy	England	Spain
1991/92	Germany	Spain	Turkey	England

Note: Before 2001/02 season U-16 & U-18 championships were held respectively.

Current history of the UEFA European Championships (keeping in mind 2001/2002 season when U-16 & U-18 tournaments were taken over by U-17 & U-19 competitions) knows Spanish national youth teams as eight-time winners of the European championships. Statistics, as such, speaks for itself.

However, statistics can be misleading. The saying, initially attributed to the British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli and later popularised by Mark Twain³ reads as follows: “*There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.*” Recalling UEFA EURO 2004 and UEFA EURO 2016 would be a good example to prove the above statement. Back to history, national youth teams of the Hellenic Football Federation (Greece) after their National “A” Team had won EURO 2004 in Portugal failed to secure any Youth European champion’s titles. However, Greek U-19 teams won European vice-champion’s title twice (in 2006/07 and 2011/12). Portuguese football youth’s domination was noticeable back in the 90s with their five-time Champion’s titles. They re-emerged

³ “Figures often beguile me, particularly when I have the arranging of them myself”; in this case the remark attributed to Disraeli would often apply with justice and force: “*There are three kinds of lies: lies, damned lies, and statistics.*” — Mark Twain popularized the saying in Chapters from My Autobiography, published in the North American Review in 1907. However, the phrase is not found in any of Disraeli’s works and the earliest known appearances were years after his death. From the point of view of the modern concepts, the most likely candidate for the authorship of the above phrase would be Sir Charles Wentworth Dilke (1843–1911). En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/12fb2zpc>

only in spring 2016 when winning over Spaniards in penalty shootouts brought Portugal their UEFA European U-17 champion's title. Is it an exception that proves the rule? However, it was Portugal national "A" team that finished their domestic UEFA EURO 2004 as runners-up and two years later made it to four finalists at 2006 FIFA World Cup before having secured gold medals at UEFA EURO 2016 twelve years later.

To make Historical Parallels complete, summary statistics of the UEFA European U-21 Championships is given below.

	Winners	Finalists
2019	Spain	Germany
2017	Germany	Spain
2015	Sweden	Portugal
2013	Spain	Italy
2011	Spain	Switzerland
2009	Germany	England
2007	Netherlands	Serbia
2006	Netherlands	Ukraine
2004	Italy	Serbia & Montenegro
2002	Czech Republic	France
2000	Italy	Czech Republic
1998	Spain	Greece
1996	Italy	Spain
1994	Italy	Portugal
1992	Italy	Sweden
1990	USSR	Yugoslavia
1988	France	Greece
1986	Spain	Italy
1984	England	Spain
1982	England	Federal Republic of Germany
1980	USSR	German Democratic Republic
1978	Yugoslavia	German Democratic Republic

The above-mentioned data reveals the source for Squadra Azzurra's triumph at 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany. Italian young talents won five out of seven editions of the UEFA European U-21 Championships — a very prestigious football competition. But it was Dutch youth who yielded silver medals at 2010 FIFA World Cup having also won two consecutive UEFA U-21 EURO tournaments. Meanwhile, Spanish youth's domination at football arena, which led them to UEFA U-21 EURO gold medals, was preceded by six-time champion's title in the UEFA European U-17 & U-19 Championships.

To sum up, let me say a few words about national team of Germany, 2014 World Cup winner, and a series of reforms launched by the Deutscher Fußball-Bund (DFB) in 2001.

Before 2008 none of German youth teams were among leaders of European youth football. But changes made by Germans resulted in winning every UEFA

title in every age category — U-17, U-19 and U-21 over two consecutive seasons (2007/08 and 2008/09). Since then, German national teams joined national teams of Spain and France in so-called “*Vieille Garde*” of the Old World and found themselves among leaders of the European youth and U-21 football. By the by, “*gold*” *Nationalmannschaft* squad in Brazil in 2016 had six winners of the 2009 UEFA U-21 EURO in Sweden.

And this is exactly why an effective management at youth and U-21 national team level or rather establishing a solid National Youth System (National Teams Institute) within any national association should be a must if they want to reasonably count on big national “A” team success.

HOW TO MAKE “A” TEAM EVOLVE TO THE LEADERS, or What Roles Do Clubs Play?

Do strong clubs generate strong NATs?

How to develop competitive national youth teams as a solid foundation for U-21 and NAT (“A” national team is equal to “A” representative team following the FIFA definition — FIFA STATUTES, edition as of June 2019⁴)?

There is a well-known formula for success: strong clubs generate strong national team. Therefore, there is an axiom of player evolution primarily in a football club. A national team though sets an environment for a player to hone essential elements of his football education, giving him so-called international game experience, therefore, making a player a candidate for National “A” Team. However, for any NAT to become genuinely competitive on the basis of professional football clubs, primarily, NAT’s strong performance should be manifested in effective training system of pool of players to make “A” team (i.e. home-grown players) or rather, in a high-quality education and training process at its basis.

Undoubtedly, Spain, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal and the Netherlands own their success in the recent years to working with local club football academies or club training groups in those countries that are mandatory elements of professional football system to meet the requirements both of the UEFA’s club licensing system and national licensing regulations. Given the fact of great achievements of England national youth teams, discussed below, as well as the level of “bureaucracy” (in a good sense) in the English Premier League, the FA alone should be considered as an excellent example for any NA along with other well-established leaders.

Firstly, we should talk about the Home Grown Player rule introduced in the English Premier League in 2010/11 season onward⁵. It brought the first results eight years later and culminated into the semi-final of 2018 FIFA World Cup 28 years after (if we take the semifinal of the 1990 FIFA World Cup as the reference point and taking 22 years after the semifinal of the UEFA EURO 1996 too), as well as into UEFA EURO 2020 final.

⁴ FIFA Statutes, Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes, the Standing Orders of the Congress, June 2019. Source: fifa.com URL <https://tinyurl.com/snqun2z> or the latest edition of the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, October 2020. (including COVID-19 temporary amendments); Source: fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/zapfnc8>

⁵ Premier League Home Grown Players rule — how does it work? // Goal.com, Mar 09, 2018. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/nzr56pjc>

Below is how Greg Dyke⁶ as a former chairman of the FA commented on the situation back in 2015⁷:

“In 2010 England’s Under-17s won the European championship; but only four of the team have since played more than 20 Premier League games. The Spanish team that we beat have produced twice that number for La Liga. The England team won the Under-17 tournament again last year. How many of that squad will make it through the system in England?”

The second problem is the diminishing pool of players from which we are able to choose the national team. In the 2013–14 season, just 23 English players were playing Champions League football — the elite level of the club game which supplies most of the major international sides. This compared with 78 Spaniards, 55 Germans and even 51 Brazilians.

In recent years we have been working in partnership with the Premier League and the Football League across a range of initiatives: from training up thousands of new coaches to the Elite Player Performance Plan (EPPP) already revolutionising academies up and down the country, to our £230m investment in building grassroots facilities.

With these changes and a little bit of luck, we can fulfil my public ambition for England to win the 2022 World Cup in Qatar.”

And one more quote is noteworthy⁸: *“With the 2019/20 season concluded, figures show that the number of English players starting in the Premier League has increased from last season. More than a third of players who started for their teams throughout the campaign are qualified to play for the England national team. The 35,6 per cent of those starting matches were England-qualified players (EQP), a rise of over five per cent on the average figure from the 2018/19 season.”*

To conclude, let’s consider some of the latest statistics⁹: *“Figures from CIES Football Observatory show English players featured in 38% of total minutes played in the Premier League in 2020–21. That compares with an average of 33,8% of minutes since 2010–11. Although the figures in the Premier League were an improvement, England still lagged behind Spain (60,6%), France (51,9%) and Germany (40,8%) for overall playing time for national players in the big-five European leagues last season. Only Italy (35,3%) have a worse percentage.*

Last season also saw a new high for the percentage of minutes played by English under-21s at 6,4%, compared to a 4,7% average over the last 11 seasons. As for national under-21s, England had a better percentage for playing time last season

⁶ Gregory Dyke (born 20 May 1947) is a British media executive, football administrator, journalist and broadcaster. He was chairing the Football Association from 2013 to 2016. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/5vjydz2s>

⁷ Greg Dyke: “Give young talent a chance ... and we can win 2022 World Cup”. The Guardian by Greg Dyke// Theguardian.com, Tue 24 Mar 2015. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/n3y6uds3>

⁸ Homegrown players on the rise in 2019/20.// Premierleague.com. 6 Aug 2020. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3b54m24j>

⁹ Premier League playing time for English players reaches new high. By Alistair Magowan BBC Sport // bbc.com/sport, 15 July 2021. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tepxzt2>

than Italy (5,4%) and Spain (5,3%). France (12,3%) and Germany (9,5%) offer more chances to younger players from their respective countries.”

Let us look at more shining examples taking **France** with their “**Operation de Guérin**” first. France winning ambitions ended in fiasco at the 1966 FIFA World Cup. A few days later, upon France national “A” team elimination and return from England, their head coach Henri Guérin was dismissed. Instead of surrendering to despair, he intensified his efforts to work at the Fédération Française de Football and mapped out a programme named “Operation de Guérin” after him. He started selecting youngsters aged 14–15 across the country. Throughout 1972–1974 every professional football club in the country was obligated to set up a youth training center, where FFF coaches were delegated to, following a unified approach to talent development. Years later, France lifted the EURO trophy in 1984 and was very close to winning gold medals at the FIFA World Cup in Spain two years earlier. Now, French football enjoys internationally-acclaimed L’institut national du football de Clairefontaine and 14¹⁰ elite football centres under FFF’s leadership with every Ligue 1 clubs having their own football academy. Furthermore, France won the FIFA World Cup twice — in 1998 and 2018.

Germany (see Annex 1). The 28th of February 2001 is, probably, a crucial date for modern German football. This was the date when the decision was taken to include youth football academies into the Deutsche Fußball Liga (DFL) structure in response to meeting licensing requirements. The DFL chose the path of establishing their own structure for talent development (pool of players) to make the “A” team in every club through specific infrastructure requirements, sporting criteria, etc., thus, having continuously incorporated both Bundesliga (2001/2002 season) and Bundesliga 2 (2002/2003 season) into this process and hence, 36 Bundesliga clubs hosted 36 football academies. The DFB went beyond that and designed their own “**Talent Development Programme**” (“**TALENTFORDERUNG**”). Mr Ulf Schott, DFB Director for Youth Programme Development and one of the founding fathers of the Programme, describes it as follows¹¹: *“After the 1988 FIFA World Cup and the EURO 2000, when we, with disgrace, lost to the second team of Portugal and even failed to qualify for the next round... That was a real failure. We realized we were way behind other European countries. At the EURO 2000 German National “A” Team had only one U-21 player, Sebastian Deisler, but on average players were about 31 years old. Let’s have a look at the squad for the final tournament in South Africa featuring six U-21 players namely Thomas Mueller, Holger Badstuber, Jerome Boateng, Mesut Oezil, Toni Kroos and Marko Marin with an average squad age of about 25. Everything changed ten years ago when we put our words into action (Interview from 2010) and our experts designed “TALENTFORDERUNG” Programme. We expected to benefit*

¹⁰ Les pôles espoirs masculins // www.fff.fr. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/6kktjc6r>

¹¹ Ляпин М. Глава «Программы поддержки талантов» в Германии. Ульф Шотт: Готовы поделиться опытом с РФС. 10 сентября 2010. Газета «Советский спорт» URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yd6lupkg>

from it in eight or ten years. And we did benefit.” The mere fact that it took all three countries — France, Germany and England — 8–10 years for their success to be visible after reforms had been launched is remarkable and noteworthy.

We cannot but mention **Belgium** as another shining example with their “**Michel Sablon Plan**” (Michel Sablon coached Belgium “A” team for the 1986, 1990 and 1994 FIFA World Cup and was taking the office of Technical Director of the Union Royale Belge des Sociétés de Football-Association in the 2000s¹²). The Project was launched in the mid-2000s and made a relatively small country a leader of world and European football. “Diable Rouges” reached the top of FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking in November 2015 and finished third at the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

We should not forget about **Denmark** with their **Integrated Talent Development (ITD) Programme** and recall Denmark’s sensational EURO 1992 triumph in Sweden. The Dansk Boldspil-Union designed the first draft of the Programme in 1994. The Project author Flemming Serritslev had been working with national youth teams of Denmark and the U-21s for many years. In 1999 the Programme was modified and in 2000 a new pilot project was launched. Initially, in the mid-90s, the Programme was developed in such a way to encompass players aged 13–18. Later, in 1999, the decision was made to focus on players aged 18–23 (i.e. to let their U-21 team complete a competition cycle at the UEFA European Championship).

The **Österreichischer Fussball-Bund Project 12** stands out as another good example. The Project was launched in 2009 straight after the UEFA EURO 2008 in Austria and Switzerland had taken place and was similar to ITD Danish Programme aimed too at football talent development for players aged 15–21, but now in Austria. In December 2016 the Programme encompassed 25 boys (born 2002–1993) and 13 girls (born 2001–1998) selected by experts, coaches of national youth teams and club coaches.¹³ Initially, the Project was designed until 2012 (thus, its title says “12”) with further prolongation until 2015. Now, the Programme is still in force. The Project experts track player performance and achievements via tailor-made database, and the Project provides for strong collaboration between clubs and football associations in order to foster young players’ careers, as well as provide scientific reasoning for transfers, etc.¹⁴ The unified work plan for 12 football club academies of Austrian Bundesliga and work approach at 29 football education centres are compulsory for the Project. The total cost of the Project implementation exceeded EUR 1,000,000. By the way, Austria owns its UEFA EURO 2016 qualification to two Project 12 graduates too; and the fact that FC Red Bull Salzburg won 2016/17 UEFA Youth League might

¹² Michel Sablon: The Man Who Re-Engineered Belgian Football, Bleacherreport.com by Samindra Kunti. // June 24, 2016. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/5rymy89t>

¹³ Projekt12 Neuausrichtung. www.oefb.at Source: <https://tinyurl.com/d4gx2v2y>

¹⁴ Симонов Д. Чему России поучиться у Австрии? 19 ноября 2014, Sport-express.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y7xbeyw2>

have had a particular relevance to national plan implementation on youth football development across the country too.

We are finally getting to **Spain** and their shining FC Barcelona. For the last decade Spanish football has been dominating the European club scene. Gold medals at the UEFA EURO 2008 and EURO 2012 and 2010 FIFA World Cup testify to proper player education & training on the Iberian Peninsula in accordance with the highest standards even without any special projects in place. In 2013/14 season, 17 out of 25 Catalan FC Barcelona players were "home-grown". A truly impressive dynamic showing a higher number of home-grown players in FC Barcelona speaks for itself: 46% in 2008/09, 48% in 2009/10, 52% in 2010/11, 57% in 2011/12, 64% in 2012/13 and 68% in 2013/14.

At the same time, following financial analysis of the transfer market of the Top-5 European leagues by CIES Football Observatory¹⁵, over the last decade glorious FC Barcelona, despite their own "home-grown" player successful education & training, has become one of the most active transfer market players ranked 6th with € 697 million.

So, to make a highly competitive National "A" team one needs, first of all, **effective youth development programmes for professional football clubs** (terms as defined in the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations and FFU Club Licensing Regulations) which, by and large, is a key success factor. That said, effective and efficient youth development programmes should be implemented, without exception, in all football clubs in top football divisions.

Therefore and most probably, any NAT's success should rest **on three pillars**:

1. Effective management of National Youth Teams Institute;
2. Effective competition system in children's & youth and U-21 football;
3. **Effective youth development programmes within the structures of professional football clubs.**

The third element is pivotal and if it is missed, national teams will have almost zero chance to succeed. However, every cornerstone entails a **dominant factor, i.e. a football coach** as so much depends on his knowledge, education and training, his culture and understanding of modern football. Therefore, an effective system of coach education at all levels (from national C-diploma to UEFA Pro-licence) is a predominant success factor along with a leading role professional football clubs play (**because football clubs are in charge of player education**). Since UEFA has entrusted coach education and training to bodies under the auspices of national associations, any UEFA member association has a capacity to significantly improve their training process quality (just like clubs do) or even play first fiddle that would result in team performance improvement at all levels — from youth leagues & competitions to top divisions (through enhancing the quality of coach education).

¹⁵ Weekly Post // CIES Football Observatory. No. 266. 09 November 2019. Manchester City First billion euro squad in football history. Football-observatory.com Source : <https://tinyurl.com/vyto9wo>

NATIONAL TEAMS INSTITUTE

*Institute is an organization where people
do a particular type of scientific, educational, or social work.
...to start or cause a system, rule, legal action, etc. to exist*¹⁶

Institute (from Latin — “*institutum*” — *establishing, custom, Institute*) is a term used to denote a certain class of organisations. That said, **National Teams Institute** (NTI) represents a complex structure aimed at making highly competitive national teams in all age categories on world and European football arenas. The NTI’s objective is to ensure strong and successful national team performance in FIFA and UEFA competitions.

Let us study National Teams Institute by analysing Ukrainian Association of Football (UAF) known as the Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) before it was officially renamed to UAF in spring 2019. The FFU consists of relevant departments and operates in accordance with FFU, UEFA, and FIFA regulations and statutes. The structure of the FFU’s National Teams Institute is as follows¹⁷:

- National Teams Committee (centralised management and strategic decision-making);
- National Teams Unit (staff list features all national team coaches, managers, administrators (kit managers), and other national “A” team staff);
- Sports and Medical Support Unit (NAT doctors and physiotherapists/masseurs);
- Development Department (FFU International Match Calendar (FFU IMC) planning and scheduling, FFU data base (Information Management Unit) and FFU/NAT Comprehensive Scientific Study Group (Analytical Unit within the Department);
- National Teams Event Management and Planning Unit (direct implementation of FFU IMC).
- National Teams, i.e. National “A” representative team, U-21, U-20, U-19, U-18, U-17, U-16 (no women’s national teams included);

FFU’s National Teams Institute operations are governed by:

- FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players;
- FIFA Regulations Governing International Matches;

¹⁶ The Cambridge Dictionary; dictionary.cambridge.org. URL : <http://tinyurl.com/3k4rmlon>

¹⁷ The information from 2017. U-20 team ceased to exist on a regular basis at the beginning of 2017. Later, the FFU National Teams Department was set up bringing together national team coaching staff and team management. The FFU Development Department was renamed to Sports and Technical Department.

- FIFA Men's International Match Calendar;
- UEFA International Match Calendar;
- FFU Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players;
- FFU International Match Calendar (approved by FFU Executive Committee);
- FFU National Teams Provisions (2000 edition in force and to be amended).

Considering the specific nature of national “A” team operations and formation, a separate structure should be set up. After all, its operations no way relate to national youth teams and only partially overlap with U-21 activities because they play on the same dates — FIFA dates.

That said, **National Youth Team Institute** operates sort of separately. Besides all national youth teams aged U-15/16 — U-18/19, it also includes U-20 and U-21 teams closely linked with national youth teams because of their age group and principles of player promotion from one age group to another. Finally, U-19 team, upon completion of their performance cycle, always makes the U-21 one. It happens very naturally. National youth teams and U-21 coaches maintain close collaboration because it is the U-21 team and their coaches who constantly monitor and follow so-called “senior” youth (U-19s).

To sum up, it should be noted that National Teams Institute must regularly update its “library” of FIFA, UEFA and FFU’s regulations since those documents are subject to frequent changes and amendments. For example, now 2020 FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players has already entered into force.

NATIONAL YOUTH TEAMS

“Things which matter most must never be at the mercy of things which matter least.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe¹⁸

In 2002, straight after final whistle was blown at the 2001/2002 UEFA European U-17 Championship in Denmark, Ukraine U-17s (players born on and after 01.01.1985) took part in, the FFU National Teams Committee made a suggestion to **introduce a special calendar of international matches for national youth teams** and put it into practice in order to provide youth teams with sufficient international game experience. The poor performance of Ukraine U-17s in Denmark was, primarily, caused by lack of game experience. The team approached the final round in Denmark with only two international matches played. Meanwhile, leading European NAs were playing 15 matches on average, while in 2002 our international game experience figures were “stuck” at 3–5 matches alone.

Today the UAF has a complete International Match Calendar (hereinafter — IMC) featuring international friendly matches and training camps with selection and preparation training camps included (see **Annex 4**) and also a well-developed National Youth Teams Institute (hereinafter — the NYTI; information from 2016) consisting of several selections: **U-21** (players born on and after 01.01.1994), **U-20** (players born on and after 01.01.1996), **U-19** (players born on and after 01.01.1998), **U-18** (players born on and after 01.01.1999), **U-17** (players born on and after 01.01.2000), **U-16** (players born on and after 01.01.2001). Meanwhile, the NYTI was gaining experience and expertise and underwent some changes compared to its initial structure with U-21, U-19, U-18, U-17, and U-16 selections included.

In 2010 permanent U-20 national team was made within the FFU to get U-21s ready for the next UEFA European Championship cycle. However, following the decision made by the FFU senior management in 2017, U-20 ceased to exist.

In 2011, the FFU made Junior National Youth Team just 1,5–2 years before the start of the qualifying round of the UEFA European U-17 Championship. In previous years, it used to be made only a year before the start of the qualifying matches.

Probably, one of the vital indicators to measure NYTI work effectiveness is statistics of players who were developed through national youth and U-21 pathway before joining “A” team.

¹⁸ Wikiquote. Attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Source: <http://tinyurl.com/1r47iy2s>

For example, 12 out of 23 players on the entry list for the UEFA EURO 2012 have developed through national youth pathway since 2000 with 8 footballers having played for NYT, and 4 footballers — for U-21 NT. More 5 players started their path with NYT before 2000, while the remaining 6 have never played for NYT or U-21 NT before. That said, 6 players in “A” squad played at the 2011 UEFA European U-21 Championship in Denmark and 2 of them were 2008/09 UEFA European U-19 Championship winners. Moreover, all six of those players were fielded at EURO 2012.

At EURO 2016 in France, only 3 out of 23 Ukrainian players namely Olexander Kucher, Yevhen Khacheridi and Yevhen Seleznyov have never played for any NYT or U-21 NT. It is fair to say though that Seleznyov took part in no official matches other than U-20 friendly matches. At the same time, 16 players have developed through national youth pathway and played for all national youth teams of Ukraine since 2002. Seven of them played in the final round of the UEFA U-21 EURO 2011 in Denmark, and three of them, namely Bohdan Butko, Denys Garmash and Serhiy Rybalka were 2008/2009 UEFA European U-19 Championship winners. Two more players — Viktor Kovalenko and Olexandr Zinchenko — played in the final round of the UEFA youth championships in 2013 and 2015, and Kovalenko was the one who took part in 2015 FIFA U-20 World Cup.

Thus, at UEFA EURO 2012, percentage of those players in the Ukraine “A” team who played for national youth teams (U-15 — U-19 NYT) was 57% and reached 70% at UEFA EURO 2016. To compare with 2014 FIFA World Cup, Spain “A” team percentage was 77%, Germany had 86%, and, for example, Russia “A” NT had only 27%¹⁹.

However, let’s not forget about natural migration between national teams, especially as far as U-21 NT is concerned where U-19 NYT is a source of U-21 formation. Therefore, footballers ever played, for example, in U-21 can be called for NAT once any of NAT’s players finishes his playing career. Therefore, team & coaching staff evaluation should be approached with a certain amount of skepticism taking into account team achievements, team performance quality and player excellence. In this respect, allow me to quote Jürgen Klopp from his interview to Sky Sports in September 2016²⁰: *“The quality of the game is more important than the result, especially in the long term.”*²¹

So the progress of national youth teams is utterly significant because of gaining valuable international game experience; on a large scale, players start gaining such experience only when playing in UEFA Youth League (U-19). By this time, game experience for national team players may span from 10–13 UEFA official matches up to 20 international friendly games.

¹⁹ Дзичковский Е. Газзаев хочет стать главой РФС. 1 октября 2014, Sport-express.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ybexdr6>

²⁰ Friday Night Football — Premier League Round 5. Full Show. September 16, 2016. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y866cp64>

²¹ Лукомский В. Klopp как главный футбольный философ. 4 января 2017, Sports.ru, URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9oerk23>

To carry on with national team successful performance at youth level, let me quote Leonid Slutskiy²², head coach of the Russia “A” team at UEFA EURO 2016: *“Recall Gerrard and Lampard. They were playing brilliantly for the top clubs in the Champions League and The English Premier League, but they could not play their best for their national teams. World Cup or European championships are different. I cannot explain that, however, this is a different level of responsibility and concentration. It is completely different from even Champions League matches — close to them but still different.”* In my opinion, his words should be projected both towards the UEFA European U-17/19 & U-21 Championships and FIFA U-17/20 World Cups.

Therefore, the more often national youth teams qualify for U-17/U-19/U-21 European Championship and the U-17/20 FIFA World Cup final rounds, the better international game experience players get. At the same time selection of candidates by team coaching staff gets more productive, enhancing probability for NAT to succeed. Spain, Italy and Germany are brilliant examples to prove it.

²² Дудь Ю. Леонид Слуцкий: «Ко мне в номер зашла группа игроков, и мы в один голос произнесли: “Мы говно”». 9 июля 2016, Sports.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ydxo96d2>

THE LEVEL OF COMPETITION AT NATIONAL TEAM TOURNAMENTS

Competition breeds quality

In my opinion, understanding mechanisms of modern football applicable for National Team Institute of FIFA and UEFA member associations requires a thorough analysis of competition landscape within UEFA national youth competitions. Let's start with a simple historical statistical data going from big to small. All statistics is presented upon completion of 2015/16 season.

8 national football associations out of 211 FIFA member associations won the FIFA World Cup (i.e. only 3,8% of its participants have reached the top at the most popular sports game in the world). The list of the most successful associations is well-known. So here we go:

FIFA WORLD CUP

1. Brazil — 5
2. Germany — 4
3. Italy — 4
4. Argentina — 2
5. Uruguay — 2
6. England — 1
7. France — 1
8. Spain — 1

UEFA EURO

1. Germany — 3
2. Spain — 3
3. France — 2
4. Czechoslovakia — 1
5. Greece — 1
6. Denmark — 1
7. Italy — 1
8. Netherlands — 1
9. Portugal — 1
10. USSR — 1

The list of those national football associations which won European Championships is extended to 10. Taking into account the current number of UEFA member associations (55), 18% of European football associations have succeeded in the Old World championships.

The number of FIFA youth tournament winners is also quite limited.

FIFA U-17 World Cup

1. Nigeria — 6
2. Brazil — 3
3. Ghana — 2
4. Mexico — 2
5. France — 1
6. Saudi Arabia — 1
7. Switzerland — 1
8. USSR — 1

FIFA U-20 World Cup

1. Argentina — 6
2. Brazil — 5
3. Portugal — 2
4. France — 1
5. Ghana — 1
6. Germany — 1
7. Serbia — 1
8. Spain — 1
9. USSR — 1
10. Yugoslavia — 1

Since 2015/16 season, five FIFA tournaments have taken place. France, who had already yielded gold medals at this competition, lifted FIFA World Cup trophy in 2018 again. England was the first-time winner of FIFA U-17 World Cup in 2017 and the same year their U-20s followed the success of their peers and triumphed at FIFA U-20 World Cup. In 2019 Ukraine were FIFA U-20 World Cup winners. And Brazil became a four-time FIFA U-17 World Cup winner in 2019.

Thus, two more teams joined the squad of FIFA youth tournament champions and surpassed the number of FIFA and UEFA adult tournament champions by 8 & 10 vs. 9 & 12 accordingly. Conditional symmetry in equal win balance, as it was the case before 2017, was no longer applicable. But I took a little detour, dear reader, and may have your focus shifted. Let's move on.

FIFA and UEFA national team competitions are the tip of the iceberg. For our final analysis, let's take a closer look at the complete List of Winners of UEFA U-17, U-19 and U-21 European championships introducing some time frames and formal restrictions.

Following the increase in number of participants in the UEFA U-17 European Championship final round from 8 to 16 in 2014/15, our analysis spanned from 2002/03 to 2013/14 when only 8 teams contested the final round with maximum level of competition. For UEFA U-19 European Championship final rounds, we will consider the entire time frame spanning from the moment of UEFA's transition to two-round qualifying format (qualifying and elite rounds from 2002/03 season onward). The U-19 Championship final round competition format remains unchanged with 8 participants.

The analysis of U-21 competitions spans from 1998/2000 season following the UEFA's decision to introduce one compact final tournament played in two groups of 4 teams, just like at major UEFA EURO hosted by one of the UEFA member associations. Let's not forget that from 2015/17 competition cycle, 12 national teams contest the final round (3 groups of 4 teams) and 16 teams do (4 groups of 4 teams) from 2019/21.

UEFA U-17 EC	UEFA U-19 EC	UEFA U-21 EC
1. England — 2	1. Spain — 6	1. Spain — 2
2. Spain — 2	2. France — 3	2. Italy — 2
3. Netherlands — 2	3. Germany — 2	3. Netherlands — 2
4. Portugal — 2	4. Serbia — 1	4. Czech Republic — 1
5. Russia — 2	5. Italy — 1	5. Germany — 1
6. France — 2	6. Ukraine — 1	6. Sweden — 1
7. Germany — 1		
8. Turkey — 1		
9. Switzerland — 1		

As we can see, the number of European championship winners goes down when every age category goes up. Thus, even without two new latest UEFA members (55 – 2 = 53), Gibraltar and Kosovo, the percentage of winners out of total number of UEFA member associations remains very low standing at 17% for U-17 and at 11% both for U-19 and U-21. This is a very strong evidence of highly competitive level or say, extremely competitive! After all, now 24 teams contest the UEFA EURO final tournament with eight (8) U-19, twelve (12) U-21 and sixteen (16) U-17 teams playing the final rounds of the Youth and U-21 European Championships respectively. Apart from the final tournaments, two qualifying rounds for U-17 & U-19 tournaments are played with both group winner and runner-up qualifying for the U-17 Final Tournament, and with only a group winner qualifying for the U-19 Final Tournament. Before 2019/21, the number of participants at UEFA U-21 EURO finals was twice less than at UEFA EURO major showcase which also meant a minimum of double increase of competition at every qualifying stage compared with those for NAT Finals. At that, qualifying competition scheme was the same for both finals. Today the level of competition is half as high, and it is significant.

To carry on with the subject of high competition at “A” team level, it should be noted that football tournament at the Summer Olympic Games is the most difficult one in terms of competitiveness since its format can “host” only 16 teams with just 4 slots reserved for UEFA. UEFA U-21 EURO semifinalists are the one and the only (!) who secure their qualification for the Olympics. For FIFA youth tournaments, it is worth to remind ourselves that, as a rule, there are 24 participants in the FIFA Final Tournaments, i.e. U-17 and U-20 World Cup. UEFA, as a rule, is allocated 5 or 6 slots depending on the tournament and its venue.

For more detailed assessment of competition level at national youth team tournaments, let’s look at the participating team statistics for UEFA European Championship final rounds for U-17, U-19 and U-21s, excluding NA teams who qualify automatically as hosts. First of all, let us look at the statistics of Ukraine’s participation in two qualifying rounds for U-17 & U-19 European Championships.

Ukraine U-17 NYT failed to qualify for elite rounds thrice — in 2002/03 (players born on and after 01.01.1986), in 2007/08 (players born on and after 01.01.1991) and in 2008/09 (players born on and after 01.01.1992). It was a fourfold

qualification for Ukrainian teams for the next qualifying round only after having finished as the third best team or the third team in the Access List to the elite round ranked by their performance during the first qualification stage in 2005/06 (players born on and after 01.01.1989), in 2013/14 (players born on and after 01.01.1997), in 2014/15 (players born on and after 01.01.1998) and in 2016/17 seasons (players born on and after 01.01.2000). As for the seniors, i.e. U-19 NYT, both in 2002/03 (players born on and after 01.01.1984) and in 2006/07 seasons (players born on and after 01.01.1988), Ukraine eliminated after the first qualifying competition round.

Now, let us take a closer look at the statistics for UEFA European U-17 Championships final rounds.

THE LIST OF TEAMS QUALIFIED FOR UEFA U-17 FINAL ROUNDS

2002/03–2013/14

1. England 7 (2)	10. Czech Republic 3	19. Serbia 2	28. Romania 1
2. Spain 7 (2)	11. Italy 3	20. Scotland 2	29. Sweden 1
3. Netherlands 7 (2)	12. Ukraine 3	21. Croatia 2	
4. France 6 (1)	13. Russia 2 (2)	22. Belarus 1	
5. Switzerland 6	14. Belgium 2	23. Georgia 1	
6. Germany 5 (1)	15. Denmark 2	24. Greece 1	
7. Turkey 5 (1)	16. Hungary 2	25. Northern Ireland 1	
8. Portugal 3 (1)	17. Iceland 2	26. Poland 1	
9. Austria 3	18. Israel 2	27. Republic of Ireland 1	

Hereinafter the number of Championship title winners is given in brackets.

As described above, 54,7% of UEFA member associations qualified for the final rounds. Ukraine managed to do so only thrice within 2002/03–2013/14 season span.

Meanwhile, in contrast to the U-19 competition with Spain being an absolute leader given the total number of title wins (6), U-17 competition knows four national teams who celebrated their victory twice — England, Spain, the Netherlands and Russia! Furthermore, England, Spain and the Netherlands took part in the final tournament 7 times in total. Overall season-by-season final tournament statistics is given in **Table 1**.

In senior competitions, the number of qualified national teams representing UEFA member associations is slightly less and makes 27 in total (nearly 51%). Among them, Spain is an absolute front-runner with 10 finals and 6 titles in their winners' profile. France is a three-time champion and, together with Portugal, shares the second position in terms of making their way to the finals, i.e. 9 times in total. England is back again to being one of the leaders, and in the youngest age category too, after having played seven times in the final round.

Ukraine's U-19s qualified only thrice for the final tournament. So did U-17s. Ukraine did not manage to make it to the final tournament through very harsh qualifying stages for 10 years! (2003/04–2013/14). On the one hand, this clearly speaks of team poor performance, but on the other hand, international arena is highly competitive and Ukraine, as it turned out, was not prepared for it.

**THE LIST OF TEAMS QUALIFIED FOR UEFA U-19 FINAL ROUNDS
2002/03–2015/16**

1. Spain 10 (6)	9. Greece 5	17. Russia 2	25. Scotland 1
2. France 8 (3)	10. Turkey 5	18. Armenia 1	26. Slovenia 1
3. Portugal 8	11. Netherlands 4	19. Bulgaria 1	27. Switzerland 1
4. Serbia 7 (1)	12. Ukraine 3 (1)	20. Hungary 1	
5. England 7	13. Belgium 3	21. Georgia 1	
6. Germany 6 (2)	14. Czech Republic 3	22. Israel 1	
7. Austria 6	15. Croatia 3	23. Poland 1	
8. Italy 5 (1)	16. Norway 2	24. Republic of Ireland 1	

Table 2 shows participants of the U-19 final tournament season-by-season.

As long as our study goes, the list of finalists for the UEFA European U-21 Championship appears to be even shorter than the ones from previous editions with only 24 UEFA member associations having played in the finals (45%). Italy heads the list being UEFA U-21 EURO five-time champion excluding the above-mentioned limitations. Italians won champions' title twice, so did Spain, with eight-time qualification for the final tournament for Italy, and four-time for Spain.

Looking at figures from the UEFA European U-21 Championship, what amazes the most is England performance with seven (7) finals and the second place in our ranking. Here Serbia is among the leaders too with five (5) finals in team's track record. This Balkan country reached seven (7) finals in U-21 age category and two (2) — in U-17.

**THE LIST OF TEAMS QUALIFIED FOR UEFA U-21 FINAL ROUND²³
1998/2000–2013/2015**

1. Italy 8 (2)	9. Belarus 3	17. Greece 1
2. England 7	10. Switzerland 3	18. Finland 1
3. Germany 5 (1)	11. Sweden 2 (1)	19. Iceland 1
4. Portugal 5	12. Belgium 2	20. Israel 1
5. Serbia 5	13. Croatia 2	21. Norway 1
6. Spain 4 (2)	14. France 2	22. Russia 1
7. Czech Republic 4 (1)	15. Ukraine 2	23. Slovakia 1
8. The Netherlands 3 (2)	16. Denmark 2	24. Turkey 1

Table 3 shows participants of the U-21 final tournament season-by-season.

In this category what really stands out is the statistics of France. The data provided by CIES Football Observatory²⁴ allow us to conclude that yesterday, today and, most probably, tomorrow French football was, is and will be ranked

²³ From 2006/07 the host association did not participate in the qualifying round.

²⁴ Weekly Post // CIES Football Observatory No. 167 dated November 28, 2016. Exporting countries: Brazil and France head the tables. Football-observatory.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9ju4cg9>

number 2 in the world after Brazil when speaking about the number of players playing abroad with TOP-5 national championships included (England, Germany, Spain, Italy and France). By the way, at the time the above Swiss survey was published, France could boast about the highest number of their nationals in the TOP-5 national championships — 116 in total (Brazil — 114). Meanwhile, France U-21s over and over again wasted their chances to play in the final rounds of the U-21 European championships. One of the reasons, probably, lies in the area of psychology. High playing capability of French young players (as unquestionably the CIES statistics states) quickly takes them to big clubs, including foreign ones (TOP-5), so sometimes footballers simply do not work hard in the national team seeing themselves already in the *Les Bleus* squad.

Meanwhile, Italy is making good progress in every age category with Italy junior (U-17s) three-time and senior youth (U-19s) five-time qualifications for the final tournament respectively. As far as Italy U-21s are concerned, Italy is turning into an undisputed leader of the world and European football (according to the number of UEFA and FIFA awarded titles).

At the same time, results achieved by Czech Republic and Belarus should be in the spotlight too. Four successful qualifications and quite “old” victory dating back to 2002 for Czech Republic and three finals and participation in the London Olympics for Belarus. Before the first decade of the 21st century, Belarusian football was represented by competitive U-21 teams and, to a significant extent, due to the fact that at the break of the century professional football clubs in Belarus relied on young players. An increased number of Prime League participants (14–16 clubs before 2009) was, apparently, a success factor too. For example, in 2014 twelve (12) clubs played in the Prime League with no qualification for U-21 finals ever since 2011 (14 clubs in 2015 and 16 clubs in 2016). Here we may deal with cumulative effect — both negative and positive. Well, 16 participating clubs contested the domestic championship in 1993–2000. Before 2009, six championships were played with 14 participating clubs and three championships — with 16 clubs. Since 2010 onwards the number of clubs is as follows — 12, 12, 11, 12 and 12.

Ukraine U-17, U-19 and U-21 teams are not underdogs in the UEFA competitions. Nor leaders. Although going beyond the time span set in this chapter, it is noteworthy that within 2012/13–2017/18 only one Ukraine NYT, either U-17 or U-19, qualified for the final round of the UEFA European championship. There are only two national youth teams who qualified for at least one of the final rounds of the UEFA youth competitions every year over the given six seasons — Ukraine and the Netherlands are. And in the above-mentioned six seasons, youth teams of 31 UEFA member associations in total qualified for the final tournaments.

Of course, it should be added that the Netherlands qualified thrice for the final rounds of the European U-17 & U-19 Championships during one sporting season. So Germany and Portugal did. France, England, Austria and Italy reached the same level of success twice. Spain, Norway, yes, Norway, and Russia qualified just once. But all of them, unlike Ukraine, did not play in the finals every year. By the

way, Ukraine qualified for UEFA junior and senior youth final tournaments only once in 2003/04 season.

Taking into account the fact that specific work on National Teams Institute development started only in 2002, the first systematic results were achieved exactly 10 years later. The first success came 7 years later and that was winning 2008/09 UEFA European U-19 Championship. And the first major success came 17 years later and that is the triumph at 2019 FIFA U-20 World Cup. However, no more detours and let's get back to the main subject of this chapter.

Representatives of the world's TOP-5 football leagues are running the show also at national youth level in every age category. Spain is a youth leader while Italy is leading the U-21 scene, and their leadership is partially owned to one of the highest number of national team activities in one sporting season. To be more precise, Italy U-17s, U-19s and U-21s get game experience 10 months a year, i.e. having up to 10 football events per year (see Annex 7). And this has absolutely been the best result in the entire Europe from 2010 to 2014. England never ceases to amaze with high number of their team qualifications for the final rounds of all, without exception, European championships, with results as such testifying to a top-standard work of club academies. The lack of high-profile victories at the level of "A" team²⁵ is probably caused by a dominant presence of "legionnaires", i.e. foreign players in the richest football league in the world (Premier League). "Foreign factor" as such so far is what has been hindering local young talents from developing and opening up their potential. Germany too continues to gain momentum due to successful work of club academies while France still remains the Mecca of Football Talents.

The fact that Serbia, Croatia, Belgium, Denmark, Switzerland and Iceland succeeded at youth and U-21 level is directly linked to a highly efficient work by local football schools (primarily professional football clubs) in those countries notwithstanding their military past (Serbia and Croatia) or limited financial and human resources (demographic factor). Success as such is also owned to top-standard coach education, especially club coach education, and competent managerial approach at national football associations towards national teams institute, youth and professional football, including club licensing (very reasonable and growth & development boosting criteria for youth development programme).

To sum up, we have to acknowledge that the level of competition at FIFA and UEFA U-17, U-19 NYT and U-21 tournaments is higher than the one at "A" team tournaments. Consequently, at level as such, only FIFA and UEFA member associations with highly competitive professional football leagues resulting in high development standards for home-grown players who are trained within local league club structure appear to be successful. And with approach as such, even "small" NAs with rather poor clubs and leagues would be capable enough to adequately

²⁵ Going beyond the indicated time span, as here statistics is presented upon completion of 2015/16 season, we should acknowledge obvious progress England has made over the last years, i.e. 2018 FIFA World Cup semi-final (since 1990) and UEFA EURO 2020 final (since 1996).

represent themselves at the level of world and European championships having local development programmes in place, such as the program of DBU (the Danish Football Association) called “The Integrated Talent Development (ITD)” launched in 1994, and fostering their development. That said, this does answer the question “How to make “A” team evolve to the leaders or what role do clubs play?”

Regional centres for children’s and youth football of the Swiss NA (there are three according to the linguistic division of local cantons — i.e. German, Italian and French) contribute to the process too, as they’ve been set up for the most talented youth development similar to the French system with accommodation for players being the main difference. Young players live with host families and not in the Academy. Plus there is a three-category bonus system for professional football clubs in Switzerland allocating CHF 180 000–250 000 (data from 2006) per year depending on the level of youth programme development. Furthermore, before 1994 (the year Switzerland qualified for 1994 FIFA World Cup for the first time since 1966) such profession as “children’s football coach” was not listed in the Swiss profession register.

Let’s not forget of the Plan by Michel Sablon who was coaching National Team of Belgium at 1986, 1990 and 1994 FIFA World Cup and took a technical director post at the Union Royale Belge des Sociétés de Football-Association in 2000s. The Plan helped the country with 11 million population to head FIFA/Coca-Cola World Ranking and, as far as number of Belgian footballers playing in TOP-5 leagues is concerned, to enter Top-5 countries together with France, Brazil, Argentina and Spain. And this implicitly testifies to a high level of children’s and youth football development countrywide. However, the latest major success for Belgium at the level below national “A” team, dates back to semi-finals at 2006/2007 UEFA European U-21 Championship and 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. And “*Les Diables Rouges*” sealed their success at the top level.

Table 1

**SUMMARY OF UEFA EUROPEAN U-17 CHAMPIONSHIPS
FINAL ROUNDS OF EIGHT 2002/2003–2013/20**

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Portugal*	France*	Italy	Belgium	Belgium	Turkey	England
Spain	Spain	Turkey*	Czech Republic	England	Republic of Ireland	France
Denmark	Turkey	England	Germany	France	Switzerland	Italy
Austria	Northern Ireland	Belarus	Hungary	Germany	France	Netherlands
Israel	England	Croatia	Luxembourg	Iceland	Serbia	Spain
Hungary	Portugal	Netherlands	Russia*	Netherlands	Scotland	Switzerland
England	Austria	Switzerland	Serbia and Montenegro	Spain*	Spain*	Turkey
Italy	Ukraine	Israel	Spain	Ukraine	Netherlands	Germany*
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014		
Czech Republic	Czech Republic	Belgium	Slovakia	Malta		
England*	Denmark	France	Croatia	Switzerland		
France	England	Georgia	Austria	Turkey		
Greece	France	Germany	Sweden	Netherlands		
Portugal	Germany	Iceland	Ukraine	England*		
Spain	Netherlands*	Netherlands*	Switzerland	Germany		
Switzerland	Romania	Poland	Russia*	Scotland		
Turkey	Serbia	Slovenia	Italy	Portugal		

THE LIST OF THE ABOVE FINAL ROUNDS PARTICIPANTS

1. England 7 (2)	10. Czech Republic 3	19. Serbia 2	28. Romania 1
2. Spain 7 (2)	11. Italy 3	20. Scotland 2	29. Sweden 1
3. Netherlands 7 (2)	12. Ukraine 3	21. Croatia 2	
4. France 6 (1)	13. Russia 2 (2)	22. Belarus 1	
5. Switzerland 6	14. Belgium 2	23. Georgia 1	
6. Germany 5 (1)	15. Denmark 2	24. Greece 1	
7. Turkey 5 (1)	16. Hungary 2	25. Northern Ireland 1	
8. Portugal 3 (1)	17. Iceland 2	26. Poland 1	
9. Austria 3	18. Israel 2	27. Republic of Ireland 1	

Number of final round contests is given in brackets preceding NA team;

Number of wins is given in brackets.

The hosts of the final tournament are given in bold. The tournament took place in Liechtenstein in 2010 and, despite being hosts, Liechtenstein did not take part in the finals.

*UEFA European U-17 Championship winner

Table 2

SUMMARY OF UEFA EUROPEAN U-19 CHAMPIONSHIPS FINAL ROUNDS

2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Austria	Belgium	Armenia	Austria	Spain*	Czech Republic	England
Czech Republic	Germany	England	Belgium	Greece	Bulgaria	France
England	Italy	France*	Czech Republic	Portugal	England	Serbia
France	Poland	Germany	Poland	Austria	Germany*	Slovenia
Italy*	Spain*	Greece	Portugal	Germany	Greece	Spain
Liechtenstein	Switzerland	Northern Ireland	Scotland	France	Hungary	Switzerland
Norway	Turkey	Norway	Spain*	Serbia	Italy	Turkey
Portugal	Ukraine	Serbia and Montenegro	Turkey	Russia	Spain	Ukraine*
2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Austria	Belgium	Estonia	Lithuania	Hungary	Greece	Germany
Croatia	Czech Republic	France	France	Ukraine	Spain*	England
England	Greece	England	Serbia*	Bulgaria	Germany	Italy
France*	Republic of Ireland	Serbia	Portugal	Israel	Russia	Austria
Italy	Romania	Portugal	Spain	Serbia	Netherlands	Netherlands
Netherlands	Serbia	Greece	Netherlands	Germany*	Ukraine	Croatia
Portugal	Spain*	Croatia	Georgia	Austria	Austria	Portugal
Spain	Turkey	Spain*	Turkey	Portugal	France	France*

THE LIST OF THE ABOVE FINAL ROUNDS PARTICIPANTS

- | | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Spain 10 (6) | 9. Greece 5 | 17. Russia 2 | 25. Scotland 1 |
| 2. France 8 (3) | 10. Turkey 5 | 18. Armenia 1 | 26. Slovenia 1 |
| 3. Portugal 8 | 11. Netherlands 4 | 19. Bulgaria 1 | 27. Switzerland 1 |
| 4. Serbia 7 (1) | 12. Ukraine 3 (1) | 20. Hungary 1 | |
| 5. England 7 | 13. Belgium 3 | 21. Georgia 1 | |
| 6. Germany 6 (2) | 14. Czech Republic 3 | 22. Israel 1 | |
| 7. Austria 6 | 15. Croatia 3 | 23. Poland 1 | |
| 8. Italy 5 (1) | 16. Norway 2 | 24. Republic of Ireland 1 | |

Number of final round contests is given in brackets preceding NA team;

Number of wins is given in brackets.

The hosts of the final tournament are given in bold.

*UEFA European U-19 Championship winner

Table 3

**SUMMARY OF UEFA EUROPEAN U-21 FINAL ROUNDS
1998/2000–2013/15 WITH 8 TEAMS DIVIDED INTO TWO GROUPS**

2000	2002	2004	2006	2007	2009	2011
Czech Republic	Italy	Italy*	France	Netherlands*	Sweden	Belarus
Spain	Switzerland	Serbia & Montenegro	Serbia & Montenegro	Belgium	Belarus	Czech Republic
Netherlands	Portugal	Belarus	Portugal	Portugal	England	Denmark
Croatia	England	Croatia	Germany	Israel	Finland	England
Italy*	France	Sweden	Ukraine	Serbia	Germany*	Iceland
Slovakia	Czech Republic*	Portugal	Netherlands*	England	Italy	Spain*
England	Belgium	Germany	Italy	Italy	Spain	Switzerland
Turkey	Greece	Switzerland	Denmark	Czech Republic	Serbia	Ukraine

2013	2015
England	Denmark
Germany	Germany
Israel	Portugal
Italy	Sweden*
Netherlands	Czech Republic
Norway	Serbia
Russia	England
Spain*	Italy

THE LIST OF TEAMS QUALIFIED FOR THE ABOVE FINAL ROUNDS**

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. Italy 8 (2) | 9. Belarus 3 | 17. Greece 1 |
| 2. England 7 | 10. Switzerland 3 | 18. Finland 1 |
| 3. Germany 5 (1) | 11. Sweden 2 (1) | 19. Iceland 1 |
| 4. Portugal 5 | 12. Belgium 2 | 20. Israel 1 |
| 5. Serbia 5 | 13. Croatia 2 | 21. Norway 1 |
| 6. Spain 4 (2) | 14. France 2 | 22. Russia 1 |
| 7. Czech Republic 4 (1) | 15. Ukraine 2 | 23. Slovakia 1 |
| 8. Netherlands 3 (2) | 16. Denmark 2 | 24. Turkey 1 |

Number of final round contests is given in brackets preceding NA team;

Number of wins is given in brackets;

The hosts of the final tournament are given in bold;

* UEFA European U-21 Championship winner;

** Since 2006/07 season the host association's team didn't take part in the qualifying round.

WHEN DO YOU START TRAINING THE NA'S YOUNGEST NATIONAL TEAM?

Better late than never?

To start with, let us look at practical solutions implemented at the FFU before 2017.

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
U-14/15	TC									4	4				
	IT									0	0				
	IM									0	0				
U-15/16	TC	4	2	2	3	4	4	2	6	6	5	2	3	3	5
	IT	3	2	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	0
	IM	9	9	5	9	3	5	6	9	8	10	7	8	8	8

TC — training camp

IT — international tournament

IM — international [friendly] match

NYT (U-14/15) are indicated with (“/”) because the analysis is made in the calendar year, not in the sports season.

As can be seen, the preparation of the youngest Ukrainian NYT starts with the U-15/16 age category, about a year and a half before the start of the qualifying round of the UEFA European U-17 Championship (September is the earliest start date for the qualifying round). Once, in 2011, the FFU made a team of U-14/15 and organized four selection training camps on a regional basis in autumn that year. After the extensive selection work, the first international matches followed. The newly elected FFU Board had, unfortunately, cancelled the activities planned for 2012. Today, as a rule, the youngest national team starts training in spring (in April) with a selection training camp and in May, September, October and November the team plays two international matches. Consequently, selection evolves by playing international matches. To a certain extent, this is an “economy” and “hybrid” option: training combined with selection, provided there are quality rivals like France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Italy, or, for example, the Czech Republic; this allows smart coaches to determine the level of competitiveness of candidates for the national team. After all, only the match and the rivalry with the strongest NYT in Europe can give a realistic assessment of the ability of the player to compete on the national team level and allow the coach to get the most objective assessment.

Thus, for example, in the middle of 2000s the youngest teams traditionally used to gather for the first time in July (one year and 2 months before the start of the UEFA qualification), when the Ukraine Child Youth Football League (CYFL) final tournaments were over. For one training camp, the strongest CYFL final tournament's participants were invited in August in order to take part in the international tournament in Palanga (players one year younger than other participants, U-17 NYT). In 2015, the Lithuanian FA terminated this competition.

Fortunately, the UAF has an excellent selection platform — CYFL — that makes it possible to select the best candidates for the desired age category, which greatly simplifies the national team coach workload. It is fair to say that the level of competition in CYFL, in all age categories, has always left much to be desired. However, in spite of all disadvantages, this tournament is a key element for the formation of U-15/16 and U-16/17 national youth teams.

Now, let us take a look at examples from the Czech Republic, Italy and Spain in the field of formation of the youngest national team.

CZECH REPUBLIC (information from 2013)

The Czech Republic FA has 14 coach-scouts (according to the number of administrative regions of the country) who shape the youngest national team for the future, undertaking selection activity among U-13/14/15 teams. Thus, a wide choice of candidates is formed within three years.

The final phase of the formation of the NYT consists of three stages:

- 1st stage: May 7-days tournament with the participation of teams from 14 regions. The main purpose is to form two teams of 25 players, one from the Moravian region and one from the Czech region being the largest areas of the country.
- 2nd stage: July: short TC (2–3 days) to prepare for the final selection tournament to be held in August.
- 3rd stage: August: a tournament with six U-17 club teams and two teams from the Moravia & Czech regions: the Czech Republic U-16 NYT is formed according to the results of the tournament.

In September, the U-16 NYT starts to play their first international matches.

ITALY (information from 2013)

The U-15 NYT (players born on and after 01.01.1999) started functioning in October 2013. In October, November and December the team has 5 short TC (not longer than 4–6 days) with about 30 players involved. Just before Christmas, a 4-day tournament is held, from which 80 out of the 150 players involved are selected. In early January of the following year, there will be another TC, with 32 players invited. This NYT plays its first international match in February.

SPAIN (information from 2008)

How is the team formed?

- Until December reports are received from regional coaches (17 coaches are involved in the formation of the U-17 NYT according to the number of regions in the country).
- “Weekend matches” are watched.
- During the December meeting of regional coaches, the information is put together.

By December a list of 55 players, five for each position, is compiled.

The team gets together for a 3-day training camp where two training matches are played.

Starting from January:

- Team training camps;
- Tournaments;
- “Weekend” matches.

In January, selection is narrowed down to 33 players, three for each position. Again, a short (3-day) TC is held and the team starts taking part in international matches and tournaments.

Below is a statistical comparison for the preparation of U-15/16 (1998) and U-15/16 (2001) NYTs of five NAs during 2013 and 2016 respectively: Belgium, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and France.

BELGIUM

2013 (1998)	7 TC & 13 IM	2015/16 (2001)	4 TC & 8 IM
19 and 21.02	Belgium vs. Italy	24 & 26.11.2015	Belgium vs. Netherlands
16 and 18.04	Netherlands vs. Belgium	16 & 18.02.2016	Belgium vs. Italy
28.05	Belgium vs. Northern Ireland	20 & 22.09.2016	Belgium vs. Ukraine
11.07	Belgium vs. Northern Ireland	04 & 07.11.2016	Belgium vs. Portugal
13 and 16.09	Belgium vs. Germany		
01 and 03.10	Italy vs. Belgium		
27.10	Belgium vs. France		
29.10	Belgium vs. Netherlands		
31.10	Belgium vs. Serbia		

ITALY

2013 (1998)	7 TC & 11 IM	2016 (2001)	7 TC & 16 IM
19 and 21.02	Belgium vs. Italy	16 and 18.02	Italy vs. Belgium
20 and 22.03	Italy vs. Russia	15 and 17.03	Italy vs. Romania
01.05	National tournament	24.04	Italy vs. England
11 and 13.06	Italy vs. Hungary	25.04	Italy vs. Russia
04.09	Scotland vs. Italy	27.04	Italy vs. Qatar
01 and 03.10	Italy vs. Belgium	29.04	Italy vs. Croatia
05 and 07.11	Italy vs. Austria	01.05	Italy vs. USA
		06 and 08.09	Italy vs. Switzerland
		18 and 20.10	Italy vs. Poland
		22 and 24.11	Italy vs. Ukraine
		14.12	Italy vs. Turkey

THE NETHERLANDS

2013 (1998)	5 TC & 11 IM	2015/16 (2001)	8 TC & 11 IM
16 and 18.04	Netherlands vs. Belgium	24 & 26.11.2015	Netherlands vs. Belgium
19.04.	Luxemburg vs. Netherlands	02.02.2016	Netherlands vs. R. of Ireland
14 and 16.05	Netherlands vs. Germany	04.02.2016	Netherlands vs. Austria
24.05	Germany vs. Netherlands	06.02.2016	Netherlands vs. Turkey
27.10	Belgium vs. Netherlands	07 & 09.04.2016	Netherlands vs. Serbia
29.10	Netherlands vs. Serbia	19 & 21.05.16	Netherlands vs. Germany
31.10	France vs. Netherlands	September 2016	TC
26 and 28.11	Netherlands vs. Ireland	October 2016	TC
		November 2016	TC
		06 & 08.12.2016	Netherlands vs. Czech Republic

GERMANY

2013 (1998)	4 TC & 9 IM	2016 (2001)	4 TC & 8 IM
14 & 16.05	Netherlands vs. Germany	19 & 21.05	Netherlands vs. Germany
24.05	Germany vs. Netherlands		
13 & 16.09	Belgium vs. Germany	11 & 13.09	Germany vs. Wales
10 & 13.10	Germany vs. Russia	30.09 & 03.10	Germany vs. Austria
12 & 14.11	Germany vs. Cyprus	17 & 19.11	Germany vs. Czech Republic

FRANCE

2013 (1998)	3 TC & 5 IM	2016 (2001)	2 TC & 4 IM
19–22.08	TC	27 & 29.09	France vs. Scotland
17 & 19.09	France vs. Wales	25.10	France vs. Russia
29.10	France vs. Serbia	27.10	France vs. England
31.10	France vs. Netherlands	29.10	France vs. USA
01.11	France vs. Belgium		

As described, the preparation of the youngest teams starts in autumn, two years before the beginning of the qualifying round of the UEFA European U-17 Championship. Some NAs start playing their first international matches in late autumn or in December. In this context, besides the Netherlands and Belgium, Turkey should also be mentioned. Even if their statistics are not shown here, their U-15/16 NYTs play in late autumn and in December, which means that the formation of the team begins even earlier. Most of them start their international NYT game experience in the period February-May, in the year preceding UEFA qualification year. The programme of the Dutch team deserves special attention, because it includes not only IM but also short-term TCs. In other words, the team “plays enough” (7 IMs), then holds 3 TCs and then rounds things off with two more IMs in December.

In addition, large NAs, such as DFB (Deutscher Fußball-Bund e.V., Germany), regularly start with the youngest team only in May. The FFF (Fédération Française de Football) generally only starts its work in September. But this does not prevent France from being one of the leaders in the number of qualifications for the final round of the UEFA European U-17 Championships, once again underlining the key point: an effective and competitive system of roster preparation in professional football clubs (French professional club academies start working on a regular basis with young football players from the time they are 15 years old) and in national football to a certain extent guarantees the success of national youth teams. This is a key element because only clubs train football players. By the way, Spain, unlike Italy or the Netherlands, takes its time with international matches. As a rule, the Spaniards, like the Germans, “start” in late spring.

To sum up, there is no exact recipe for when to start training the youngest team of a NA. Each national association chooses its own path, taking into account its own traditions, programs and, of course, financial resources. But there are trends and patterns.

First, a national team is being selected and made not earlier than two years before the UEFA qualifying round.

Secondly, the first international matches can already be played in November-December (one year and 9–10 months before the start of UEFA qualifications).

Thirdly, international game experience with a full slate of candidates usually starts in February.

Fourth, probably, not later than one year before the start of the UEFA qualifying round, a national association should start to make the youngest national team. This, of course, is the latest term acceptable to the NAs, which have an effective roster preparation system in the structure of their professional football clubs. The rest should remember that “stitch in time saves nine” and “in time” means if not in summertime than still well in advance.

So, taking into account a high level of competition in matches among national youth teams of UEFA member associations, every national football association should have its own system for the formation and training of national youth teams in place, including a certain number of TCs and IMs, so that a competitive national team could evolve on the international arena. And the key role belongs here to the youngest national team, because the formation of the entire National Team Institute starts with U-15/16 NYT.

U-19 FINAL TOURNAMENTS AND WHEN TO START THE PREPS

*“Assistance to drowning persons
is in the hands of those persons themselves”²⁶*

The 2017/18 UEFA European U-19 Championship final round in Finland forced us to take a fresh look at principles of team preparations for such tournaments. And here it goes why. In accordance with the FIFA rules in the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players which national regulations on release of players to the national teams are based on, the following time limits apply to the timing of calling up players to national teams: *“For a final competition in the sense of paragraphs 2 and 3 above, players must be released and start the travel to their national team no later than Monday morning the week preceding the week when the relevant final competition starts and must be released by the association in the morning of the day after the last match of their team in the tournament.”²⁷*

The final round in Finland kicked-off on Monday, 16th of July 2018. With adherence to the above paragraph of the FIFA Regulations, it turns out that a national football association has the right to get players at its disposal no later than Monday morning, July 9, since Monday of the week in question is exactly the one preceding the week when the relevant final competition starts. Of course, I exaggerate and even reinterpret the above rule, trying to fit the timing of England team preparations for the Championship to the regulation’s provisions, since the British, ultimately, had at their disposal only 5–6 days to prepare for the final round of the competition. England’s head coach Paul Simpson said: *“We had five or six days to prepare for this tournament and that’s not ideal. But it’s just the timing of the tournament.”²⁸*

But before we get back to England squad, winners of UEFA European U-19 Championship, FIFA U-20 World Cup and FIFA U-17 World Cup (!) for the first time in their history in triumphant 2016/2017 season, let us define, once and for all, the terms of arrival of players at the disposal of their national football

²⁶ A quote from the classic satirical novel “The Twelve Chairs” (Chapter 34) by the Odessa Soviet authors Illya Ilf (1897—1937) and Evgeniy Petrov (1903—1942) published in 1928 <http://lib.ru/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y89qvskw>

²⁷ 2018 Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, approved by the FIFA Council on 27 October 2017 and came into force on 1 January 2018; page 33. FIFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/vyw8woe>

²⁸ Norway Deserved FIFA U20 World Cup Spot, Says England Boss Paul Simpson. www.thefa.com Thursday 26 July 2018 URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tenvzs7>

associations following the provisions of the FIFA Regulations and relevant FIFA circular letters. Let us refer first to the FIFA Circular No. 1578 *“Rest periods for the players on the provisional list for the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™”*²⁹ dated 30th of March 2017, Zurich and stating, *inter alia*, the following: *“28 May — 13 June 2018 is a preparation phase for the member associations participating in the final competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™.”*

Bearing in mind that the tournament in Russia would kick-off on Thursday, 14th of June, the official starting date for team preparations for the final tournament was exactly Monday, 28th of May. That said, participating teams were “issued an indulgence”, figuratively speaking, by FIFA so they could start their preparations not on Monday the 4th of June but a week earlier and have at their disposal instead of those “insufficient” 10 days (4.06 — 13.06.2018) more than two weeks, i.e. 16 days (28.05.2018 — 13.06.2018).

Meanwhile, formally, all eight participating teams of UEFA tournament in Finland must have started their preparations on Monday, July 2. Now, one more factor should be foregrounded which had been well-described by the FA Technical Director Dan Ashworth in his interview to BBC Sports before the kick-off of the final round in Finland³⁰. Before getting into details and nuances, let’s add that the above FIFA Regulations is binding to all national teams of FIFA member associations — from “A” to the youngest (for example, U-17) — as far as FIFA or UEFA official tournaments involving U-17/U-19/U-20/U-21 age categories are concerned.

Going into details so eloquently described and quoted by Dan Ashworth in his interview, the FA Technical Director has criticised the timing of the tournament, which clashed with clubs’ pre-season tours, having said: *“Manchester City’s Phil Foden, Borussia Dortmund’s Jadon Sancho and Fulham’s Ryan Sessegnon are among those absent”*. Ashworth called UEFA’s organisation *“bitterly disappointing”*. *“This tournament is scheduled outside a FIFA window, which forces clubs to make such difficult decisions,”* said Ashworth. *“We understand the dilemmas the clubs face around release of players during this particular time of the season and it’s our view, and that of several other countries, that Uefa should take this into account when scheduling tournaments of this magnitude”*, he added. Ashworth believes the clash *“impacts the value of the tournament”* and hopes UEFA will schedule further tournaments *«at a sensible time in the season”*.

The main Ashworth’s concern was the timing of the final tournaments of UEFA U-17 & U-19 Championships scheduled outside those «Fifa windows» or by definition, stated by the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, outside “international windows” fixed, for example, at the latest FIFA International Match Calendar: 2018–2024 INTERNATIONAL MATCH CALENDAR FIXED

²⁹ Circular No. 1578 dated 30 March 2017, Zurich SG/ita. <http://goldengate-law.com/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4tzk4j4x>

³⁰ European Championships: England begin defense of U19 title without star names, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/> 16 July 2018. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tgonh9x>

DATES FOR INTERNATIONAL “A” MATCHES³¹, having quite a long and “florid” definition (par. 4 Annex 1 “Release of players to association teams. Principles for men’s football”): *“An international window is defined as a period of nine days starting on a Monday morning and ending on Tuesday night the following week, which is reserved for national teams’ activities. During any international window a maximum of two matches may be played by each national team, irrespective of whether these matches are qualifying matches for an international tournament or friendlies. The pertinent matches can be scheduled any day as from Wednesday during the international window, provided that a minimum of two full calendar days are left between two matches (e.g. Thursday/Sunday or Saturday/Tuesday).”*³².

The final rounds among junior youth players (U-17) are played in the first half of May, and among seniors (U-19), as a rule, in July, closer to the middle of the month, sometimes taking the very beginning of August. At that, there are five “international windows”: in March, June, September, October and November. Every above-mentioned “window” does not clash with the timing of the UEFA U-17/U-19 final tournaments, although qualification and elite rounds are played exactly on these dates, i.e. within autumn and spring (March) “FIFA windows”, with this rule being mandatory in accordance with the FIFA tournament regulations. With reference to Janus-concept where UEFA is Janus, such a mismatch or rather a kind of “duplicity” may spark on a conflict of interest between football associations and professional football clubs exactly in the context of U-19 tournaments. As for U-17 tournament, footballers are too young to be involved in the competition process at the level of the first club teams, so the above problems are simply left aside. The dilemma concerning senior youth teams has existed for a long time and every FIFA and UEFA association member tackles it alone, without any support from Nyon or Zurich (with Messi’s Olympic story in 2008 making an exception). It is just as the saying goes: *“Assistance to drowning persons is in the hands of those persons themselves” or rather “God takes care of those who take care of themselves”*.

In 2018 the Englishmen suffered a defeat after having missed three “stars” in the squad, and should they had been there, England would have probably competed and counted for winning. However, judging by circumstances, they were forced to bring players with a lack of international game experience who had debuted in the national team at such a high level. *“We had a short period of time and we were bringing players who have never had experience of international matches”* — those were the words said by the head coach Paul Simpson who led the England team to the victory at 2017 FIFA U-20 World Cup in South Korea³³.

³¹ Circular No. 1653 “Men’s international match calendar 2018–2024” dated November 19, 2018, Zurich. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tzh2dqd>

³² 2018 Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players approved by the FIFA Council on the 27th of October 2017 and came into force on the 1st of January 2018; page 32. FIFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/vyw8woe>

³³ Norway Deserved FIFA U20 World Cup Spot, Says England Boss Paul Simpson. www.thefa.com Thursday 26 Jul 2018 URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tenvz7>

As a rule, youth (U-19/U-20) and even U-21 national teams suffer from such clash of interest between clubs and national teams from time to time. Well-known is the conflict between FC “Barcelona” and FIFA following the Catalan club’s refusal to release Lionel Messi to the Olympic team of Argentina in 2008. The dispute resulted not only in the special ruling issued by FIFA regarding Messi, but also in the case proceedings before the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne. However, FIFA happened to be a defeated party in Lausanne. Barcelona and two German clubs, Werder Bremen and Schalke 04, sealed their win in this case: *Barcelona, together with Werder Bremen and Schalke, addressed CAS after having argued against Fifa’s insistence that it was “mandatory” for all players aged 23 and under to be released for the tournament.*³⁴

“The Olympic Football Tournament Beijing 2008 is not included in the coordinated match calendar and there is no specific decision of the FIFA Executive Committee establishing the obligation for the clubs to release players under 23 for this tournament,” read a CAS statement. *“The requirements to justify a legal obligation of clubs to release their players for the Football Tournament in Beijing 2008 on the basis of customary law are not met.”*³⁵

Fortunately for Messi and Argentina, Pep Guardiola, who has just been appointed as manager of the Catalan club, solved the dispute in favour of the player and his country: *“After interference from newly appointed Barcelona manager Pep Guardiola, who had won the tournament in 1992, Messi was permitted to join Sergio Batista’s under-23 squad in Beijing.”*³⁶

Ultimately, Argentina won the Olympic tournament for the second time in a row.

Now, we can’t but notice German clubs. The German clubs, despite the CAS decision, also permitted their players, namely Rafinha (born on 07.09.1985) from Schalke 04 and Diego (born on 28.02.1985) from Werder Bremen³⁷, to join Brazil team in Beijing.

And here goes the commentary made by the German general manager Oliver Bierhoff regarding the conflict between the FA, Arsenal and Liverpool in March 2011: *“...resistance from Arsenal and Liverpool to Jack Wilshere and Andy Carroll being selected for U-21 duty this summer would not happen in Germany, where Bierhoff claims clubs such as Bayern Munich appreciate how international success*

³⁴ Beijing Olympics: Barcelona and Argentina clash over Lionel Messi. The Telegraph by Mike Norrish. 06 Aug 2008. Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/swrq35t>

³⁵ Beijing Olympics: Barcelona and Argentina clash over Lionel Messi. The Telegraph by Mike Norrish. 06 Aug 2008. Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/swrq35t>

³⁶ Hunter G. Barça: The Making of the Greatest Team in the World. BackPage Press, 2012. Pp. 63–64. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/glbr2zu>

³⁷ Football at the 2008 Summer Olympics — Men’s team squads. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wfysbla>

goes hand-in-hand with the development of their players.”³⁸. By the way, both players were out of the English squad at UEFA U-21 EURO in Denmark³⁹.

Meanwhile, in 2015 Germans found themselves in the Englishmen’s shoes to some extent. Like England did, Germany arrived to the U-19 tournament as last year’s winners with bright stars Leroy Sané and Timo Werner⁴⁰ in their squad and head coached by the same manager Marcus Sorg who won in 2014 in Hungary and later on (information from August 2018) joined the *A-Nationalmannschaft* team staff. Germany U-19s did not qualify for the semi-final. The last what we could add here is that Ukraine was also playing the final tournament in Greece and followed Germany’s path by having gained only one point in three matches.

Unfortunately, so far there’s been no panacea for the “conflict of interest” between clubs and national associations. If a country has a very talented ready-to-play trained youth, like in the case with Jadon Sancho from Borussia Dortmund despite his young age back then (he was born in 2000), a player will be out of the national team squad because his direct employer will be interested in him doing his duty only during UEFA competitions. By the way, Real Madrid had the same official reason to refuse to release Andriy Lunin to the Football Federation of Ukraine for his U-19 duty at 2017/18 UEFA EURO in Finland. But if blockage from clubs is practically unavoidable or club managers are non-cooperative with national associations, as it was the case with Messi or German clubs in 2008, it is still possible though to increase the timing of team preparation for the final tournament despite the applicable formal regulatory restrictions. And this has become the main trend among the majority of Championship participants in Finland. How?

Portugal, the tournament winner in this age category and made of players born on and after 01.01.1999, stepped up tournament preparations on the 27th of June 2018⁴¹ (previously Portugal had won both UEFA European U-17 and U-19 Championships).

The runner-up Italy (in 2017/18 season Italy yielded silver medals for the second time following May 2018’s triumph in U-17 category), entered their first stage of preparations from 12–17 June⁴², and the second one — from 4–9 July⁴³. This preparation scheme is very similar to the one used by France.

³⁸ Germany general manager Oliver Bierhoff warns England they must develop team spirit to be successful. The Telegraph by Mark Ogden. 31 Mar 2011. Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8jilaj3>

³⁹ 2011 UEFA European Under-21 Championship squads. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/quujnrr>

⁴⁰ 2015 UEFA European Under-19 Championship squads. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yovqustx>

⁴¹ Hélio Sousa convoca para Euro. 22 de Junho 2018. www.fpf.pt URL : <https://tinyurl.com/w4lbkty>

⁴² Azzurrini al lavoro a Milanello in vista della Fase Finale del Campionato Europeo, giovedì 7 giugno 2018. www.figc.it URL : <https://tinyurl.com/qn4o8px>

⁴³ Ultimo stage prima del Campionato Europeo. Nicolato: “Difficile scegliere i 20 convocati”, lunedì 2 luglio 2018. www.figc.it URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tfdxx4h>

The first stage of preps was within June 18–30, 2018⁴⁴ with the second one to follow in July — from July 3–11, 2018⁴⁵. The gap between two preparation stages for France was filled with two international friendlies vs. China played on the 8th and 11th of July (ended up with 5:3 and 2:1)⁴⁶.

The Ukraine team, semifinalist, stepped up preparations only on the 5th of July. However, in accordance with the National Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, the team had to enter preparatory stage on Monday, July 2. But formally, Ukraine U-19s started to prepare for the tournament already at the end of May by taking part in the traditional U-21 Lobanovskiy Memorial Tournament (29 May: Ukraine vs. Israel, 0:1⁴⁷; 31 May: Ukraine vs. Greece, 1:3⁴⁸). Ukrainians were playing against their elders at the initiative of U-21 head coach Oleksandr Holovko.

Therefore, the Ukrainians followed in their Portuguese peers' footsteps. Portugal took part in the 46th Toulon U-20 Tournament and played four matches⁴⁹ thus, having stepped up preparations for Finland at the end of May (they had their training camp from May 23 to June 9, 2018).

At the same time, actually, it was England U19s who made their first steps towards Finland by having organised a short training camp in La Manga (Spain) within May 20–25⁵⁰. By the way, it was England too who won traditional tournament in Toulon, but not the team made of players born in 1999. This too testifies to the fact that everything in fine so far in Foggy Albion with the preparation of the competitive pool of players.

To sum up, let us say a few words about the timeline of Turkey U19s preparations⁵¹. They started on the 25th of June, 2018. On July 5, 2018 Turkey U19s played a friendly vs. Finland that ended in 2:0 win⁵².

The above highlights a tendency to increase the terms of team preparations for the UEFA European U-19 Championship final rounds despite the existing

⁴⁴ Orsini V. Bernard Diomède a convoqué trente et un joueurs à Ploufragan (Côtes-d'Armor), du 18 au 30 juin, pour participer au premier stage de préparation au Championnat d'Europe U19, organisé en Finlande (16–29 juillet), mardi 5 juin 2018. www.fff.fr

⁴⁵ Mayen P. Deuxième stage de préparation à l'Euro 2018, 30 juin 2018. www.fff.fr

⁴⁶ Thébaud X. Deuxième succès contre la Chine, 11 juillet 2018 (5–3). www.fff.fr or China national under-20 football team [En.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org) URL : <https://tinyurl.com/lrh33657> ; Lhéritier B. La France domine la Chine (2–1), 8 juillet 2018. www.fff.fr or Lequipe.fr URL : <https://tinyurl.com/47tbgo5z>

⁴⁷ Меморіал Валерія Лобановського. Україна у півфіналі поступилася Ізраїлю, 29 травня 2018 р. UAF.ua URL : <https://uaf.ua/article/33762>

⁴⁸ Команда Петракова посіла четверте місце на меморіалі Лобановського, 31 травня 2018 р. UAF.ua URL : <https://uaf.ua/article/33784>

⁴⁹ 2018 Toulon Tournament or 46ème Festival International "Espoirs" — Tournoi Maurice Revello. [En.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org) URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3hsh78ow>

⁵⁰ England U19s Squad Set for Training Camp Ahead of July's Euro Finals in Finland. 27 April 2018. www.thefa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/qrcy2d5>

⁵¹ U19 Milli Takımımızın Avrupa Şampiyonası Finaleri aday kadrosu açıklandı, 19.06.2018. www.tff.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/w59mmry>

⁵² U19 Milli Takımı, Finlandiya'ya 2:0 yenildi, 5.07.2018. www.tff.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v4nqez2>

regulatory restrictions. As per FIFA regulations, teams shall start their preparations not earlier than July 2, however:

- Italy began on June 12;
- France — on June 18;
- Turkey — on June 25;
- Portugal — on June 27.

At the same time, preparations may be divided into two stages. Ukraine, Portugal and England had their training camps at the end of May incorporating Ukrainian and Portuguese teams' participation in international tournament and playing deliberately with younger players. Final results revealed the good of the decision.

As described, such liberties can only be taken if an option for national team event organisation outside "FIFA windows" is set by national regulations. Or there is clubs' goodwill, and/or a very good relationship between clubs and national association and, at the same time there is a profound understanding of the role National Teams Institute plays in education & training of young players at UEFA Youth European Championships. In particular, FFU Regulations provides for similar case (edition 2016) and reads as follows:

Article 22 The procedure for calling and release of football players to the national teams of Ukraine

"1.2. The release of the player, the member of the national team, is mandatory for the matches or training camps of the national teams:

1.2.3. Dates of which are listed in the international match calendar of FFU, approved by Executive Committee of FFU"⁵³.

To conclude, may I go back in times and share a few examples from the past when Ukraine U-19s before starting in the final round of the UEFA European Championship allowed themselves such "liberties" and ultimately, succeeded.

The year of 2004

Ukraine U-19s (players born on and after 01.01.1985) reached the semi-finals of the UEFA European Championship in Switzerland and lost in a penalty shoot-out to future champions, Spain (2:2 after the end of the extra time). Right before the tournament they had had their 21-day training camp and played 6 international matches:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| 23.06 — Ukraine vs. Czech Republic | 1:1 |
| 25.06 — Ukraine vs. Czech Republic | 3:1 |
| 30.06 — Ukraine vs. Moldova | 4:1 |
| 02.07 — Ukraine vs. Moldova | 2:1 |
| 06.07 — Ukraine vs. Turkey | 4:0 |
| 08.07 — Ukraine vs. Turkey | 2:0 |

The Ukraine team played their first match in Switzerland on July 13, 2004.

⁵³ FFU Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, Kyiv-2016. UAF. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4k9e9njh>

The year of 2009

Ukraine U-19s (players born on and after 01.01.1990) won the European championship.

The first preparation stage lasted from June 29 to July 9. The second one was July 12–20. Italy and France did the same in 2018 and split their preps into two stages — with shorter duration but longer break between the two. Ukraine played their first match on July 21 after a three-week training camp with no international training matches. Experience from 2018 shows that only three European national teams had played their international matches before the tournament kicked off. Turkey and Finland had played vs. each other and France vs. the representative team of Asian Football Confederation.

As statistics and practical aspects of preps for such tournaments showed, the most effective training camp duration is about 19–21 days. The split of preparation period into two stages is also effective. The international game experience is efficient too even when teams play against senior teams. By the way, in 2004 Ukraine played against Czech Republic and Moldova U-21 with Turkey, future runner-up team, being the only one represented by U-19s. Thus, leading national football associations ramp up the preparation of their national youth teams not by blindly following the provisions of FIFA rules but by trying to increase the number of training days in order to achieve the best results in the final round. After all, nobody cancelled the law of the passage of quantitative changes into qualitative ones that can also be applied as *“Engels postulated three laws of dialectics from his reading of Hegel’s Science of Logic.”*⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Engels, F. (7th ed., 1973). *Dialectics of nature* (Translator, Clements Dutt). New York: International Publishers. (Original work published 1940) En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uytg5k7r>

MURPHY'S LAWS AND PARADOXES OF FIFA REGULATIONS ON THE STATUS AND TRANSFER OF PLAYERS

*Anything that can go wrong will go wrong*⁵⁵

Let us consider Annex 1 “Release of players to association teams” to FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players in the context of the timescale of the release of players for the final tournaments of the FIFA World Cup™, the FIFA Confederations Cup and the championships for “A” representative teams of the confederations.

Paradox No. 1. With a plus sign (+6 or +3)

Paragraph 7 (Principles for men’s football) reads as follows: “...*For a final competition in the sense of paragraphs 2 and 3 above, players must be released and start the travel to their representative team no later than Monday morning the week preceding the week when the relevant final competition starts...*” (2018 edition was approved by the FIFA Council on March 16, 2018 and came into force on June 1, 2018⁵⁶).

As a result, *par exemple*, with strict adherence to the provisions of the FIFA Regulations (edition 2016 was in force until June 1, 2018⁵⁷), the participating teams of the 2018 FIFA World Cup had only 11 days before the start of the final tournament since the first match of the competition was played on Thursday, June 14, 2018. But contrary to the 2016 FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, FIFA by its Circular letter No. 1578 dated 30th of March 2017 extended

⁵⁵ Murphy’s law En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4bk4h5yb>

⁵⁶ Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2018 Edition. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ubz5lq7>. The new version of these Regulations was approved by the FIFA Council on June 3, 2019 and came into force on October 1, 2019. No amendments or changes were made to paragraphs and clauses referred to: Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2019 Edition. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/vaaqw45>. Meanwhile, the latest version of the Regulations came into force on March 1, 2020 and was approved by FIFA on October 24, 2019: Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2020 Edition. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/soljt8d>. The modifications made did not concern any matters we refer to in this chapter: To the Member Associations of FIFA Circular No. 1709, Zurich, 13 February 2020. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tkhexge>.

⁵⁷ Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2015 Edition came into force on 1 October 2015.// Digitalhub.fifa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/7ebbem37> and Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2016 Edition came into force on 1 June 2016.// www.icsspe.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yz4hyy28>

“preparation phase for the member associations participating in the final competition of the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia up to 17 days, i.e. from 28th to 13th of June 2018”⁵⁸. As a consequence, the teams were allocated 17 days for the preparation instead of 11 (+ 6 days).

Looking back at the history of 2014 FIFA World Cup, FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (edition 2010⁵⁹) stated:

“e) the final competition of an international tournament: 14 days before the first match in the competition.”

In other words, the reference is made to 14 days for team preparations for the final tournament (amendments to the Annex 1 entered into force on August 1, 2014 already when 2014 FIFA World Cup had been over by Circular No. 1437⁶⁰ issued in Zurich on July 23, 2014 “Amendments to

— *the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players*

— *the Rules Governing the Procedures of the Players’ Status Committee and the Dispute Resolution Chamber”*).

In the meantime, following the thread of the FIFA Circulars related to the subject, by FIFA Circular No. 1329 dated November 14, 2012 the preparation time was extended again. Preparatory stage for the players on the provisional list for the 2014 FIFA World Cup Brazil™ lasted from May 26 to June 11, 2014⁶¹. Consequently, we had the same 17 days instead of 14 (+3 days).

Therefore, FIFA Circulars allow extending the duration set by FIFA Regulations. And FIFA World Cup participating teams do benefit from this extension.

However, within the framework of the FIFA Confederation championships, for example, UEFA EURO, such extension do not happen and thus, European national “A” teams operate under the current FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. Obviously, UEFA does not have the authority to adjust the time limits of team preparation for the tournament since the aforementioned regulations fall within FIFA’s jurisdiction. Furthermore, UEFA EURO is under UEFA auspices. Thus, 16 participating teams of UEFA EURO 2012 had a 14-day preparation for the final round, but for 24 participating teams of UEFA EURO 2016 this duration was formally shortened down to 11 days (should the provisions of the FIFA Regulations be fully respected).

Pursuant to the paragraph 7 of the FIFA Regulations (edition 2016) and 2016 Calendar, and taking into consideration that the first match at UEFA EURO 2016 was scheduled on Friday June 10, 2016, the date for players to “*start the travel to*

⁵⁸ Circular No. 1578 issued in Zurich, 30 March 2017 SG/ita. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1qm7k2xo>

⁵⁹ Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2010 Edition. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/t9tfmth>

⁶⁰ Circular No. 1437 Zurich, 23 July 2014 SG/mav/oon. www.theplayersagent.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yx6fmojv>

⁶¹ Circular No. 1329 Zurich, 14 November 2012 SG/cun-sas. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/w3o622h>

join their representative team” was on Monday, May 30, 2016. That means 11 days instead of 14. Due to the fact that in the majority of European professional football leagues 2015/16 season was completed at the second half of May, long before May the 30th, those professional football clubs (*moreover, paragraph 8, Annex 1 of the FIFA Regulations reads that “the clubs and associations concerned may agree a longer period of release or different arrangements with regard to paragraph 7 above.”*) who had players in their squad as future participants of UEFA EURO were interested in promoting their players at such great Championship as UEFA EURO. Successful performance in such tournament inevitably increases the transfer price of a player. Such fortunate conjunction of circumstances made players of the participating teams arrive to the training camp of their “A” teams earlier than it was stipulated by the FIFA Regulations. As a result, without officially extending the terms of team preparation, national teams benefit from more favorable conditions for their preparation and performance within the framework of the FIFA Confederation championship. No doubt, it is a very positive moment.

Paradox No. 2. Regulations “vulnerability” with emphasis on gender

Practically no overlaps or restrictions occur during FIFA and UEFA competitions at “A” team level, and professional clubs just have no reasons to “obstruct” players from “A” teams. There is no reason for the conflict of interest because clubs are interested in promoting their players thanks to “A” teams at top FIFA and UEFA competitions. However, in case of junior age categories the situation is just the opposite.

Let’s us start to review UEFA U-19 and U-17 European Championships by reading paragraph 4 Annex 1 of the current FIFA Regulations: *“...During any international window a maximum of two matches may be played by each representative team, irrespective of whether these matches are qualifying matches for an international tournament or friendlies.”*

There are two qualifying rounds in UEFA European U-17 and U-19 Championships, i.e. qualification and elite rounds. They consist of group tournament with four teams playing three matches in the format of UEFA mini-tournament. Both players with professional contracts and players with amateur status are eligible to play in U-17 competitions (item 2 Article 18 of the FIFA Regulations: *“Players under the age of 18 may not sign a professional contract for a term longer than three years.”*), and therefore, professional football clubs, frankly speaking, are quite loyal to the release of their players to association’s U-17 teams. There are counter-examples though to be discussed later.

The situation with U-19 age category is very different and has been eloquently illustrated by the evolution of the Article 7 of the Regulations of the UEFA U-19 Championship starting from 2012/13 season as follows:

In 2011/12 Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship⁶² no references are made yet to FIFA International Match Calendar.

Article 7 Match dates

7.02 *The match dates must be agreed between the four associations in each group according to the criteria stated in Annex I point 2.*

7.03 *Qualifying round matches must be played between 1 July and mid-November 2011.*

7.04 *Elite round matches must be played by the end of May 2012.*

The 2012/13 Regulations⁶³ contains references to FIFA International Match Calendar in the context of the elite round matches in spring, i.e. played within 22–26 March 2013.

Article 7 Match dates

7.02 *The match dates must be agreed between the four associations in each group according to the criteria stated in Annex I, point 2.*

7.03 *Qualifying round matches must be played between 1 July and 26 November 2012.*

7.04 *Unless all four teams agree to play on another date, elite round matches must be played on the occasion of the following dates included in the FIFA International Match Calendar:*

— 22–26 March 2013

— 4 June 2013

— 7–11 June 2013

The rules to be applied for determining the dates are explained in Annex I, point 2.2.

The 2013/14 Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship⁶⁴ provides for more details. With strict adherence to the FIFA International Match Calendar, clear dates for the first qualifying round have appeared in autumn of the given sports season.

Article 7 Match dates

7.02 *The match dates must be agreed between the four associations in each group according to the criteria stated in Annex I, point 2.*

7.03 *Unless all four teams agree to play on another date, qualifying round matches must be played on the following dates included in the FIFA International Match calendar.*

6–10 September 2013

⁶² Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship 2011/12; Football.enterprise.uefa.com

⁶³ Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship 2012/13; Football.enterprise.uefa.com

⁶⁴ Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship 2013/14; Football.enterprise.uefa.com

11–15 October 2013

15–19 November 2013

7.04 *Elite round matches must be played until a date determined by the UEFA administration.*

The 2014/15 Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship⁶⁵ establishes a clear connection with autumn and spring dates indicated in the FIFA International Match Calendar.

Article 19 Match dates and fixtures

19.1 *Following the draw, the four teams in each group have to agree on match dates.*

19.2 *Unless all four teams agree to play on another date, qualifying competition matches must be played on the following FIFA International Match Calendar dates (see “International matches of national teams” in Annex A).*

a. *Qualifying round*

— 1–9 September 2014

— 6–14 October 2014

— 10–18 November 2014

b. *Elite round*

— 23–31 March 2015

19.3 *If the teams of a group cannot all agree on the match dates, a decision is reached as follows:*

a. *opinion of the majority of the teams;*

b. *if no majority can be reached, the UEFA administration decides, taking climatic conditions into consideration.*

The 2018/19 edition of the Regulations differs only by dates indicated in the FIFA International Match Calendar, naturally, because new version of the FIFA Calendar was published in November 2018 (Circular No. 1653, Zurich, 19 November 2018 — 2018–2024 Men’s International Match Calendar⁶⁶) and incorporates minor changes regarding the disputable situation in the process of fixing match dates for UEFA mini-tournament among group participants.

So, the 2018/19 Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship⁶⁷ states:

Article 19 Match dates and fixtures

19.02 *Unless all four teams agree to play on another date, qualifying competition matches must be played on the following FIFA International Match Calendar dates (see “International matches of national teams” in Annex A).*

⁶⁵ Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship 2014/15; Football.enterprise.uefa.com

⁶⁶ Circular No. 1653; Zurich, 19 November 2018 SG/tgo. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tzh2dq>

⁶⁷ Regulations of the UEFA European Under-19 Championship 2018/19; Football.enterprise.uefa.com

a. *Qualifying round*

— 3–11 September 2018

— 8–16 October 2018

— 12–20 November 2018

b. *Elite round*

— 18–26 March 2019

19.03 *If the teams of a group cannot all agree on the match dates, the host association decides in accordance with Paragraph 19.02.*

To sum up, UEFA U-19 competitions escaped under “protective umbrella” offered by the FIFA International Match Calendar, because point 2 Annex 1 of the FIFA Regulations states: “*The release of players under the terms of paragraph 1 of this article is mandatory for all international windows listed in the international match calendar*”. In other words, if the dates of the tournament lie beyond the scope of FIFA International Match Calendar, the release of players to association teams can be ignored.

But there is a slight hitch in the above “defense”, speaking on football terms. In accordance with the Championship Regulations, during an international window three matches of UEFA mini-tournament are played. Meanwhile, the same FIFA Regulations, which should serve as a “protective umbrella”, stipulate that:

“...During any international window a maximum of two matches may be played by each representative team, irrespective of whether these matches are qualifying matches for an international tournament or friendlies.”

The participating teams of the UEFA European U-19 Championship play qualifying matches in the international tournament and the number of those matches is more than two. Since within its scope of application, FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players are applied, without exception, to all national teams of FIFA member associations and not only to “A” teams, such collision or, if you like, so-called “vulnerability”, can potentially trigger problems for UEFA competition participants.

Having said that, Article 1^{bis} “Principles for women’s football” of the 2016 FIFA Regulations, states as follows:

4.

There are three types of international windows:

b) *Type II is defined as a period of nine days starting on a Monday morning and ending on Tuesday night the following week, which is reserved for the confederations’ qualifying mini-tournaments of representative teams. During the type II international window, a maximum of three matches may be played by each representative team.*

c) *Type III is defined as a period of ten days starting on a Monday morning and ending on Wednesday night the following week, which is reserved for a friendly tournament of representative teams to be played in February/March of every calendar year. During the type III international window, a maximum of four matches may be played by each representative team.*

As we can see, in the context of women's football there are international windows when 3 (three) and even 4 (four) matches can be played.

The similar article was kept in the FIFA Regulations — editions of 2018, 2019 and 2020.

It is obvious that on their domestic markets, football associations are tackling not only issues of release of players for international tournaments involving more than two matches during FIFA international windows, but also the release of players to national youth teams for the matches outside so called "FIFA dates", even though the FIFA Regulations in question reads otherwise:

6.

"It is not compulsory to release players outside an international window or outside the final competitions (as per paragraph 2 above) included in the international match calendar."

National regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players could have provisions which significantly expand the authority of national associations and increase the number of national team events, first and foremost for national youth and U-21 teams. Evidently, it is not sufficient for the normal and natural national youth team development, especially for junior age categories (mainly U-15/U-16/U-17), to play inside five international windows only.

Meanwhile, one must refer to the FIFA Regulations when it comes to the situation when national association is calling up players to national youth team from foreign football clubs. Consequently, football club acting through their legal service or sports director, who is an expert in this field, may start voicing reasonable objections regarding the number of matches to be played by their player or players in the UEFA international competition. Of course, here we face a top-level bureaucracy and pure formality on one side. However, on the other side *Dura lex, sed lex* or "the law is a law". And this applies both to UEFA U-17 and U-19 tournaments.

If no Type II and Type III international windows for women's football had been introduced, it would have been another paradox to add to the absence of any rules setting the dates for FIFA U-17 and U-20 and UEFA U-17, U-19 and U-21 final tournaments and, last but not least, football tournament of the Summer Olympic Games. All these tournaments "are not listed" in the FIFA International Match Calendar and, therefore the release of players to these events is not mandatory (in accordance with the pp. 2 and 6 Annex 1 of the FIFA Regulations) and could be ignored by a football club (especially a foreign one) if no other agreements at national level are made. Subtle nuances are still possible though and will be discussed below.

Paradox No. 3. Ambivalence or against all odds

First, let's talk about domestic or national Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players in the context of releasing players to association teams. Back in 2008, the Football Federation of Ukraine amended their regulations obliging clubs to release players to all events involving national teams and listed in the FFU international match calendar. Nevertheless, FC "Metalurg Zaporizhzhya" lodged a claim to the Court of Arbitration for Sport in Lausanne in an attempt to abolish certain provisions of the national regulations and fit it back to the FIFA Regulations framework (*Metalurg Zaporizhzhya v. Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) CAS 2009/A/1889 — Lausanne, 11th of March 2010*). Fortunately, CAS in its decision took the FFU's side. Internal agreements as well as national regulations safeguarding the interests of the association's teams may provoke professional club's reaction being far from positive.

Second, there were situations when youth, U-21 and Olympic teams missed their players simply because UEFA U-17/U-19/U-21 championships, FIFA U-17/U-20 World Cups or football tournament of the Summer Olympic Games were not included in the FIFA International Match Calendar.

Example No. 1

England U-19 before the final round of the 2017/18 UEFA European U-19 Championship missed three of their players because of the tournament dates. Three clubs simply did not release their players to their respective national teams because pre-season club training had already started.

Example No. 2

The Olympic story with Lionel Messi and the Olympic team of Argentina back in 2008 clearly unveiled "vulnerability" of the teams participating in the football tournament of the Olympics. Only Josep Guardiola's goodwill, new head coach of FC Barcelona and 1992 Olympic champion himself, despite the verdict by CAS, allowed Messi to play in Beijing and win Olympic gold medal.

Example No. 3

This time England U-21s have fallen victims to a non-release. In 2011 the team missed two talented players in their squad during the final tournament of the 2009/11 UEFA European U-21 Championship because of the conflict two clubs and the FA had that was caused by the tournament dates. The dates were outside FIFA windows just as it was the case in the previous two examples, or were not even included in the FIFA International Match Calendar.

Example No. 4

In May 2017 Sancho (Jadon Malik Sancho, DOB: 25.03.2000) became vice-champion of the 2016/17 UEFA European U-17 Championship in Croatia⁶⁸. In September he entered England U-17 squad for the FIFA U-17 World Cup and, following the arrangements made with his new club Borussia Dortmund⁶⁹, took part only in the group stage of the competition and, upon its completion, travelled back to Dortmund right before the quarter-final match vs. Japan (played on October 16, 2017). Eventually England U-17 became World Cup winners.

These four examples, also referred to in the previous chapter, show “vulnerability” of all FIFA and UEFA final tournaments except for “A” team tournaments, because their dates are outside the FIFA International Match Calendar. As such the situation unveils dual nature or ambivalence. On the one hand, there is an applicable law, “the law is the law” (*dura lex, sed lex*) that clubs shall adhere to and they do. On the other hand, there are tournaments played contrary to the Sword of Damocles hanging over clubs’ refusal to release players. It is common to refuse because players like Messi or Sancho, despite their young age, were considered as first choice players, and head coach just needed them during pre-season preparations or through the course of the season. Nevertheless, these competitions are an integral and essential element of player development to make pool of players for “A” team. That is why national associations, and more specifically their National Team Institutes, have nothing left but keep on working under such challenging circumstances to achieve better results despite those circumstances and not thanks to.

One of the Murphy’s laws states though: “*Left to themselves, things tend to go from bad to worse.*”⁷⁰

And an afterthought

Paragraph 2 Annex 1 of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, 2007 and 2010 editions, contains the following phrase: “*The release of players under the terms of paragraph 1 of this article is mandatory for matches on dates listed in the coordinated international match calendar and for all matches for which a duty to release players exists on the basis of a special decision by the FIFA Executive Committee.*”⁷¹

⁶⁸ Jadon Sancho. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb3joq9f>

⁶⁹ England Starlet Jadon Sancho at Centre of a Tug-of-war Between Borussia Dortmund and the FA. Mirror by Adrian Kajumba, 29 September 2017. Mirror.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/scnw9n>

⁷⁰ Murphy’s law <http://www.murphys-laws.com/murphy/murphy-laws.html>

⁷¹ Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2007 Edition. Fuz.co.zw URL : <https://tinyurl.com/29nopb2w>; Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2010 Edition. Theplayersagent.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/t9tfmth>

Our concern is the following quote from this paragraph: *“and for all matches for which a duty to release players exists on the basis of a special decision by the FIFA Executive Committee.”*

As described, in 2008 Barcelona and two German clubs won Messi’s case in the CAS exactly on the grounds *“on the basis of a special decision by the FIFA Executive Committee”*. *“The Olympic Football Tournament in Beijing 2008 is not included in the Coordinated Match Calendar and there is no specific decision of the FIFA Executive Committee establishing the obligation for the clubs to release players under 23 for this tournament,”* read a CAS statement.

Consequently, FIFA rewored this part of the Paragraph 2 only 6 years after by FIFA’s Circular No. 1437 dated 23rd of July 2014, Zurich *“Amendments to*

- *the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players*
- *the Rules Governing the Procedures of the Players’ Status Committee and the Dispute Resolution Chamber”*⁷².

The above-mentioned phrase has been rewored as follows: *“as well as for the final competitions of the FIFA World Cup™, the FIFA Confederations Cup, and the championships for “A” representative teams of the confederations, subject to the relevant association being a member of the organizing confederation.”*

After 6 years, Ladies and Gentlemen!

⁷² Circular No. 1437 Zurich, 23 July 2014 SG/mav/oon. Theplayersagent.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yx6fmojv>

WHEN BADLY NEEDED BUT NOT ALLOWED

“Impossible is Nothing”

The Adidas Slogan

Let’s carry on with the issue discussed in the previous chapter. Furthermore, in summer 2020 UEFA did give us a fair reason to do so.

On Wednesday, 17 June 2020 UEFA published the decision of the UEFA Executive Committee on scheduling three matches in October and November FIFA windows with the following wording provided here as an excerpt: *“The group stage matches of the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League will be played on the following match days: 3/4/5 and 6/7/8 September; 10/11 and 13/14 October; 14/15 and 17/18 November 2020. Friendly matches will be played on 7/8 October and 11/12 November.”*⁷³

On Friday, 26 June 2020 UEFA published the full fixture list for the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League group stage where 20 matches to be played on 7/8 October (17 on October 7th and 3 on October 8th), 15 matches to be played on 11–12 November (14 on November 11th and 1 on November 12th), as well as 20 matches to be played on Wednesday, October 14th and 18 matches — on Wednesday, November 18th were listed.

There are also 8 play-off semi-finals of the UEFA EURO 2020 to be played on the 8th of October with 4 play-off finals of this tournament — on the 12th of November. These matches as well as the above-mentioned friendly matches should have been played in March 2020.

We know though what the previous chapter states: *“During any international window a maximum of two matches may be played by each representative team, irrespective of whether these matches are qualifying matches for an international tournament or friendlies.”* However, clause No. 4 Chapter 1 Annexe 1 “Release of players to association teams” of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, June 2020 (including COVID-19 temporary amendments) has the following wording⁷⁴:

“An international window is defined as a period of nine days starting on a Monday morning and ending on Tuesday night the following week, which is reserved for representative teams’ activities. During any international window a maximum of

⁷³ UEFA competitions to resume in August, Wednesday, 17 June 2020 UEFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yyqmcakd>

⁷⁴ Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, June 2020 (including COVID-19 temporary amendments) Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ycxrzqzr>

two matches may be played by each representative team, irrespective of whether these matches are qualifying matches for an international tournament or friendlies. The pertinent matches can be scheduled any day as from Wednesday during the international window, provided that a minimum of two full calendar days are left between two matches (e.g. Thursday/Sunday or Saturday/Tuesday).”

What does that mean? Wednesday, October 14, 2020 and Wednesday, November 18, 2020 are outside the international window. An international window is the period starting on Monday morning and ending on Tuesday night the following week. The above-mentioned Wednesdays mean the day after “Tuesday night the following week”. So it is obvious, there have been contradictions between UEFA match calendar and FIFA legislation in the context of the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League.

Furthermore, on Tuesday, 18 August 2020 FIFA Circular No. 1727 “Updates to the Men’s and Women’s International Match Calendars”⁷⁵ was published, by which FIFA made changes to the FIFA International Match Calendar exactly for October 2020 and November 2020, thereby permitting UEFA (national teams of UEFA member associations) to play three matches in the FIFA international window as well as extending appropriate FIFA windows for associations affiliated to UEFA by one day. It took less than two months for UEFA match calendar to enter into force making all contradictions disappear. If something is badly needed but not allowed, is it anyway possible then!?

In all fairness, I can’t help but mention one detail. UEFA changed the link to the news about “The full fixture list for the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League group stage” on their official website, so it became available then but was dated not Friday, 26 June but Wednesday, 12 August 2020⁷⁶. Despite this, UEFA Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/UEFA>) proves that the news «The UEFA #NationsLeague group stage schedule is complete» is dated exactly 26th of June 2020⁷⁷.

In the meantime, on Thursday, September 24, 2020 the UEFA Executive Committee announced “The calendar for European national team matches” which included “Two triple-headers approved for 2021 March and September national team windows”⁷⁸.

First, in contrast to the announced windows with three national team matches in October and November 2020, UEFA put in the following phrase — an excerpt from the news at the official UEFA website: “*The calendar for European national team matches will therefore now be as follows, pending FIFA’s approval.*” That means: “UEFA is waiting for FIFA’s approval.” Second, in my view, COVID-19 pandemic

⁷⁵ Circular No. 1727 “Updates to the Men’s and Women’s International Match Calendars”, Zurich, 18 August 2020 Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y6yy8mzg>

⁷⁶ Nations League group stage in September, October and November, Wednesday, 12 August 2020 UEFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ybz7w3j6>

⁷⁷ The UEFA #NationsLeague group stage schedule is complete. Who does your side face? 6:57 PM Jun 26, 2020 Twitter.com/UEFA <https://tinyurl.com/yxj73nqq>

⁷⁸ Two triple-headers approved for 2021 March and September national team windows, Thursday 24 September 2020 UEFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yyahphfj>

leaves no choice. All the more there is a long-established practice of playing triple matches within the FIFA international window for the UEFA national youth and women's tournaments with strict adherence to the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

Third, it is for the first time ever in UEFA's practice that the international window will appear right before the UEFA EURO final tournament, therefore allowing representative teams to play officially two matches (following Circular No. 1727 which had already included the new date just for UEFA even before the appropriate decision of the UEFA Executive Committee was taken in September 2020) at the end of May and at the beginning of June, i.e. "31 May — 8 June 2021: EURO preparation friendly matches". FIFA had permitted the matches like those to be played before the start of the FIFA World Cup final round by issuing the FIFA Circular in this respect.

After all, it must be said that without this decision it would be impossible to complete the qualifying cycle of UEFA EURO 2020, to say the least. Probably, it was the only right thing to do in the light of the worldwide pandemic.

Nonetheless, I think the situation with the publication of the UEFA Executive Committee's decision on Wednesday, 17 June 2020, and its formal approval by FIFA after two months or 62 days had passed, is one more striking illustration of Murphy's law that says: "*Anything that can go wrong will go wrong*" as far as the context of the aforementioned FIFA Regulations is concerned. But apparently, the bug corrected in time should not be treated as an error, by analogy with the five-second rule⁷⁹.

Certainly FIFA will approve further transformations to the Men's and Women's International Match Calendars. However, should we wait for the next challenge? Or one should rather update FIFA regulations thus, allowing for triple matches to take place in the FIFA international window? Furthermore, precedents have already been set and so have the exclusions.

On 1 October 2020⁸⁰ changes did happen. But these changes are only temporary. FIFA did make relevant amendments to the paragraph 4, Chapter 1, Annex 1 "*Release of players to association teams*" that are as follows:

"i. During the international windows scheduled for October 2020 and November 2020, for associations affiliated to UEFA:

a) the international windows are extended by one day; and

b) a maximum of three matches may be played by each representative team."

Later 3 matches (UEFA only) were listed on 2020–2024 MEN'S INTERNATIONAL MATCH CALENDAR (dated February 2021) on the following dates: 22 — 31 March and 30 August — 8 September 2021. But no separate FIFA Circular was issued in this regard.

⁷⁹ The Five-second rule En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y3grube3> or the thesis that food fallen on the ground remains equally edible and healthful if lifted therefrom within five seconds. Yourdictionary.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yxn4ksl8>

⁸⁰ Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, October 2020 (including COVID-19 temporary amendments) Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y6zw6xnj>

U-20 NATIONAL TEAM

*Amat victoria curam,
or Victory loves preparation*⁸¹

The first U-20 national youth team was made within the structure of the FFU on a permanent basis in 2010, irrespective of the results of U-19 NYT qualification for the FIFA U-20 World Cup (Ukraine took part in four editions — in 2001, 2005, 2015 and 2019). The team was made to develop the potential of national team players born on or after 01.01.1990. And promising U-19s won the UEFA European U-19 Championship in 2009.

Meanwhile, many European football associations do have teams in this age category irrespective of U-19 NYT qualification results for the FIFA U-20 World Cup. First, one of the most famous and popular annual international tournaments in Toulon⁸² is held just for U-20s. Second, the DFB for many years has been hosting a tournament for four U-20 teams (in parallel with the EURO U-21 cycle). In 2017 Germany expanded the competition format up to 8 participants. Third, Ukraine participated in the English tournament Trophy Cup for U-23 national teams twice — in 2013/15 and 2015/17 seasons. As described, the tournament is for U-23 national teams, but Ukraine and a number of other NAs were represented at this tournament by their U-20s. Finally, we should mention the Torneo Internacional de Fútbol Sub-20 de L'Alcúdia — a Spanish tournament with a long history dating back to its first edition in 1984.

Over the last years FFU has gained some experience too. It should be said that U-20 NYT serves, first of all, as a feeder team for future U-21 NT. High level of competition at the UEFA European U-19 Championship, with only 8 national teams playing the final tournament, should be taken into consideration too. The level of “competitive selection” here is higher than at the UEFA EURO with 24 participating teams, and even higher than at the European U-21 Championship having 12, and now 16 participants since 2019/21 competition cycle and U-17 Championship with 16 participants. There is always a high probability that U-19 age group might eliminate at the level of national teams already in March (dates of the elite round), and if NA has no U-20 team, players may be deprived of any international game experience for 1,5 years! This happens at the very important stage in players’ careers when they are promoted from youth (U-19/21) to senior

⁸¹ The literary translation of this Latin proverb is: “Victory loves carefulness”. But in the context of our subject I allow myself to replace the word “carefulness” with “preparation”.

⁸² Tournoi Espoirs de Toulon / “Toulon Young Players’ Tournament”, the first tournament was held in French Toulon in 1967 and since 1974 it has been a competition for U-20 national teams.

teams of professional football clubs and establish themselves as top professionals competing at international level. No national football association can afford neglecting the next generation of “youth” for a year and a half; what every national association keeps in mind is the future of their “A” team to be made of these young players one day. Let’s take Ukraine. Since UEFA switched from U-16/18 to U-17/19, Ukrainian youth has managed to qualify for the final round of these competitions for four times only (in 2004, 2014, 2015, 2018). Meanwhile, in the last 15 seasons (from 2001/02 to 2015/16), only 27 out of 55 UEFA member associations took part in the U-19 final tournaments.

Every second UEFA European U-21 Championship is a qualifying competition for the FIFA tournament of the Summer Olympic Games. Players in U-23 age category and three more players over 23 play the competition (18 players must be in the Entry Form⁸³).

Just to give you an example. The qualification cycle for 2017/19 U-21 EURO involved players born in 1996 and 1997. Players born on or after 1997 and younger would go for the Olympics in Tokyo⁸⁴. Naturally, it is unlikely one would enter only players born in 1997 and, let’s say, three more players born in 1996. In case of qualifying for the Olympic football tournament, one would need players born in 1998 and, probably, in 1999 too. Consequently, U-20 team today is not only the U-21 team in the future but also a sort of “incubator” for the country’s Olympic team. Even though Ukraine has never got a chance to play in the Olympic football tournament and played only twice at EURO U-21 finals, and considering that the qualification road to the Olympic Games is the most difficult one of all FIFA and UEFA tournaments (16 participants in total with 4 slots reserved for UEFA; there are only 12 participants in the UEFA U-21 EURO final tournament and expanding U-21 final tournament format to 16 teams will not change the UEFA’s slots in the Olympic football tournament), any football association should be prepared for a possible success that will be impossible and unachievable without such preparation. Just like the Latin proverb goes: *Amat victoria curam* or “Victory loves preparation”!

To conclude on U-20 national team, one cannot help but say that it is made not only for purely sporting purposes. It provides an effective coaching platform. Of course, U-21 head coach is a key figure in managing U-20s, only if we are not talking about the team owing their participation at the FIFA U-20 World Cup to the success at the UEFA European U-19 Championship. At that, U-20 team, like all senior youth teams (U-18/19) and U-21s do, usually plays exclusively on FIFA dates which means a lack of opportunity for U-21 head coach to fully work with

⁸³ Taking football tournament of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games as a starting point, the Player List was extended up to 20 players: Regulations for the Olympic Football Tournaments Games of the XXXII Olympiad Tokyo 2020//Digitalhub.fifa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3aetz6yc>. Pursuant to the Regulations of the football tournament of the Olympic Games Rio de Janeiro 2016, the Player List featured 18 players: Regulations for the Olympic Football Tournaments Games of the XXXI Olympiad Rio De Janeiro 2016 // Library.olympics.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/rvm3hbm>.

⁸⁴ The Olympic Games Tokyo 2020 were postponed to 2021 because of Covid-19. New dates are July 21 — August 8, 2021. Olympics.com. URL : <https://olympics.com/tokyo-2020/en/schedule/>

“juniors”. This brings to conclusion that one of the coaches, who is not busy with national youth teams since they may not play on FIFA dates, could join U-20 as a mentor (ideally, it would be a coach who worked with the team earlier when they were U-17/19 and continued to work with the junior team). Consequently, coaches of the National Teams Institute would have more practice, and a national association, for example, would benefit of salary budgeting due to U-20 mentors. At the same time, the team, which has no tournament tasks to accomplish, can be used by the association to train next coach of national youth teams and, for example, by making him a member of U-21 coaching staff as a promising coach with career perspectives. To sum up, U-20 team is also a kind of a training class for coaches.

As described, national U-20 team within the National Team Institute is neither a luxury nor a rudimentary element. It is, in its own unique way, a unique and multifunctional instrument of modern football aimed at fulfilling not only sporting tasks, but also at working with a thought for the morrow of the national U-21 team, the national “A” team of the country and the entire national football. Team players and coaches, in return, get such an important international game experience — so badly needed and so highly valued in modern high-performance sports.

WINNER TAKES ALL, or When “A” Team Meets U21s (Part 1)

They Shoot Horses, Don't They?
— Horace McCoy, American writer⁸⁵

Speaking on FIFA's terms, the first national team or “A” representative team is at the peak of football pyramid of any national football association. U-21 team is one level lower and interaction between them, undoubtedly, impacts the results of both teams and National Team Institute as a whole. The fact that the thirteenth qualifying cycle for Ukraine for the UEFA European U-21 Championship finished in October 2018, and the national “A” team secured early top position in the group stage of the first ever UEFA Nations League (in the League B) induced us to analyse some aspects of interaction between the key teams of the Ukrainian Football Association.

Let's start with some highlights from NAT head coach Andriy Shevchenko's press-conference right before the FIFA international window opened in October⁸⁶:

— *Will Lunin join back “A” team after having come to Ukraine U-21's help?*
— *Today he will play for U-21s in the qualifying match against Scotland and be back to us tomorrow. Depending on the situation with injured players, we will take a decision who else may be called up from U-21 team.”*

This is an example of a normal process of players' exchange between teams except for one thing. Andriy Lunin (born on 11.02.1999) is a goalkeeper, Real Madrid player and was on loan to C.D. Leganés (in October 2018), the club of Spanish La Liga. In principle, he should play for the U-21 team only in the next cycle, i.e. 2019/2021. He was eligible even to play for Ukraine U-20s at the FIFA U-20 World Cup in Poland in 2019 (he became World Cup winner), however, the U-19 team had qualified for that tournament without him in their squad, particularly because there was a time clash with his movement to Real Madrid and the final round of the UEFA European Championship. Meanwhile, it was not the first year that Lunin was with the NAT (he was included in the Player List for the match back in 2017), but he made his first international “A” appearance on

⁸⁵ Horace McCoy (April 14, 1897 — December 15, 1955) was an American writer whose hardboiled novels took place during the Great Depression. His best-known novel is “They Shoot Horses, Don't They?” (1935). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horace_McCoy

⁸⁶ Попов А. Андрей Шевченко: «Матч Чехии со Словакией даст нам полную информацию о нашем сопернике». 12.10.2018, Dynamo.kiev.ua. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wjgp5z3>

March 23, 2018 in the match vs. Saudi Arabia. He is not a first-choice goalkeeper in the “A” team and, unfortunately, still lacks game experience at the club level.

No doubt he is a gifted goalkeeper and even with a lack of game experience as of early October 2018, Lunin was a first-choice goalkeeper in U-21 national team, which at that time still had chances to qualify for the play-off of the UEFA European Championship or finished second in the group that could enhance Ukraine’s ranking position right before the draw for the next qualifying round. U-21 team’s ranking matched the third basket following their performance in 2015/17 competition cycle. Ultimately, Lunin contributed to U-21 team’s win over Scotland in the second-last group match of UEFA tournament. However, he returned to NAT to reinforce the squad.

Now, it is interesting to look at the statistics of “recruiting” U-21 national team players (born on and after 01.01.1996) to NAT in the given U-21 qualification cycle when compared to previous years. The number of match entries based on the NAT’s “Player List” is given in brackets preceded by the number of matches played.

2017/19 Qualification cycle

(Players born on and after 01.01.1996)

2017 (before the start of the U-21 competition cycle)

1. Matviyenko Mykola, 02.05.1996	3 (0)
2. Kovalenko Viktor, 14.02.1996	3 (0)
3. Besedin Artem, 31.03.1996	3 (0)
4. Tsygankov Viktor, 15.11.1997	1 (2)
5. Shepeliev Volodymyr, 01.06.1997	2 (0)
6. Zinchenko Oleksandr, 15.12.1996	0 (1)
7. Lunin Andriy, 11.02.1999	0 (2)
8. Dovbyk Artem, 21.06.1997	0 (1)

2017 (after U-21 cycle started)⁸⁷

1. Matviyenko Mykola, 02.05.1996	4 (1)
2. Besedin Artem, 31.03.1996	3 (1)
3. Kovalenko Viktor, 14.02.1996	3 (0)
4. Zinchenko Oleksandr, 15.12.1996	2 (1)
5. Lunin Andriy, 11.02.1999	0 (4)
6. Shepeliev Volodymyr, 01.06.1997	0 (3)
7. Dovbyk Artem, 21.06.1997	0 (1)
8. Tsygankov Viktor, 15.11.1997	0 (1)
9. Lukyanchuk Pavlo 19.05.1996	0 (1)

⁸⁷ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2017. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/waph2p7>

2018 (by the end of the U-21 cycle)⁸⁸

1. Matviyenko Mykola, 02.05.1996	8 (0)
2. Zinchenko Oleksandr, 15.12.1996	8 (0)
3. Tsygankov Viktor, 15.11.1997	6 (0)
4. Besedin Artem, 31.03.1996	4 (0)
5. Lunin Andriy, 11.02.1999	2 (5)
6. Shepeliev Volodymyr, 01.06.1997	2 (1)
7. Kovalenko Viktor, 14.02.1996	2 (1)
8. Shaparenko Mykola, 04.10.1998	2 (0)
9. Lukyanchuk Pavlo, 19.05.1996	1 (1)
10. Kravets Vasyly, ⁸⁹ 20.08.1997	0 (3)

The list of those players who took part in the 2017/19 UEFA European U-21 Championship cycle and at the same time were involved with the “A” team ⁹⁰ (after DOB the number of match appearances is given):

1. Kovalenko Viktor, 14.02.1996	8
2. Shepeliev Volodymyr, 01.06.1997	5
3. Lunin Andriy, 11.02.1999	5
4. Zinchenko Oleksandr, 15.12.1996	3
5. Besedin Artem, 31.03.1996	3
6. Lukyanchuk Pavlo, 19.05.1996	4
7. Shaparenko Mykola, 04.10.1998	4
8. Dovbyk Artem, 21.06.1997	2
9. Kravets Vasyly, 20.08.1997	1
10. Matviyenko Mykola, 02.05.1996	1

As described, 10 footballers of the U-21 team played both sides. Only Viktor Tsygankov constantly remained in the team under Andriy Shevchenko’s leadership (total number equals to starting 11). Is this number big or small? Let’s consider the statistics of the previous cycles taking the most successful 2004/06 one both for U-21 and NAT as a starting point when the Ukrainians became runners-up of the UEFA European U-21 Championship in Portugal and reached the quarter-final of the 2006 FIFA World Cup in Germany. Let’s remind ourselves that before 2006 the UEFA tournaments for “A” and U-21 teams were played in parallel, i.e. U-21 teams had the same composition of the qualifying group as “A” teams did. Starting from 2007/09 season, UEFA kicked-off U-21 European Championship separately from NAT, with separate teams’ ranking and baskets for the draw, and competition calendar was introduced for U-21 teams too. The U-21 competition

⁸⁸ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2018. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uefprep>

⁸⁹ 2018–19 UEFA Nations League B. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wgxx3rx>

⁹⁰ 2019 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification Group 4. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/vwp3s6p>

calendar was shifted for one year compared to one for NATs. 2006/07 cycle became a transitional one and was played to a reduced format.

2004/06 Qualification cycle

(Players born on and after 01.01.1983)

2005 (by the end of the U-21 cycle)⁹¹

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Iatsenko Oleksandr, 24.02.1985 | 1 (0) |
| 2. Olexandr Maksymov, 13.02.1985 | 1 (0) |

On 12.10.2005 Iatsenko and Maksymov took part in home friendly match vs. Japan upon concluding the group stage and before U-21 play-off matches in November.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's entry for 2006 FIFA World Cup⁹² featured 7 players who were eligible to take part in the U-21 qualification in the given cycle:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Iatsenko Oleksandr, 24.02.1985 | 0 (5) |
| 2. Milevskiy Artem, 12.01.1985 | 4 (1) |
| 3. Pyatov Andriy, 28.06.1984 | 0 (5) |
| 4. Chygyrnskiy Dmytro, 07.11.1986 | 0 (5) |
| 5. Shust Bohdan, 04.03.1986 | 0 (5) |
| 6. Husyev Oleg, 25.04.1983 | 5 (0) |
| 7. Rusol Andriy, 16.01.1983 | 4 (1) |

The first four of listed players were involved with U-21 team in matches in Portugal and joined "A" team only after the final match of the UEFA European championship (played on 04.06.2006). And on the 14th of June 2006 Ukraine played its first match in Germany. Husyev and Rusol did not play in the U-21 qualifying rounds. Shust had only a few international caps at the beginning of the cycle and debuted in NAT in February 2006. Thus, no exchange of players between the teams was the case. From the four listed U-21 players, the only one fielded in four "A" team matches in Germany was Artem Milevskiy. Since then he did not come back to U-21 team, although he was still eligible to play in the next cycle. Bohdan Shust played for U-21 team in the 2007/09 cycle but played just one NAT match in February 2007 before the start of the competition cycle, so his statistics was not taken into account here.

2007/09 Qualification cycle

(Players born on and after 01.01.1986)

2007 (after U-21 cycle started)⁹³

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-------|
| 1. Gladkiy Olexandr 24.08.1987 | 5 (0) |
|--------------------------------|-------|

⁹¹ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2005. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wojhnw3>

⁹² Ukraine. List of players FIFA WC 2006 FIFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v5hjxy5>

⁹³ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2007. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uf7ahbs>

2008 (by the end of the U-21 cycle)⁹⁴

1. Mandzyuk Vitaliy, 24.01.1986	5 (1)
2. Gladkiy Olexandr, 24.08.1987	3 (1)
3. Dopilka Oleh, 12.03.1986	2 (0)
4. Fedoriv Vitaliy, 21.10.1987	1 (0)

In 2008 Ukraine U-21s played only one qualifying match against Czech Republic on the 9th of September that ended with 1:0 win for Ukraine. Players Gladkiy, Dopilka and Fedoriv were fielded in this last qualifying match.

2009/11 Qualification cycle

(Players born on and after 01.01.1988)

2009⁹⁵

1. Yarmolenko Andriy, 23.10.1989	6 (0)
2. Rakits'kyi Yaroslav, 03.08.1989	4 (0)
3. Pashaev Pavlo, 04.01.1988	2 (0)

Yarmolenko played all matches for "A" team in autumn but played just one match for his U-21 team in the first game of the cycle against Malta in June, so did Rakits'kyi, who joined "A" team in October. Pashaev played friendlies in February before the start of the U-21 competition cycle.

2010 (by the end of the U-21 cycle)⁹⁶

1. Konoplyanka Yevhen, 29.09.1989	5 (0)
2. Rakits'kyi Yaroslav, 03.08.1989	3 (0)
3. Yarmolenko Andriy, 23.10.1989	1 (0)
4. Zozulya Roman, 17.11.1989	1 (0)
5. Kanibolotskiy Anton, 16.05.1988	0 (1)

2011/13 Qualification cycle

(Players born on and after 01.01.1990)

2011 (starting from U-21 competition cycle)⁹⁷

1. Butko Bohdan, 13.01.1991	6 (0)
2. Garmash Denys, 19.04.1990	3 (0)
3. Bezus Roman, 26.09.1990	1 (1)
4. Kryvtsov Serhiy, 15.03.1991	0 (1)

⁹⁴ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2008. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tjssxkq>

⁹⁵ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2009. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/rry5oq8>

⁹⁶ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2010. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wb8ljah>

⁹⁷ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2011. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/sw4yh9r>

What happened was that since Ukraine “A” did not take part in the UEFA EURO 2012 qualifying round as host association’s team, the team started to involve U-21 players from the very beginning of the U-21 qualifying round. And this is why Butko and Garmash have not played for U-21s.

2012 (by the end of the U-21 competition cycle)⁹⁸.

1. Butko Bohdan, 13.01.1991	6 (3)
2. Garmash Denys, 19.04.1990	5 (4)
3. Bezus Roman, 26.09.1990	1 (1)
4. Koval Maxym, 09.12.1992	1 (6)

Player List for UEFA EURO 2012⁹⁹:

Koval Maxym, 09.12.1992	0 (3)
Butko Bohdan, 13.01.1991	1 (2)
Garmash Denys, 19.04.1990	1 (2)

2013/15 Qualification cycle

(Players born on and after 01.01.1992)

In 2013 no U-21 players were called up to the Ukraine “A” team.

2014 (by the end of U-21 cycle)¹⁰⁰

1. Budkivskiy Pylyp, 10.03.1992	3 (1)
2. Ordets Ivan, 08.07.1992	1 (2)
3. Bolbat Serhiy, 13.06.1993	1 (0)

Budkivskiy and Ordets did not play in the first match in the play-off round against Germany on 09.10.2014 (Ukraine lost 0:3) but took part in the second leg match on 14.10.2014 (ended with 0:2 defeat). Meanwhile, Budkivskiy played two UEFA EURO 2016 qualifying matches, i.e. against Belarus on 09.10.2014 and FYR Macedonia on 12.10.2014.

2015/17 Qualification cycle

(Players born on and after 01.01.1994)

2015 (after U-21 competition cycle started)¹⁰¹

1. Zinchenko Olexandr 15.12.1996	1 (0)
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⁹⁸ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2012. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/so6apts>

⁹⁹ Ukraine. Player List for UEFA EURO 2012 En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/rofgncj3>

¹⁰⁰ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2014. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uexdsdk>

¹⁰¹ Сезон збірної України з футболу 2015. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wsr47kx>

2016 (by the end of U-21 cycle)¹⁰²

1. Kovalenko Viktor, 14.02.1996 9 (1)
2. Zinchenko Olexandr, 15.12.1996 8 (0)

Player List for UEFA EURO 2016¹⁰³

- Kovalenko Viktor, 14.02.1996 3 (0)
- Zinchenko Olexandr, 15.12.1996 3 (0)

The summary table listing the above seven U-21 qualification cycles

Qualification cycle	Number of players	Position in the group following the results of the qualification
2004/06	2	2
2007/09	4	2
2009/11	6	1
2011/13	5	3
2013/15	3	2
2015/17	2	4
2017/19	10	3

2017/19 competition cycle evidently happened to be kind of abnormal. The previous 2009/11 one saw the second biggest number of transfers of players between “A” and U-21 national teams. Also 2009/11 was extremely successful for U-21s when Ukraine finished as group leader in a difficult group with France and Belgium, then won against the Netherlands in the play-off round and reached the final round of the UEFA European Championship in Denmark. Even today the key role in “A” team belongs to the players who were winners in 2009 and 2010, namely Rakits’kyy, Yarmolenko, Stepanenko and Konoplyanka (information from autumn 2018; however, Rakits’kyy announced his retirement from the national “A” team of Ukraine in November 2019). The record was broken in the last competition cycle with 10 players at one time, practically the whole squad! playing both sides. Yet only one side succeeded. The “A” team did.

Let’s add some emotions to pure statistics by illustrating a constant migration of players from U-21 to “A” team with the following episodes.

Episode 1

With the start of 2017/19 U-21 qualifying cycle, in the first two matches against Latvia and Andorra (played on 01.09.2017 and 05.09.2017) seven players could have potentially reinforced the U-21 squad but they were on “A” duty. Matviyenko, Besedin, Zinchenko and Kovalenko were fielded in matches both for U-21 and “A” teams. Lunin, Tsygankov and Shepelev were on the Player List for the match vs. Turkey on 02.09.2017¹⁰⁴. But for the next match against Iceland on 05.09.2017,

¹⁰² Сезон збірної України з футболу 2016. Uk.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/u53snbz>

¹⁰³ Ukraine. List of players UEFA EURO 2016 En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3kummer9>

¹⁰⁴ 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ qualification — UEFA Group I Ukraine vs Turkey 02.09.2017. Uafootball.net.ua URL : <https://tinyurl.com/s6vk9vh> or Skysports.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/r47pgjc>

the only one included on the Player List was Lunin. Shepelev and Tsygankov were not on the List at all¹⁰⁵. In the meantime, the only footballer who played in two premier matches for the U-21s and later was called up to national “A” team was Dovbyk. The U-21s lost two points in the match against Latvia¹⁰⁶.

Episode 2

On the same day, 27.03.2018, the U-21s played their key qualifying match against England and national “A” played friendly against Japan. Three players namely Zinchenko, Besedin and Matvienko, who could have reinforced their U-21 squad in the match against England, were in the “A” team squad. Well, let us not rely on Tsygankov here, because Tsygankov played exclusively for Shevchenko’s team in the given competition cycle. After Ukraine “A” first friendly against Saudi Arabia on 23.03.2018, Lunin, Shepelev and Kovalenko joined U-21 team, but neither Shepelev nor Kovalenko took part in the NAT match¹⁰⁷. Ukraine lost 1:2 against England.

Episode 3

Let’s remember what Andriy Shevchenko said the day before the UEFA Nations League match against Czech Republic about goalkeeper Andriy Lunin and him join national “A” team. Lunin was on the Player List for the friendly match in Italy on October 10 and played for U-21 team against Scotland on October 12 before his return to NAT. In the meantime, on October 16, U-21 coaching staff fielded second-choice goalkeeper in the last qualifying match against Netherlands. On the same day Ukraine national “A” team won over Czech Republic and took up top position in the group and thus, secured their appearance in League A for the next UEFA Nations League edition. What is even more important is that now the team will be seeded from the second basket during the UEFA EURO 2020 qualifying round draw. As to Lunin, he watched the game from the substitutes’ bench. Winner takes all¹⁰⁸.

And finally, let me share Vasyl Kravets’ story, who was playing for CD Lugo (Segunda División) on a regular basis at the beginning of 2018/19 season but

¹⁰⁵ 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ qualification — UEFA Group I Iceland vs. Ukraine 05.09.2017. Uafootball.net.ua URL : <https://tinyurl.com/up4gr8w> or Espn.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/r2gogru>

¹⁰⁶ 2017/19 UEFA European U-21 Championship, Qualifying Round — Group 4. Latvia vs. Ukraine 01.09.2017 UEFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/vm4lbp4>

¹⁰⁷ International Match Saudi Arabia vs Ukraine // Skysports.com, Friday 23rd March, 2018. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/t6deb76>

¹⁰⁸ Literal Russian translation of the phrase “Winner takes all” has many versions. For example, winners can’t be judged or numerous other versions like “success is never blamed”, “victors don’t have to justify themselves”, “victors are not judged”, “success is never blamed”. However this phrase has its own origin. The legend says that those words belong to the Russian Empress Ekaterina II (Catherine the Great). She supposedly said them in order to protect Aleksandr Suvorov who wanted to be judged for having neglected the order by the commander-in-chief Rummyantsev and took by assault the Turkish fortress Turtukay in 1773. Ekaterina wrote her verdict: “Winners can’t be judged”. However, this legend has no historical evidence. Серов В. В. Энциклопедический словарь крылатых слов и выражений. М.: Локид-Пресс. 2003.

remained a substitution bench resident in NAT during FIFA international windows in September and October.

But if we take a closer look at the history of so-called “NAT-to-U21” migration in previous years we may notice the following. In 2008, U-21s played only one qualifying match (following the first ever independent qualification draw which was followed by more than four hours of negotiations among group participants). Three out of four players involved with NAT joined the U-21 team for the last qualifying match. Ukraine won the match, by the by. Probably, the fact that Oleksiy Mykhalychenko was at the helm of NAT and had coached U-21s before mattered too.

In 2009 and 2010 the U-21 team was delegating Yarmolenko, Rakits'kyy and Konoplyanka to the national “A” team on a regular basis and suffered no problems. It was the other way round. The U-21s won their play-off while NAT lost one (in fact, the U-21s played their play-off in October and NAT — in November).

The U-21 team, apparently, did not manage to find any adequate substitution to Garmash and Butko who left for NAT right before 2011/13 qualification cycle started. Even though NAT had no official matches during this cycle, the U-21 team was playing without Kryvtsov or Bezus from time to time.

In 2014 the U-21s “lost” two of their key players, Budkivskiy and Ordets, in the most inappropriate time — right before their first play-off match against Germany.

In 2015/16 competition cycle, U-21s practically lost all chances to succeed already in fall 2015, as it was the case in 2007/09. On top of that, Zinchenko and Kovalenko formally should have started in the next qualifying round. Therefore, their involvement with two teams, most likely, made no harm, and player migration between national teams was a sort of mutual benefit or mutual enrichment, if you like.

On a final note let me say a few more words about “mutual enrichment” by presenting a table containing NAT and U-21’s results in the qualifying rounds of the qualification cycles for UEFA EURO, FIFA World Cup, UEFA Nations Leagues and UEFA European U-21 Championship. The given year means the year when the qualifying round ended and not the year when the final round of the competitions took place.

	«A»		U-21
1995	4 UEFA Euro	1995	2
1997	2 FIFA WC (PO — L)	1997	2
1999	2 UEFA Euro (PO — L)	1999	3
2001	2 FIFA WC (PO — L)	2001	1 (PO — L)
2003	3 UEFA Euro	2003	3
2005	1 FIFA WC	2005	2 (PO — W)
		2006	2
2007	4 UEFA Euro		
		2008	2

2009	2 FIFA WC (PO — L)		
		2010	1 (PO — W)
2011	UEFA Euro host association team		
		2012	3
2013	2 FIFA WC (PO — L)		
		2014	2 (PO — L)
2015	3 UEFA Euro (PO — W)		
		2016	4
2017	3 FIFA WC		
2018	1 NL UEFA	2018	3

UEFA EURO — UEFA European Championship

WC FIFA — FIFA World Cup

NL UEFA — UEFA Nations League

PO — Play-off round

L — Loss

W — Win

Obviously, “A” team is a top priority for any UEFA or FIFA member association. The second team, i.e the U-21 still remains the second despite their participation in continental tournaments and their potential to qualify for the football tournament of the Summer Olympics once in four years.

Nevertheless, a situation around talented youth may be and should be discussed in the context of “mutual enrichment” whether we are talking about Milevskiy, Yarmolenko, Rakits’kyy, Zinchenko or Kovalenko. Because these players, despite their age limits, joined national “A” team at a younger age than they would usually do. Moreover, modern football is “getting younger” indeed¹⁰⁹. For example, the Player List of France, 2018 World Champions, once had four players eligible to play in the 2017/19 UEFA European U-21 Championship cycle, namely Benjamin Pavard (28.03.1996), Lucas Hernandez (14.02.1996), Kylian Mbappe (20.12.1998) and Ousmane Dembele (15.05.1997). England, the semifinalist, had four players too — Trent Alexander-Arnold (07.10.1998), Dele Alli (11.04.1996), Ruben Loftus-Cheek (23.01.1996), Marcus Rashford (31.10.1997). Even unlucky Germany included two U-21 players, Julian Brandt (02.05.1996) and Timo Werner (06.03.1996)¹¹⁰ on their Player List for the 2018 FIFA World Cup. And noteworthy is the fact that there were seven U-21 players on the Player List of Ukraine for 2006 FIFA World Cup.

Probably we should make references to natural change of generations or retirement of “seniors” who immediately can be replaced by “juniors”. However, we shouldn’t forget about a natural balance of interests if we aim not only to

¹⁰⁹ Kacper Kozłowski (16.10.2003) beats Jude Bellingham (29.06.2003) to Become Youngest Player in European Championships. Poland’s Kacper Kozłowski becomes the new Youngest Player in the Euros at 17 years and 246 days (he entered the game as a substitute in the match Poland vs. Spain on 19 June 2021) beating England’s Jude Bellingham (who was 17 years and 349 days old when he also entered the game as a substitute in the match England vs. Croatia on 13 June 2021).

Kozłowski becomes youngest player to appear at a EURO Uefa.com/uefaeuro-2020, Sunday 13 June 2021, // URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3cf4tsjj>

¹¹⁰ 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia™ Teams. FIFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/95ap3cxx>

exploit U-21 team but count on maximum effect by simply accumulating as much international game experience as possible through qualifications for the final tournament of UEFA European Championship that, in its turn, enhances the status of any national association.

And it is natural in view of the lack of competitive players on international arena (enough to look at number of players from Top-5¹¹¹ football leagues in the squads of Group 4 for the 2017/19 UEFA European U-21 championship: Ukraine — 4; Scotland — 12; Netherlands — 57; England — with English Premier League excluded — 8; information is given for the beginning of 2018/19 season), the impact such involvement of any number of young players with NAT may have on U-21 team potential is far from positive. Setting aside team formation, tactics, training process etc., it is evident that national association needs to set not only basic priorities but to develop an effective and non-reflexive interaction within their National Team Institutes at the level of “human resources management” for NAT, which, as experience suggests, can either be absolutely moderate and quite mild (in an “environmentally” friendly way) towards “junior business partners” or turn into shameless expansion with an inevitable negative impact on U-21 team.

To sum up, not only the present but the future of our national teams too depends on professionalism and knowledge of NA’s executive management and relevant managers within the NA structure. In Ukrainian Football Association, those structures are National Teams Committee or National Teams Department. Naturally, players and coaches come and go. But they should not be sacrificed for the sake of interests of the main national team. No doubt we are dealing with very difficult and comprehensive task of many psychological aspects. But without a balance of interest and a clear policy towards the second national team, the latter may have a permanent status of “spare parts store” or “organ donor” and hardly be of any benefit to NAT, and not only in the medium term. And, as it may happen, in some situations “winner takes nothing” indeed¹¹².

Finally, here goes the statistics from the previous 13 qualifying cycles for UEFA European U-21 Championships which Ukraine took part in too.

¹¹¹ Players Abroad. Int.soccerway.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/skwwusc>

¹¹² Winner Take Nothing is a 1933 collection of short stories by Ernest Hemingway. Originally published on October 27 in 1933.

1**1996 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 4¹¹³**

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Italy	10	6	3	1	22	8	+14	21
2	Ukraine	10	6	2	2	24	12	+12	20
3	Slovenia	10	6	1	3	19	12	+7	19
4	Croatia	10	5	2	3	13	12	+1	17
5	Lithuania	10	2	2	6	14	16	-2	8
6	Estonia	10	0	0	10	5	37	-32	0

2**1998 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 9¹¹⁴**

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Germany	8	6	2	0	20	3	+17	20
2	Ukraine	8	5	1	2	14	4	+10	16
3	Portugal	8	4	2	2	20	11	+9	14
4	Albania	8	1	1	6	6	19	-13	4
5	Armenia	8	1	0	7	8	31	-23	3

3**2000 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 4¹¹⁵**

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	France	8	6	1	1	18	4	+14	19
2	Russia	8	6	0	2	17	5	+12	18
3	Ukraine	8	3	2	3	16	12	+4	11
4	Iceland	8	2	0	6	9	18	-9	6
5	Armenia	8	1	1	6	6	27	-21	4

4**2002 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 5¹¹⁶**

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Ukraine	10	6	1	3	14	13	+1	19
2	Poland	10	5	3	2	20	14	+6	18
3	Norway	10	6	0	4	21	12	+9	18
4	Belarus	10	5	1	4	21	14	+7	16
5	Armenia	10	4	2	4	10	15	-5	14
6	Wales	10	0	1	9	4	22	-18	1

2002 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification play-offs
Ukraine vs. Switzerland 1:2 and 1:2

¹¹³ 1996 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/r5gkejh>

¹¹⁴ 1998 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v5ebp8o>

¹¹⁵ 2000 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wpnp98>

¹¹⁶ 2002 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v47bevkl>

5

2004 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 6¹¹⁷

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Spain	8	6	1	1	16	2	+14	19
2	Greece	8	3	3	2	10	7	+3	12
3	Ukraine	8	2	5	1	8	5	+3	11
4	Northern Ireland	8	2	1	5	8	16	-8	7
5	Armenia	8	1	2	5	5	17	-12	5

6

2006 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 2¹¹⁸

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Denmark	12	9	2	1	30	12	+18	29
2	Ukraine	12	7	2	3	22	7	+15	23
3	Greece	12	6	2	4	18	9	+9	20
4	Turkey	12	5	4	3	15	9	+6	19
5	Georgia	12	3	2	7	7	22	-15	11
6	Albania	12	2	3	7	9	27	-18	9
7	Kazakhstan	12	2	1	9	8	23	-15	7

2006 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification play-offs
Ukraine vs. Belgium 2-3 and 3-1

7

2007 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 12¹¹⁹

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Bulgaria	2	2	0	0	5	1	+4	6
2	Ukraine	2	1	0	1	2	4	-2	3
3	Croatia	2	0	0	2	2	4	-2	0

8

2009 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 2¹²⁰

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Turkey	8	6	1	1	18	6	+12	19
2	Ukraine	8	5	0	3	16	7	+9	15
3	Czech Republic	8	4	2	2	19	5	+14	14
4	Armenia	8	3	1	4	8	16	-8	10
5	Liechtenstein	8	0	0	8	4	31	-27	0

¹¹⁷ 2004 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wqocknd>

¹¹⁸ 2006 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uqd4fzc>

¹¹⁹ 2007 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/scoep69>

¹²⁰ 2009 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tebqvpe>

9**2011 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 8¹²¹**

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Ukraine	8	4	4	0	13	5	+8	16
2	Belgium	8	4	3	1	8	5	+3	15
3	France	8	4	3	1	12	6	+6	15
4	Slovenia	8	2	2	4	6	10	-4	8
5	Malta	8	0	0	8	0	13	-13	0

2011 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification play-offs
Netherlands vs. Ukraine 1:3 and 2:0

10**2013 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 2¹²²**

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Sweden	10	7	1	2	18	10	+8	22
2	Slovenia	10	6	2	2	15	8	+7	20
3	Ukraine	10	5	2	3	21	10	+11	17
4	Finland	10	3	3	4	12	14	-2	12
5	Lithuania	10	3	0	7	9	18	-9	9
6	Malta	10	1	2	7	8	23	-15	5

11**2015 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 5¹²³**

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Croatia	8	6	1	1	20	5	+15	19
2	Ukraine	8	6	1	1	20	8	+12	19
3	Switzerland	8	5	0	3	23	8	+15	15
4	Latvia	8	2	0	6	11	22	-11	6
5	Liechtenstein	8	0	0	8	3	34	-31	0

2015 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification play-offs
Ukraine vs. Germany 0-3 & 0-2

¹²¹ 2011 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/rfbpnju>

¹²² 2013 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/t82u8ub>

¹²³ 2015 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/sw9trcd>

122017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 3¹²⁴

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	Macedonia	10	6	3	1	13	7	+6	21
2	France	10	6	2	2	17	8	+9	20
3	Iceland	10	5	3	2	13	9	+4	18
4	Ukraine	10	4	2	4	14	12	+2	14
5	Scotland	10	2	2	6	8	17	-9	8
6	Northern Ireland	10	0	2	8	6	18	-12	2

132019 UEFA European Under-21 Championship qualification, Group 4¹²⁵

	Team	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
1	England	10	8	2	0	23	4	19	26
2	Netherlands	10	5	3	2	21	6	15	18
3	Ukraine	10	5	2	3	18	12	6	17
4	Scotland	10	4	2	4	13	13	0	14
5	Latvia	10	0	4	6	5	18	-13	4
6	Andorra	10	0	3	7	1	28	-27	3

¹²⁴ 2017 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uf243ez>

¹²⁵ 2019 UEFA European Under-21 Championship Qualification. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tndm63m>

WINNER TAKES ALL, or When “A” Team Meets U21s (Part 2)

“All things are numbers.”¹²⁶

— Pythagoras

The previous chapter said that modern football was “getting younger” and presented a small piece of statistics from 2018 FIFA World Cup. The article “Ten most fielded U-21 players in the big-5 leagues and Portuguese top division” published in Swiss CIES Football Observatory¹²⁷ was a good motivation to study the statistics of the U-21 players on the Player Lists of national “A” teams participating in the FIFA World Cup and the UEFA EURO. With the collaboration between national “A” and U-21 teams as an integral part of National Teams Institute development&management at FIFA and UEFA member associations in mind, a question naturally arises — how many young players, eligible to take part in U-21 competitions (in the context of UEFA European U-21 Championship because we are considering the age category for UEFA competitions), are involved with national “A” teams at top-level tournaments.

To start, let’s have a look at national “A” teams’ statistics gathered from the above-mentioned Top-5 leagues for major tournaments over the last 18 years.

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014	2016	2018
England	6	6	3	6	—	0	6	6	5	4
Germany	1	2	5	8	0	6	4	5	5	2
France	3	2	0	1	2	0	1	3	2	4
Spain	5	3	6	5	3	3	0	1	1	1
Italy	3	0	1	1	0	0	2	3	1	—

2000 — UEFA Euro 2000 (players born on and after 01.01.1977)

2002 — 2002 FIFA World Cup (players born on and after 01.01.1979)

2004 — UEFA Euro 2004 (players born on and after 01.01.1981)

2006 — 2006 FIFA World Cup (players born on and after 01.01.1983)

2008 — UEFA Euro 2008 (players born on and after 01.01.1986)

2010 — 2010 FIFA World Cup (players born on and after 01.01.1988)

2012 — UEFA Euro 2012 (players born on and after 01.01.1990)

2014 — 2014 FIFA World Cup (players born on and after 01.01.1992)

2016 — UEFA Euro 2016 (players born on and after 01.01.1994)

2018 — 2018 FIFA World Cup (players born on and after 01.01.1996)

¹²⁶ Pythagoras, as everyone knows, said: «All things are numbers» [Russell B. In A History of Western Philosophy. Book 1. Part I/ Chapter III: Pythagoras. P. 35] URL : <https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Pythagoras>

¹²⁷ Weekly Post // CIES Football Observatory. № 240. November 12, 2018. Most Fielded U21 Players: Hot Prospects. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ups9edv>

Unlike CIES Football Observatory, we did not concentrate on the playing time but on footballer’s entry in the Player List for the Tournament which demonstrates how unconditional “A” team interference into U-21’s interests is. In retrospective, let’s consider UEFA U-21 age category at the moment of staging FIFA World Cup or UEFA EURO (e.g. CIES Football Observatory studies were centred on players born on and after 01.01.1997).

By accepting the fact that other FIFA member associations have no U-21 competitions and limit themselves with U-20 teams only (with the CAF being the only one confederation hosting U-23 Africa Cup of Nations), let’s limit ourselves with UEFA U-21 age category which clearly shows the level of young players involvement in national “A” competitions. Another simplification relates to transitional 2006/07 UEFA European U-21 Championship which took place between FIFA and UEFA tournaments, i.e. 2006 FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO 2008. The players born on and after 01.01.1985 took part in the U-21 Championship in an “age-lowered” format. During UEFA EURO 2008 qualifying round, U-21 age category encompassed players born on or after 1985–1986. The 2006/07 tournament was shortened, so 1986 year of birth was taken as a starting point to consider UEFA EURO 2008.

Now, let’s get back to general statistics for UEFA tournaments.

UEFA EURO

	1	2	3
2000 (16)	2	43	11,69
2004 (16)	2	48 ↑	13,04 ↑
2008 (16)	4	32 ↓	8,7 ↓
2012 (16)	3	35 ↑	9,51 ↑
2016 (24)	2	53 ↑	9,6 ↑

1 — number of teams with no U-21 players

2 — number of U-21 players

3 — % of U-21 players on the Player List

The number of UEFA EURO final tournament participants is given in brackets. Up and down arrows show increase or decrease compared to previous editions.

FIFA World Cups

First, participants from UEFA are given followed by general statistics for all FIFA World Cup participating teams.

UEFA

	1	2	3
2002 (15)	2	39	11,3
2006 (14)	1	55 ↑	17,08 ↑
2010 (13)	3	25 ↓	8,36 ↓
2014 (13)	0	43 ↑	15,99 ↑
2018 (14)	1	30 ↓	9,32 ↓

FIFA

	1	2	3
2002	2	120	16,3
2006	2	125 ↑	16,98 ↑
2010	7	69 ↓	9,38 ↓
2014	3	84 ↑	11,41 ↑
2018	1	65 ↓	8,83 ↓

The number of UEFA member associations taking part in FIFA World Cup is given in brackets.

The Summary Table for two FIFA and UEFA tournaments for “A” teams representing UEFA member associations is as follows:

	1	2	3
2000 (16)	2	43	11,69
2002 (15)	2	39	11,3
2004 (16)	2	48 ↑	13,04 ↑
2006 (14)	1	55 ↑	17,08 ↑
2008 (16)	4	32 ↓	8,7 ↓
2010 (13)	3	25 ↓	8,36 ↓
2012 (16)	3	35 ↑	9,51 ↑
2014 (13)	0	43 ↑	15,99 ↑
2016 (24)	2	53 ↑	9,6 ↑
2018 (14)	1	30 ↓	9,32 ↓

Let’s remind ourselves that all five FIFA World Cups (in 2002, 2006, 2010, 2014 and 2018) had 32 participants. At the same time, UEFA EURO format had 16 participating teams four times (in 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012) with 24 teams for UEFA EURO 2016.

Now, let’s consider the number of appearances for:

FIFA WORLD CUP

Switzerland — 9 U-21 players at 2006 FIFA World Cup

Nigeria — 12 U-21 players at 2002 FIFA World Cup

UEFA EURO

England — 6 U-21 players at UEFA EURO 2000 & UEFA EURO 2012

Russia — 6 U-21 players at UEFA EURO 2004

Spain — 6 U-21 players at UEFA EURO 2004

Here, one can go into a long and detailed analysis of presented figures, searching for certain regular patterns and commonalities in the number of young players and successful performances by either “A” or U-21 teams. But since *“all things are numbers”*, one should admit that the majority of national “A” teams do involve U-21 players. Today, this process is very natural for the National Team Institute within the structure of national associations. Consequently, national associations should take this factor into account while customising it to local conditions in the process of implementing medium and long-term strategies for National Team Institute development. Modern football is getting younger indeed!

Now, two interesting facts stand out which we can’t help but highlight.

Fact A.**Dutch story in the 2006 FIFA World Cup and 2004/06 UEFA European U-21 Championship**

Portugal, 4th of June 2006. The Netherlands beat Ukraine in the final match of the 2004/06 UEFA European U-21 Championship. Four players, namely Milevskiy, Chygrynskiy, Yatsenko and Pyatov were in the squad for the final match, and just a couple of weeks later joined the "A" team to play in 2006 FIFA World Cup. Three more U-21 players in the "A" squad namely Rusol, Husyev, Shust were not listed in Portugal.

Ukraine at 2006 FIFA World Cup (7)

Oleksandr Yatsenko	24 February 1985
Andriy Rusol	16 January 1983
Oleh Husyev	25 April 1983
Andriy Pyatov	28 June 1984
Dmytro Chygrynskiy	7 November 1986
Artem Milevskiy	12 January 1985
Bohdan Shust	4 March 1986

Seven footballers at a time, who later on would play in Germany, were missing on the Netherlands U-21 Player List. And at that time four of those seven have already had UEFA EURO 2004 with "A" team appearances in their profiles!

Netherlands at UEFA EURO 2004 (4)

Rafael van der Vaart	11 February 1983
Wesley Sneijder	9 June 1984
John Heitinga	15 November 1983
Arjen Robben	23 January 1984

Netherlands at 2006 FIFA World Cup (7)

Rafael van der Vaart	11 February 1983
Arjen Robben	23 January 1984
John Heitinga	15 November 1983
Hedwiges Maduro	13 February 1985
Robin van Persie	6 August 1983
Wesley Sneijder	9 June 1984
Ryan Babel	19 December 1986

Thus, 2004/06 UEFA U-21 Championship winner had 7 players on the substitution bench who certainly could have reinforced the performance. However, no help was needed. The Netherlands won the next 2007 European U-21 Championship too. As it turned out, Dutch football has an incredibly deep and absolutely competitive player pool!

It's true though, that for some U-21 teams the loss of one or two players could be fatal. But it's also true that for other teams it may not be the case at all. I repeat

myself by saying that a mere balance of interest as well as an objective assessment of a player pool to make “A” team should be the key for collaboration between “A” and U-21 national teams.

Fact B. Football is getting younger

Jadon Malik Sancho (DOB: 25.03.2000)¹²⁸ is an English football graduate and plays for Borussia Dortmund. On 12.10.2018 he made his “A” team international debut, though he was still eligible to play for U-19s in the 2018/19 cycle for UEFA European U-19 Championship, not to mention his eligibility to play for U-21 team too. He is not the first English player who debuted on the “A” level at such a young age. On 12.02.2003 Wayne Rooney made his international debut when he was only 17 years and 111 days old¹²⁹. Theo Walcott debuted on 30.05.2006 when he was 17 years and 75 days old¹³⁰.

By the by, for the last 18 years the England national team has been taking the lead among Top-5 football leagues in the number of U-21 players on Player Lists. And this is despite their failure to qualify for UEFA EURO 2008.

England — 42

Germany — 38

Spain — 28

France — 17

Italy — 11

On 20.08.2003 Cristiano Ronaldo just turned 18 when he played his debut match for Portugal “A” NT¹³¹. Lionel Messi was 18 years old too when he made his international debut for Argentina on 04.08.2005¹³². We can go on with the list of 18 year-olds but let’s have a look at Sancho’s story in the light of collaboration between professional football clubs and national football associations for UEFA and FIFA tournaments.

Fact C. Ambivalence

Croatia, May 2017. Sancho becomes UEFA U-17 EURO vice-champion. In September 2017, Sancho joined England squad for the 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup, but upon agreement with his German club Borussia Dortmund he took part

¹²⁸ Jadon Sancho. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb3joq9f>

¹²⁹ Wayne Rooney. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/hwjvju7>

¹³⁰ Theo Walcott. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/cw1qbgq>

¹³¹ Cristiano Ronaldo. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wlxekbk>

¹³² Lionel Messi. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/glbr2zu>

only in group stages of the competition, and upon its completion, before England's round of 16 tie against Japan on 16 October 2017, he returned to Dortmund¹³³. Despite the loss of their key player, England won FIFA U-17 World Cup. And again, here the question is how strong their reserve team is and how competitive players of national football association are.

Only the patronage of new FC Barcelona head coach Josep Guardiola, (see page 43) allowed Lionel Messi back in 2008 to join the Olympic football team of Argentina in Beijing. Messi's performance contributed to their success in the Olympic tournament. However, as we know, CAS cancelled the FIFA's decision in favour of the Football Association of Argentina and allowed the club to keep the player at their disposal. In summer 2018 England U-19 team was missing three players on U-19's duty with Sancho being one of them. This was because professional football clubs did not release their players for the 2017/18 UEFA European U-19 Championship since the Championship was staged outside FIFA international windows. The final rounds of FIFA and UEFA national youth competitions take place outside FIFA International Match Calendar and thus, fall under club's pressure simply because clubs adhere to the provisions of the Regulations where no need for clubs to release their players to the national youth teams is set. By the way, The FA Technical Director Dan Ashworth voiced this problem in July 2018 right before the UEFA U-19 final competition.

Well, the world is imperfect. The football world is all the more imperfect. As Hamlet put it: *“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.”* — *Hamlet (1.5.167-8), Hamlet to Horatio*¹³⁴.

Therefore, many factors impact national team activities. Sometimes there are “family ties” deeply enrooted in collaborations between “A” and U-21 teams. At the same time national teams are under pressure from professional football clubs as clubs play a key role in player development and are able to make significant impact on national teams due to the shortcomings or imperfections, if you like, of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. So obviously, the mere minimum what “relatives in football” should do is to cultivate effective and mutually beneficial laws of the game.

And...an afterthought

Ukraine “A” team head coach Andriy Shevchenko called up Vitaliy Mykolenko (DOB: 29.05.1999) for the matches within November's International window in

¹³³ England Starlet Jadon Sancho at Centre of a Tug-of-war Between Borussia Dortmund and the FA. Mirror by Adrian Kajumba, 29 Sep 2017. Mirror.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/scnw9n9>; Jadon Sancho joins England U-17 World Cup squad. BBC Sport by Simon Stone, 4 October 2017. BBC.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/s2zo5qf>; Under-17 World Cup: England's Jadon Sancho called back by Borussia Dortmund. BBC Sport from the section European Football, 16 October 2017. BBC.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/u4qhmmmt>

¹³⁴ Shakespeare Quick Quotes — Hamlet (1.5.167-8), Hamlet to Horatio shakespeare-online.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/q7ho63ja>

2018. In autumn 2018 his debut for U-21 squad in the qualifying cycle for 2017/19 UEFA European U-21 Championship was preceded by his July 2018's qualification for the 2019 FIFA U-20 World Cup with the U-19s. At that time Ukraine U-20s played two friendlies in November international window. On May 23, 2019¹³⁵ the FIFA U-20 World Cup kicked-off with Ukraine being one of the participants. The sports season in the Ukrainian Premier-League, including U-19 Championship of Ukraine, finished at the end of May — at the time when matches in Poland were in full swing. Consequently, the Ukrainian FA was challenged to call up players for U-20 team long before the end of the sports season, because the Tournament had been preceded by the national team training camp where its duration was governed not only by the FFU and FIFA regulations but depended much on diplomatic skills of the Ukrainian FA senior officials. Clubs and NAT needed U-20 players because of challenges they were facing in the domestic championship. And NAT had upcoming matches ahead with at least one UEFA EURO 2020 qualifier in June. So their mutual interest towards players could not be discarded. And Andriy Shevchenko as head coach could have counted not only on Mykolenko and Lunin back then...

The release of all players called up to U-20 duty was credited to art of diplomacy demonstrated by U-20 head coach Oleksandr Petrakov and club's goodwill and understanding. Player Mykolenko suffered an injury during U-20 training camp that deprived him of chances to play at the World Cup. He got back to shape soon and both Lunin and himself were not only entered on the Player List for the match on the 7th of June 2019 but even fielded in the "A" NT's starting XI¹³⁶. Lunin had played in Poland and missed only one FIFA U-20 World Cup match because he was entered on the "A" NT's Players List for the above June's match. It is worth noting that in the meantime Ukraine U-20s¹³⁷ became FIFA U-20 World Cup winners.

National Team Institute of any national football association is a very complicated and fine mechanism operating both under pressure from all Institute's members, i.e. national teams of different age categories subject to constant exchange of footballers, as minor footballers play not only for seniors in "A" NT, and under influence from professional football clubs too. The Institute operates within truly controversial and conflicting environment where even the FIFA Regulations have no power.

The overall statistics for all U-21 footballers on Player Lists of the participating teams for the FIFA World Cups and UEFA EUROs over 2000–2018 is listed in **Annex 9**.

¹³⁵ 2019 FIFA U-20 World Cup. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uffejqv>

¹³⁶ UEFA Euro 2020, Qualifying round — Group B. Ukraine vs. Serbia 07.06.2019 UEFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/suahff3>

¹³⁷ FIFA WC U-20 Poland 2019, Quarter-final, Colombia vs. Ukraine 07 Jun 2019 FIFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ur7jrx8>

NATIONAL TEAM COACH

*“I took over a national squad,
but I plan to leave behind a team.”*
— Luis Aragones¹³⁸

To highlight the differences between the coach of the national team and a club coach, Mircea Lucescu said: *“The coach of the national team — is less a coach than a selector. His key task is to analyse the performances of the opponent and the performances of his own team and choose tactics accordingly. In the national team, his job is not to teach the players how to dribble or shoot!”*¹³⁹

Experienced coach Semen Altman¹⁴⁰ puts it this way: *“The coach of the national team is not simply a practical football guy and expert. This is a strong and powerful person, who is able, for a short period of time, to unite different people and athletes around common goals and objectives, build up the game, unite the players around himself and to do his best to have each of them feel proud of himself and his country, when running onto the field in the national team’s kit.*

This is an expert, a good psychologist, who knows not only the language of football but also knows how to make himself heard and understood by the players. This is a manager who can control dozens of cases simultaneously. When players and colleagues believe in the coach, trust can be developed. The national coach is at the centre of information flows, monitoring dozens of players in different championships. He bears a national responsibility. Their work has to be custom-made and different from a club coach’s daily practice, closely connected with the selection of candidates, who, in their turn, must meet the requirements of modern football on the international level.

Therefore, national team coaches must be experts with appropriate international experience and experience of FIFA and UEFA tournaments. They need to understand the mechanism of international competitions, the principles of building a National Team Institute and the principles of collaborating with the professional football clubs which prepare candidates for the national team of the country.”

Up until the end of 2016, the FFU National Teams Committee had its NYT head coaches working in parallel with different age groups: in the year when the

¹³⁸ They Said it: Luis Aragones (FIFA.com). 01 February 2015. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v3lcv7d>

¹³⁹ Новиков И. Почему Александр Головкич — украинский Гари Невилл. 19 декабря 2015, Tribuna.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9mrgqj>

¹⁴⁰ Coach of the South Korea Olympic team 1994–1996; coach of Ukraine “A” 2003–2007 & 2010–2011; head of the FFU National Teams Committee 2009–2011; mentor of national teams at FME, head coach of Moldova “A” for 3 months in 2019 (August — November 2019) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Semen_Altman

UEFA European Championship qualifying round began for the senior U-19 age category, the coach also began to work with the youngest NYT (U-15/16). This expanded the workload of the coaching staff to cover two teams (here, the workload is increased during the year, which, thereby, sets a specific work tone, because the coach of NYTs always lacks training practice) but also made it possible to provide links and continuity between the different age categories.

The choice of national team coaches must be deliberate and objective. In my opinion, a national association should prepare its own coaches through the work with national youth teams and the U-21 NT and present its own home-grown coach for the “A” team. Taking into account the specificity of the coach’s work, it is crucial to take advantage of the experience gained in the national association only when working with the national teams. Secondly, it is important to maintain continuity in the work of the national team coaches. Thirdly, it is financially beneficial because the native coach is always cheaper than a foreign one.

There is another essential requirement for the personality of a national team coach. The principles of RESPECT and FAIR PLAY are not just beautiful words or FIFA and UEFA slogans. These are the cornerstones of the work of the national team coach who must juggle constant psychological pressure from the media, including social media, clubs, fans, players and their agents, intermediaries and managers and nevertheless remain an impartial and honest professional. These qualities influence the impartiality, objectivity and uprightness of the player selection process, and are critical elements in ensuring the future positive results of the national teams.

OBVIOUSLY INCREDIBLE AND INCREDIBLY OBVIOUS, or Once Again On National Team Coach's Workload

*[Oh] How many a blissful revelation
The spirit of enlightenment hides!
And then experience born to lapses
And ingenious antinomy-wise
And chance, the heavenly inventor...
— Alexander Pushkin¹⁴¹*

To make the picture, portraying the workload of NAT and especially NYT's coach complete, in my opinion, the following characteristics and features should be added to his activities. **First**, in contrast to a regular, continuous and quite definitive workload a club coach has during the entire sports season with ordinary weekly micro cycles (if, of course, his team does not play in the UEFA club tournaments), for a national youth team coach, as a rule, it takes five, six or a maximum of seven events per year to handle, i.e. a selective training camp, double headers or a tournament with different continuity and competitive character and no fixed intervals between matches or training camps. For example, the "A" NT gets together, at best, six times during a calendar year provided the team's qualification for the final round of the UEFA EURO or FIFA World Cup, i.e. at five FIFA dates (in March, June, September, October and November), for the finals and for the matches preceding the finals (a number of matches during the preparation period are scheduled for the end of May — beginning of June instead of June's FIFA date)¹⁴². However, there is one-month interval between FIFA autumn dates with a three-month interval between November and March dates and a two-month interval between March and June, and June and September dates.

Second, a national youth team coach's workload lacks not only consistency and regularity but also has three-to-four month pauses/intervals when his team has neither matches nor training camps.

Third, a national team coach is always under pressure of time when getting his team ready for the matches. The time pressure is really tough to handle. He must

¹⁴¹ Vadim Rumynskiy [Вадим Румынский], the author of the translation. [Pranava.livejournal.com URL : https://tinyurl.com/19z1h2i](https://tinyurl.com/19z1h2i)

¹⁴² For the first time, before UEFA EURO final tournament, the dates for international matches in June 2021 were officially introduced by FIFA. Circular No. 1727 "Updates to the Men's and Women's International Match Calendars", Zurich // [Resources.fifa.com](https://resources.fifa.com), 18 August 2020. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y6yy8mzj>

get his team ready to play in only two-three days before the match date. One day out of those 2 or 3 is consumed by travel time and sometimes a coach does not even see his players for three or four months. Provided the team's qualification for the final round of the UEFA European U-17/19 Championship or FIFA U-17/20 World Cup, the best-case scenario for the coach would be a maximum of 13 days¹⁴³ in order to prepare his national team for the first match, or even less, if the first match of the final round takes place before Sunday *"the week preceding the week when the relevant final competition starts"* and if a NA is not blindly guided by the FIFA Regulations and provides for the increase of the relevant term in its national regulations on the status and transfer of players. And here we should bear in mind that the above FIFA Regulations were worked out exclusively for national "A" teams and tournaments for national "A" teams played under the auspices of FIFA and FIFA member confederations. Now, the period of players' release "to association teams", in our case to junior national teams or junior association teams, may be shorter and differ from the one set by the FIFA provisions, and all depends on goodwill of national associations. Also we should not discard professional football clubs and their interests as well as existing collaboration between clubs and NA. Let's face it — relations between NAs and clubs can be cold and even unfriendly, or maybe quite the contrary. Stories can be different indeed. Every NA sets its own periods/terms of the release of players to junior national teams including the final tournaments that may differ from those set by the FIFA Regulations and be either prolonged or shortened.

At the best-case scenario, a coach will have four full days. However, one day may be taken by travel time and itinerary. Of course, it is not the case if we are talking about entering the preparation stage for the final tournament or a training camp held out-of-competition period (for example, in January).

At the worst-case scenario, and depending on the age category, season and type of the match (official or friendly/international), a coach may have two, three and six (out-of-competition period — January and for U-15/16/17 NYT) or a maximum of seven days (before the UEFA mini-tournament), in accordance with the regulations in force in the Ukrainian FA. It's worth noting that most of the time, by the time a called-up player arrives for a national team duty, he will have played full-time official match in the national championship which may cause additional problems for a national team coaching and medical staff as they should take care of his recovery and ability to play a match in three or even two days.

Fourth, a national youth team coach should be prepared to play to the following competition schedule: two days in a row (at international youth tournament a team can play four matches within five days) or every other day (double friendly matches) or, at best, every third day during the official tournament.

Fifth, the coach is challenged by a limited number of players. During any final round of the UEFA U-17/U-19 Championship, FIFA U-17/20 World Cup or the

¹⁴³ In accordance with 2019 Regulations on Status and Transfer of Players: *"no later than Monday morning the week preceding the week when the relevant final competition starts"*.

Olympic Football Tournament, the Player List is limited by only 18 footballers¹⁴⁴. As a rule, during training camp before final round competitions, a coach may count on no more than 22–23 players if NA is quite generous in their release. However, usually a coach has 20 players or less at his disposal and often can count only on 18 footballers for international friendly matches. International tournaments make coach's workload even harder, because with the same 18 players at his disposal the team must play 4–5 matches within 6–7 days. His colleagues, club coaches are in more favourable position with a larger number of candidates during the preparation period, especially within pre-season activities, although match sheets are also limited to 18 players only.

Sixth, one cannot but admit short-term tournaments with three matches only. I am talking about UEFA mini-tournaments and group stages of the final rounds of the UEFA European U-17/19/21 Championships, FIFA U-17/20 World Cup as well as the Olympic Football Tournament. Of course, you need specific and enough game experience to play at such tournaments.

Seventh, since the country's strongest players in respective age categories play for their national teams, the level of competition as well as limited number of participants in the UEFA and FIFA final tournaments should be taken into account.

That said, any national team coach works under pressure of time to get his team ready; his agenda has a limited number of activities and matches over wider time intervals and a very tight match schedule with two matches in a row, matches every second or every third day within one week; he has a limited number of players and, finally, has to work in a highly competitive international environment. It leaves no doubts that all the above requires specific knowledge and skills, and experience that can be gained only through working within such a specific structure as the National Team Institute. That is why a national team coach has to be capable to take NOT OBVIOUS DECISIONS¹⁴⁵. His capability to do so is one of the most important cornerstones in national team coach's profile.

¹⁴⁴ Since 2017/18 UEFA has extended the Player List up to 20 players. Since the football tournament of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, FIFA has increased the Player List up to 20.

¹⁴⁵ The words about taking "*not obvious decisions*" belong to Vladimir Tsytkin, the first goalkeeper coach in the national youth teams in the history of FFU 2003–2013 and a head coach of the national youth team of Ukraine (players born on and after 01.01.1998) 2013–2016.

PLAYING MATCHES WITH A TWO-DAY BREAK: IMPLICATION FOR “A” TEAM

*“We must study, and study, and study
and we must wait a bit with our deep social movements;
we are not mature enough for them yet;
and to tell the truth, we don’t know anything about them.”¹⁴⁶*
— From “My Life” (1896) by Anton Chekhov

Starting from the UEFA EURO 2016 qualifiers in autumn 2014, qualifying matches are played with a two-day break. If before NAs could draw up a match calendar for qualifying groups themselves, both for UEFA Euro and the FIFA World Cup qualifiers, now, following the centralised marketing implementation by UEFA, both the group formation and match schedule with a two-day interval are determined by the draw. Conditions as such make things harder for a national team and its coaching staff since they shall play two official matches on the same date or in one FIFA window. At the same time, UEFA EURO 2020 qualifying round for many participants consists exclusively of such matches played in pairs, since the entire cycle takes one year of 2019. It includes 10 standard dates (as per FIFA International Match Calendar) for official matches or 5 FIFA windows where in each window up to two matches may be played. All 55 UEFA member associations take part in the qualifying round and are divided into 10 groups of five or six participants each: $5 \times 5 = 25$ and $5 \times 6 = 30$, total 55. Thus, 30 national teams are forced to use all FIFA scheduled dates because they have to play 10 qualifying matches. However, the remaining 25 participants also play at least two or three paired rounds in one of the five FIFA windows. As a result, teams find themselves in a rather tight schedule pretty far from a “comfortable” one. Taking into account that matches of the UEFA club tournaments are played before September, October, November and March FIFA windows, besides FIFA window in June, gives us fair reasons to say, with high probability, that players called up to national teams for the qualifying matches played in pairs will also be forced to play UEFA matches to a very tight schedule with a two-day break — either on Wednesday or Thursday and, at best, on Sunday in respective domestic championships. Only UEFA Champions League participants playing their matches on Tuesday may enjoy an extra rest day.

It’s worth noting that national teams play in so-called FIFA week or the FIFA window (International windows according to the FIFA Regulations) in two blocks

¹⁴⁶ Anton Chekhov My Life, Year of first publication: 1896. Translator: Constance Garnett Online-literature.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/awra7p76> or Onemorelibrary.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/o2dhaim2>

with the first matches being played on Thursday, Friday or Saturday, and the second ones — on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday. As set in the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, team preparations for those matches shall begin on Monday morning, which leaves national team coaching staff no more than three or four full training days to prepare for the qualifying matches. Under conditions as such, the worst-case scenario would be to play on Thursday, while the best one would be to start qualifying matches in pairs on Saturday.

The Ukraine "A" team made a very promising start in the new UEFA Nations League competition and sealed two consecutive wins in the official matches played under two-day break scheme. Ukraine played their kick-off match on Thursday, on the most unfavourable date with less than two days for team preparations for the match. Moreover, it was an away match so travel arrangements took some time too. That said, the statistics of the Ukraine NAT performance in those two consecutive official matches at the UEFA or FIFA level looks very interesting also in the light of centralised marketing in place and before its implementation.

Since their first official match on the 7th of September 1994 against Lithuania (ended with a 0:2 defeat), Ukraine "A" have played 42 official qualifying matches in pairs in FIFA windows with 8 out of 42 played with a two-day break in accordance with the new regulations (the information from the first half of the 2018/19 season).

In October 2014 Ukraine played their first qualifying matches in pairs under the new regulations that ended with Ukraine's win. In September 2018, almost four years later! Ukraine celebrated their second double victory! It means that two out of eight qualifying matches in pairs ended with a win (25%).

Meanwhile, in March and October 2019 Ukraine NAT played two qualifying matches in pairs in UEFA EURO 2020 qualifying cycle. Spring matches in pairs ended with a win and a draw when Luxembourg scored their own goal at the end of the second half. Putting this information aside, let's get back to Autumn 2018.

In total, Ukraine have played 16 matches (matches in September 2018 included),
 winning 10 (62%);
 losing 3 (19%);
 drawing 3 (19%);
 losing 3 of the second qualifying matches in pairs out of 8 (38%).

Ukraine have played the remaining 34 qualifying matches in pairs beyond the limits imposed by the UEFA in the 2014/16 qualifying round, winning 10 out of 34 matches (29%).

Thus, Ukraine have played 68 matches in total,
 winning 47%);
 losing 14 (21%);
 drawing 22 (32%);
 losing 9 of the second qualifying matches in pairs out of 34 (27%).

Ukraine have suffered a complete defeat just once, losing both of qualifying matches in pairs (2 defeats in 2 matches in a row). It has been the first ever played qualifying matches in pairs in the history of national “A” team of Ukraine that entered historical team’s records as follows:

Date: 25.03.1995

Croatia vs. Ukraine 4:0

29.03.1995

Ukraine vs. Italy 0:2

That said, only 3 sets of qualifying matches played in pairs resulted in a draw.

Now, let us look at the team statistics of the qualifying matches in pairs in the context of FIFA dates.

Number of matches won by date (before September 2014):

September 11

October 10

March 6

June 4

November 1

Number of matches lost by date (before September 2014):

November 5

September 3

October 3

March 2

June 1

Number of matches won by date (after September 2014):

October 5

September 4

November 1

Number of matches lost by date (after September 2014):

October 2

September 1

The extremely negative statistics in November calls for our attention. Ukraine lost four out of five play-off rounds of the qualifying cycles (winning 2, losing 4 and drawing 4) played in November. The first play-off round in Ukraine NAT’s history was not paired, since Ukraine played against Croatia — on 29 October 1997 and 15 November 1997 with a two-week interval. Meanwhile, Ukraine played their

qualifying matches in pairs in November only once, and those were not play-offs. Well, the following match results were far from promising:

Date: 17.11.2007
Lithuania vs. Ukraine 2:0

Date: 21.11.2007
Ukraine vs. France 2:2

To be fair, the competition level in play-off rounds is always higher than in ordinary qualifying matches. It surely impacts team performance a lot. But certain patterns, *alas*, do exist, speaking not in favour of the national team of Ukraine.

Now, the statistics clearly shows that it had still been difficult to play qualifying matches in pairs even before UEFA innovations were introduced. From now onward, matches as such will become not only the regular ones, but practically be the main type of qualification rounds leading to higher interdependence between the ability to play with a two-day break and successful qualification for UEFA and FIFA tournaments. It's interesting to see how national team head coaches will react on it. This is how Ukraine A head coach Andrey Shevchenko¹⁴⁷ comments on the situation:

“— Throughout your entire career you used to play two matches per week and, probably, nobody but you could explain why Ukraine is so wary of such a match schedule...

— This is a burning issue. The level and game intensity at NAT matches are incomparable with the UPL Championship, except for Shakhtar vs. Dynamo match. So, it turns out that many lads have no experience of such match frequency and playing rhythm where 90-minute high playing speed has to be maintained. So we face a hurdle when it comes to playing with a two-day break. Top European football clubs do not find themselves in this situation. As a rule, they always keep the same speed and high competition in their domestic championships, in the Champions League, in the Europa League.”

Let's consider match statistics from Top-5 national European championships, including all domestic tournaments (National Cup, League Cup, Super Cup) and UEFA competitions, taking similar statistics from Ukrainian football clubs as a backdrop. The Summary Table and Data from 2017/18 season are given below.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
England	20	38	5+1=6	5+1=6	—	50	1,32	5+0+5=10	20	0,53
Spain	20	38	4+1=5	—	1	44	1,16	3+4=7	17	0,45
Germany	18	36	4+1=5	—	1	42	1,17	2+4=6	16	0,44
Italy	20	38	4+1=5	—	1	44	1,16	3+4=7	17	0,45

¹⁴⁷ Гресь Е. Андрей Шевченко: «Только вошел во вкус — и команда разъехалась...». 17.09.2018, Zbirna.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/utgacba>

France	20	38	5+1=6	4+1=5	1	50	1,32	2+5+4=11	21	0,55
Ukraine	12	32	4+1=5	—	1	38	1,19	1+4=5	13–15	0,41–0,47

1 — number of teams participating in the Championship (CH);
 2 — number of matches in the Championship during the season;
 3 — number of matches in the National Cup (NC) with a number of matches played by top division clubs with a final match included; for Ukraine 4+1=5, because the first six teams join NC from 1/8;
 4 — number of matches in the League's Cup (CL);
 5 — number of matches in the Super Cup;
 6 — maximum number of matches during the season on the national level (domestic arena);
 7 — an average number of matches per week during the sporting season;
 8 — CH+NC+CL = number of midweek fixtures in the above-mentioned domestic competitions (matches of the FA CUP, generally, are not played in midweek except for the replays);
 9 — number of midweek fixtures, including UEFA club tournaments;
 10 — number of midweek fixtures during the sporting season where season duration is defined by the number of weeks or rounds in the national championship.

Let me draw your attention to column No. 9 showing matches of the UEFA club tournaments and make a small remark in this regard.

To calculate a number of matches in the European competitions, the following data was taken into account based on the level of club performance from Top-5 Championships at these competitions.

UEFA Champions League (UEFA CL):

Play-off round 2
 Group matches 6
 1/8; 1/4; 1/2 6
 Final 1
 Maximum of 13 or 15

UEFA Europa League (UEFA EL):

Play-off round 2
 Group matches 6
 1/16; 1/8; 1/4; 1/2 8
 Final 1
 Maximum of 15 or 17

It should be noted that starting from 2019/20 season, clubs from Top-5 do not take part in the UEFA Champions League play-off round, and the number of those clubs in the UEFA EL play-off round has been significantly reduced.

We assume that clubs from Top-5 play on average 10 matches in the European club tournaments, including qualification from group stage up to the quarterfinals in the Champions League or 1/8 round in EL. It means more 10 midweek fixtures are ahead.

With two preliminary rounds and the group stage, plus a minimum of two matches in the spring rounds of the European competitions, Ukraine have 12 matches in total. At the same time, a club with direct qualification to the group

stage plays 8 matches at least. Ukrainian domestic championship resumes only at the end of February, which means that the EL participating team plays only one match per week at the stage of 1/16, and the Champions League participating team, if lucky enough, can play their matches in February being "free" from tough schedule or having "a light mode" so to speak. Therefore, it is possible to reduce the number of European midweek matches for Ukraine by two. i.e. from 13–17 down to 13–15.

Let's not forget that only participants of the European club competitions play their matches in the middle of the week on a regular basis. That said, let's look at the number of teams taking part in these tournaments and representing the Leagues in question (information from 2018/19 season):

England	4 + 2 = 6 (CL + EL)
Spain	4 + 3 = 7
Germany	4+3=7
Italy	4+2=6
France	3+3=6
Ukraine	1+2=3

The figures below back-up the statistics of the European club tournaments taking quarter finals over the last five seasons as a basis.

UEFA CL	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
ITA	2	1	0	1	0
SPA	3	3	3	3	3
ENG	2	1	1	0	2
GER	1	2	2	1	2
FRA	0	1	1	2	1
POR	0	0	1	1	0
UEFA EL	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16	2014/15	2013/14
ITA	1	0	0	2	1
SPA	1	1	3	1	2
ENG	1	1	1	0	0
GER	1	1	1	1	0
FRA	1	1	0	0	1
AUT	1	0	0	0	0
POR	1	0	1	0	2
RUS	1	0	0	1	0
NED	0	1	0	0	1
BEL	0	2	0	1	0
TUR	0	1	0	0	0
CZE	0	0	1	0	0
UKR	0	0	1	2	0
SUI	0	0	0	0	1

As it becomes immediately evident, during the last five seasons of the UEFA Champions League, representatives of only six NAs played at this stage. In the UEFA Europa League, these figures are much higher, i.e. 14 representatives. We cannot but mention the following facts in relation to national team matches and qualifying matches intensity. Firstly, in each of the last five seasons, representatives of only 5 NAs contested the round of 1/4 of the UEFA Champions League with 3 out of 8 teams being Spanish. Secondly, the UEFA EL's figure is higher again with more than 6 on average with Spain taking the lead here too. Bearing in mind that it is the participants of the European tournaments who play regularly in the middle of the week, here I wish to emphasize the following: no more than 12% of the NA clubs constantly play intensively for most of the sporting season. In this regard, playing with a two-day break and getting the team ready for such matches in a short period of time, especially when the season is in full swing, has become a burning issue not only for Ukraine, but also for the majority of UEFA member associations.

Obviously, to succeed with such a tough schedule, first of all and of all other factors, one needs players accustomed to such intense workload throughout the season. Undoubtedly, national teams representing Top-5 domestic football championships have a certain advantage. For example, France, along with Brazil, takes the lead in terms of their player representation in top European championships. However, Belgium's third place at the 2018 FIFA World Cup and Croatia's silver medals can be explained by "simple statistics", i.e. 39 Croatian and 48 Belgian players play in the Top-5 championships (information from early 2018/19)¹⁴⁸. The given number of players creates internal competition in the team that is so much appreciated by any coach but, of course, makes it harder for him to make choices, providing though for a qualified and competitive reserve team. After all, the choice of players allows coaches to explore different tactical formations and not stick to the simplest available options with an "underloaded" squad. Ukraine's statistics and available choices look frustratingly modest here.

It is noteworthy that on the domestic arena, Ukrainian footballers demonstrate quite an intense performance throughout the sports season — its duration is less than in the Western Europe for quite objective reasons. No more than 3 or 4 Ukrainian clubs take part in the autumn rounds of the European club competitions, and the number of clubs qualified for the spring competition rounds is twice less. By the way, returning to traditional 16-club format in the Ukrainian Premier League will lower match intensity on the domestic arena because participating teams will play two matches less per season: 30 instead of 32¹⁴⁹. However, and most probably, referring to Andriy Shevchenko's words, it seems that intense competition cannot compensate for less intense match performance of our teams. We will still be inferior in this aspect to many of our competitors, and not only

¹⁴⁸ Players Abroad (Croatia). Int.soccerway.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/sx74q3z>; Players Abroad (Belgium). Int.soccerway.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v9hxyty>

¹⁴⁹ For the record: since 2016/17 season 12 clubs play in the UPL; since 2020/21 — 14; since 2021/22—16.

to leading national teams of Europe, unless we learn to play faster, more efficient and, consequently, more effective and “on-target” football.

Where else should we look for reserves to improve the quality of club football and what does the national team have to do with it? “2018 — 2019 Bayern Munich Croatian coach Niko Kovač¹⁵⁰ likes to repeat that now footballers do not train enough, so he puts it this way: “Look into individual sports. Athletes train in the gym for several hours every day. Why do we have to spare the footballers?” When Kovač was leaving Eintracht, he apologised to the team for his methods: “Forgive me if I was too harsh to you. I had tortured you not because I liked it, but because otherwise we never would have succeeded”.

Probably, competent build-up of a standard training process is a basis for player pool development thus, allowing playing competitive football. The Chekhovian protagonist’s words as an epigraph or a phrase famously belonging to a leader of the Bolshevik coup-d’état in Russia in 1917 V. Ulyanov-Lenin: “*study, study and study*”¹⁵¹ can be “rephrased” by saying “*train, train and train*”. But learning, as Anton Chekhov puts it, is also necessary, because a lot depends on coaching skills.

To sum up, “A” team performance in a two-day break format clearly shows what roles clubs play in the work of the National Team Institute, as it is the clubs that prepare players for the national team. And national team performance depends much on the quality of club performance, the quality of training processes in clubs and on club regular and long-standing presence in the European competitions, because clubs are superior to national teams in terms of duration of stay and intensity of performance of players. But neither clubs nor football players will replace the effective management of the national team. The success of a national team is a complex phenomenon, where, obviously, every component matters.

All Ukraine “A” team qualifying matches played in pairs before October 2018 are listed in **Annex 10**.

¹⁵⁰ Зиновьев П. Диеты, запрет на телефоны и много тренировок. Такой «Баварию» вы еще не видели. 22 августа 2018, Sports.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uex8zgw>

¹⁵¹ “The first time Lenin used this exact phrasing in his 1899 article “The reverse direction of Russian Social Democracy”, published in “Proletarian Revolution“ journal, 1924, №8–9.” Quora.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9ay859s>

THE PORTRAIT OF NATIONAL “A” TEAM HEAD COACH IN THE LIGHT OF FIFA AND UEFA FINAL TOURNAMENTS

“Time is an old enemy of any manager.”

— Carlo Ancelotti

Let me start our conversation about NAT coaches by quoting those who have had almost no experience as “A” team managers before their appointment (one of them though was working as an assistant coach to Arrigo Sacchi in the Italy national team). Let’s talk from their outside perspective, free from any personal experience of working with “A” teams before, especially at the highest level, i.e. at final tournaments of the FIFA World Cup and/or UEFA EURO. *Par exemple*, Maurizio Sarri’s rather ambiguously explicit and direct view is complemented by a sort of less categorical assessment by Carlo Ancelotti. Here we go.

Maurizio Sarri put it this way: *“I didn’t see anything in the World Cup. I didn’t see a match in the World Cup. I don’t like the national team because there isn’t anything to learn. It is a usual position, every coach thinks like me. It is unusual to say it. It is impossible to arrange a team very well in 30 days. Every team in the World Cup will lose against the top-level club teams in every match. I think that is normal because in a club you have time to organise a team, but in the national team you have no time, so it is very difficult to see an organised team in the Euros or World Cup”*¹⁵². So, Sarri’s position is clear and understandable, i.e. it’s impossible or incredibly difficult to get a football team ready in this short span, which makes watching the FIFA or UEFA Euro Cup quite futile. Carlo Ancelotti looks at the situation from another angle.¹⁵³

First things first. *“It is an unusual situation to watch tournaments as a club manager, but I cannot wait for Euro 2016 to start. I will be honest with you, mainly I am hoping that none of my Bayern Munich players get injured. There are 10 of them at the tournament, including five with Germany.*

Watching these games is a treat for a club manager because sometimes you see a player of your own in a different way, playing in another position, revealing a quality you had not seen before. And, what if the experiment goes wrong? That’s another manager’s problem!”

¹⁵² “I did not watch the World Cup — there is nothing I can learn from internationals, says Chelsea manager Maurizio Sarri” The Telegraph by Sam Dean, 11 January 2019 Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1lao1543>

¹⁵³ This is how to win Euro 2016 The Telegraph by Carlo Ancelotti, 3 June 2016 Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4pd6uv8d>

Secondly, *“International managers in tournament years have such little time with their players on the training pitch between the season end and the competition start that they will always have to make sacrifices. It is a simple truth that if you want a team to play out from the back, to build up patiently, using short passes, then it takes hours on the training pitch to develop and refine unless, like Spain, you have a group of players who have been doing it all their lives.*

There is an alternative to set your side up to play counter-attacking football. You organise your defence well and you coach your players to soak up the pressure from the opposition, then you hit them on the break with quick strikers who are prepared to run.”

In this case, it's worth to remind of Carlo Ancelotti's words: *“Time is an old enemy of any manager.”*

Despite pessimistic Sarri's view, millions and millions of football fans and thousands of football experts, and so Ancelotti does, watch FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO with great interest (more than 3,5 billion viewers watched 2018 FIFA World Cup¹⁵⁴), and coaches of the participating teams, despite all challenges and problems, lead their teams in these tournaments.

The Portrait of a Coach by applying statistical “painting” technique

Let us apply some statistics of NAT coaches at the final tournaments of the FIFA World Cup (hereinafter FIFA WC) and UEFA EURO taking place over a 2000–2018 time span with five FIFA WCs and five UEFA EUROs. 126 coaches from 44 countries have worked at 5 FIFA WCs and 72 coaches from 29 countries — at 5 UEFA EUROs.

First and foremost, let's look at 10 criteria for our analysis. Of course, there could be more, and they could be different, but now 10 criteria to “paint” the portrait are applied:

- 1 — average age of a head coach at the time of his first appointment;
- 2 — average work experience before his first appointment;
- 3 — average work experience before his appointment to the current NAT;
- 4 — average break at work before his appointment to the current NAT;
- 5 — number of coaches experienced in working with youth and U-21/23 NTs;
- 6 — number of coaches with previous experience as NAT head coach;
- 7 — number of coaches with previous experience as NAT assistant coach;
- 8 — number of coaches with zero experience before their appointment to NAT;
- 9 — number of foreign coaches;
- 10 — number of coaches with zero break in service before their appointment to the NAT.

¹⁵⁴ More than half the world watched record-breaking 2018 World Cup, 21 December 2018. FIFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yagfyjdn>

We are painting a more generalized portrait of a head coach who is leading the team in the FIFA and UEFA tournaments. Any coach taking part in the FIFA World Cup is usually one year younger at the time of his first appointment to this post: 48,5 y.o. vs. 49,6 y.o. He is less experienced than his European vis-à-vis appointed to this post for the first time: 11,65 years vs. 12,68 years of coaching practice. And again, he has less service background with the current national “A” team in the context of the specific FIFA or UEFA tournament: 14,86 vs. 15,83 years (it is either his first appointment to national “A” team or he resumes his “A” team coaching practice for the tournament in question). On average, a team coach involved in the FIFA tournament has had a longer break before his appointment: 0,69 vs. 0,52 years. But of all coaches participating in the FIFA World Cup, there are twice as many managers experienced in working with national U-21 and youth teams: 8 vs. 4; while the number of those with work experience as NAT assistant coaches is significantly higher: 14 vs. 4. However, the number of coaches with work experience as NAT coaches is higher too: 6 vs. 22. However, for FIFA tournament, a number of newcomers, i.e. coaches with absolutely no work experience at any level out of the total number of participating teams in the FIFA World Cup (32 participants in all 5 tournaments) and in UEFA EURO (16 participants in 4 tournaments and 24 in 2016) is twice as much again: 0,8 vs. 0,4. At the same time, within the given period, four newcomers were involved in the FIFA World Cup and only one took part in the UEFA EURO (Rudi Voeller, who led the German national team at the UEFA EURO 2004, has already gained coaching experience since he debuted at the 2002 FIFA World Cup but at the time of his debut he was a “rookie”)! On average, 12 foreign coaches were working with the teams during the final round of the FIFA World Cup and only 3 of them were in the UEFA EURO final tournament.

To sum up, on average 21 coaches who participated in the FIFA World Cup retained their NAT coaching job immediately after their contract expired (compared to 13 coaches out of total number of UEFA EURO participants).

Comparison Chart of the average indices

	FIFA	UEFA
1	48,472	49,58
2	11,65	12,679
3	14,85	15,33
4	0,688	0,523
5	8,4 (26,2%)	3,6 (21%)
6	13,8 (43,15%)	4,4 (25,42%)
7	6 (18,75%)	22 (25,58%)
8	0,8 (2,5%)	0,4 (2,5%)
9	11,6 (36,26%)	2,8 (15,83%)
10	21,4 (68,34%)	13,2 (77,3%)

As a rule, NAT head coach is about 50 years old with over 10 years of coaching experience. He has had about a six-month break in his coaching career before

joining the national team. A quarter of them might have worked with junior or national youth teams (don't forget the difference between the number of teams participating in the FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO). The same number of European coaches might have already worked as NAT assistant coaches, and among the FIFA WC participants there might be almost twice as many. Also a quarter of coaches have previously worked as NAT head coaches. It is almost unlikely that a coach will be a debutant. Of 126 coaches participating in the FIFA World Cup, only 4 of them were absolute beginners, and of 72 UEFA Euro coaches, there was only one. Every third participant in the FIFA World Cup can be a foreigner, and among Europeans this number is twice less at least and, as a rule, two-thirds of them have signed a new contract with a national association following the termination.

Let's take a closer look at statistics on head coaches of the FIFA WC and UEFA EURO participating teams:

	2018 FIFA WC	2014 FIFA WC	2010 FIFA WC	2006 FIFA WC	2002 FIFA WC
1	49,41	49,16	48,38	48,69	46,72
2	10,69	11,53	11,61	12,16	12,26
3	13,53	14,75	15,10	16,42	14,45
4	0,53	0,58	1,03	0,71	0,59
5	8 (25%)	9 (28,13%)	9 (28%)	10 (31,25%)	6 (18,75%)
6	15 (47%)	13 (40,63%)	14 (43,75%)	12 (37,5%)	15 (46,88%)
7	8 (25%)	6 (18,75%)	6 (18,75%)	6 (18,75%)	4 (12,5%)
8	0 (0%)	1 (3,13%)	1 (3,13%)	1 (3,13%)	1 (3,13%)
9	12 (37,5%)	14 (43,8%)	12 (37,5%)	13 (40,63%)	7 (21,88%)
10	21 (65,6%)	22 (68,8%)	21 (67,7%)	22 (71,88%)	21 (67,74%)
	UEFA EURO 2016	UEFA EURO 2012	UEFA EURO 2008	UEFA EURO 2004	UEFA EURO 2000
1	49,96	50,13	48,5	52,75	46,56
2	13,58	13,19	12	14,375	10,25
3	15,46	16,19	16,13	15,81	13,06
4	0,79	0,5	0,125	0,2	1
5	3 (12,5%)	1 (6,25%)	8 (50%)	5 (31,25%)	1 (6,25%)
6	5 (20,83%)	4 (25%)	6 (37,5%)	3 (18,75%)	4 (25%)
7	7 (29,17%)	3 (18,75%)	4 (25%)	4 (25%)	4 (25%)
8	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (6,25%)	1 (6,25%)
9	4 (16,67%)	2 (12,5%)	4 (25%)	3 (18,75%)	1 (6,25%)
10	17 (70,83%)	12 (75%)	14 (87,5%)	12 (80%)	11 (73,3%)

1 — average age of a head coach at the time of his first appointment;

2 — average work experience before his first appointment;

3 — average work experience before his appointment to the current NAT;

4 — average break at work before his appointment to the current NAT;

5 — number of coaches experienced in working with youth and U-21/23 NTs;

6 — number of coaches with previous experience as NAT head coach;

7 — number of coaches with previous experience as NAT assistant coach;

8 — number of coaches with zero experience before their appointment to NAT;

9 — number of foreign coaches;

10 — number of coaches with zero break in service before their appointment to the current NAT.

Period of office as head coaches

First, let's consider a comparative chart showing the period of office as head coaches taking part in FIFA WC and UEFA EURO over the given period.

FIFA WORLD CUP		
1	2	3
2 cycles (4 years)	33	22,76%
1 cycle (2 years)	28	19,31%
<2 cycles (3 years)	27	18,62%
<1 cycle (1 year)	26	17,93%
<3 cycles (10 years)	10	6,90%
<4 cycles (7 years)	6	4,14%
3 cycles (6 years)	6	4,14%
4 cycles (8 years)	3	2,07%
>6 cycles (12 years)	2	1,38%
<5 cycles (9 years)	2	1,38%
8 cycles (16 years)	1	0,69%
5 cycles (10 years)	1	0,69%

UEFA EURO		
1	2	3
2 cycles (4 years)	24	31,17%
1 cycle (2 years)	17	22,08%
<2 cycles (3 years)	8	10,39%
<3 cycles (5 years)	8	10,39%
3 cycles (6 years)	7	9,09%
<4 cycles (7 years)	5	6,49%
<1 cycle (1 year)	3	3,90%
6 cycles (12 years)	1	1,3%
5 cycles (10 years)	1	1,3%
4 cycles (8 years)	1	1,3%
<5 cycles (9 years)	1	1,3%
8 cycles (16 years)	1	1,3%

1 — number of cycles (one cycle is 2 years);

2 — number of coaches;

3 — % of total number of coaches.

The longest period of continuous service at NAT (zero break):

FIFA WORLD CUP	
Morten Olsen	16 years

UEFA EURO	
Morten Olsen	16 years

The shortest period of continuous service at NAT (zero break):

FIFA WORLD CUP	
Fernando Hierro	24 days
Otto Pfister	111 days
Akira Nishino	113 days
Lars Lagerback	123 days
Sven-Göran Eriksson	127 days
Bert Van Marwijk	171 days

UEFA EURO	
Emeric Ienei	181 days
Leonid Slutski*	325 days
Vujadin Boškov	426 days

*Leonid Slutski continued to coach FC CSKA Moscow over the entire period.

The number of "A" national teams the coaches used to work with:

FIFA WORLD CUP		
1	2	3
12	1	0,79%
8	2	1,59%
7	1	0,79%
6	2	1,59%
5	2	1,59%
4	8	6,35%
3	15	11,91%
2	28	22,22%
1	67	53,18%

UEFA EURO		
1	2	3
6	1	1,39%
5	1	1,39%
4	4	5,56%
3	6	8,33%
2	13	18,06%
1	47	65,27%

6	1	1,39%
5	1	1,39%
4	4	5,56%
3	6	8,33%
2	13	18,06%
1	47	65,27%

- 1 — number of "A" national teams the coaches used to work with;
 2 — number of coaches;
 3 — % of total number of coaches.

The coaches involved in the FIFA and UEFA final tournaments with previous experience of working with the biggest number of "A" national teams throughout their careers:

FIFA WORLD CUP	
Otto Pfister (GER)	12
Bora Milutinovic (YUG)	8
Henri Michel (FRA)	8
Philippe Troussier (FRA)	7
Dick Advocaat (NED)	6
Herve Renard (FRA)	6
Carlos Alberto Parreira (BRA)	5
Guus Hiddink (NED)	5

UEFA EURO	
Dick Advocaat (NED)	6
Guus Hiddink (NED)	5
Lars Lagerbäck (SWE)	4
Sven-Göran Eriksson (SWE)	4
Humberto Coelho (POR)	4
Srečko Katanec (SVN)	4

18 out of 126 coaches took part in the FIFA World Cup twice with two different national teams and 1 (one) had FIFA WC experience with three national teams but with breaks. At the same time, 5 out of 72 coaches have had experience at UEFA EURO with two different teams but with breaks.

Following 2018 FIFA World Cup, eighteen (18) coaches still keep coaching their "A" national teams (Information from February 2019), namely:

Oscar Tabarez	URU	03.03.1947	>13 since 13.02.2006
Joachim Löw	GER	03.02.1960	>12 since 12.07.2006
Didier Deschamps	FRA	15.10.1968	>6 since 08.07.2012
Vladimir Petkovic	SUI	15.08.1963	>4 since 01.08.2014
Fernando Santos	POR	10.10.1954	>4 since 23.09.2014
Ricardo Gareca	ARG	10.02.1958	>4 since 09.02.2015
Aliou Cisse	SEN	24.03.1976	>3 since 05.03.2015
Herve Renard	FRA	30.09.1968	>2 since 16.02.2016

Age Hareide	NOR	23.09.1953	>2 since 01.03.2016
Tite	BRA	25.05.1961	>2 since 16.06.2016
Janne Andersson	SWE	29.09.1962	>2 since 23.06.2016
Roberto Martinez	ESP	13.07.1973	>2 since 03.08.2016
Rohr Gernot	GER	28.06.1953	>2 since 09.08.2016
Stanislav Cherchesov	RUS	02.09.1963	>2 since 11.08.2016
Gareth Southgate	ENG	03.09.1970	>2 since 30.11.2016
Juan Antonio Pizzi	ESP	07.06.1968	>1 since 28.11.2017
Zlatko Dalic	CRO	26.10.1966	>1 since 07.10.2017
Krstajic Mladen	SRB	04.03.1974	>1 since 29.01.2018

During his coaching career Srečko Katanec has worked with only two professional football clubs, i.e. ND Gorica (364 days) & Olympiacos (92 days)¹⁵⁵.

Following UEFA EURO 2016, five (5) coaches have still remained working with their “A” national teams (Information from February 2019), namely:

Michael O'Neill	NIR	05.07.1969	>7 since 28.12.2011
Joachim Löw	GER	03.02.1960	>12 since 12.07.2006
Didier Deschamps	FRA	15.10.1968	>6 since 08.07.2012
Vladimir Petković	SUI	15.08.1963	>4 since 01.08.2014
Fernando Santos	POR	10.10.1954	>4 since 23.09.2014

One interesting detail such as the longest managerial reins is definitely worth foregrounding. As seen below, number of cycles as NAT head coach at FIFA WCs and UEFA EUROS do match.

FIFA WORLD CUP		
1	2	3
2 cycles (4 years)	33	22,76%
1 cycle (2 years)	28	19,31%
<2 cycles (3 years)	27	18,62%

UEFA EURO		
1	2	3
2 cycles (4 years)	24	31,17%
1 cycle (2 years)	17	22,08%
<2 cycles (3 years)	8	10,39%

However, there is a big difference for serving as head coach for less than 1 cycle (1 year):

FIFA WORLD CUP		
<1 cycle (1 year)	26	17,93%

UEFA EURO		
<1 cycle (1 year)	3	3,90%

There are 26 cases of the shortest managerial reins with FIFA WC participating teams. The list of FIFA WC participating teams coached only for a year as well as the number of coaches is given below. FIFA country code and FIFA's abbreviation for confederations are used¹⁵⁶.

¹⁵⁵ Srečko Katanec. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/sp736hx>

¹⁵⁶ List of FIFA Country Codes. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/27l6s6t5>

KSA	3
KOR	3
RSA	2
TUN	2
NGA	2
CIV	1
AUS	1
ARG	1
BRA	1
CRC	1
CRO	1
ESP	1
CMR	1
TOG	1
PAR	1
JPN	1
MEX	1
TRI	1
SRB	1
Total	26

The number of coaches with one-year NAT service as split by FIFA confederations is given below (the number of member associations taking part in the FIFA World Cup coached by them is given).

UEFA — 3 CONCACAF — 3 CONMEBOL — 3 AFC — 4 CAF — 6

Furthermore, on all continents every member of FIFA confederations either appoints a new coach literally before the final tournament — and sometimes it brings success but usually it doesn't — or discontinues their service right after the championship. National team competitions unavoidably share similar characteristics with professional football league tournaments. After all, they are communicating vessels.

Nowadays, a long-serving national team coach is a rare occasion. There are only four coaches with the longest managerial reins over two-cycle time span still leading their teams after the most recent UEFA and FIFA tournaments:

Oscar Tabarez	URU	03.03.1947	>13 since 13.02.2006
Joachim Löw	GER	03.02.1960	>12 since 12.07.2006
Michael O'Neill	NIR	05.07.1969	>7 since 28.12.2011
Didier Deschamps	FRA	15.10.1968	>6 since 08.07.2012

However, two FIFA WC winners are among them. At the same time, head coach of the reigning European champion holds his office for the third cycle:

Fernando Santos	POR	10.10.1954	>4 since 23.09.2014
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There is one more touch to make to the Portrait of a Head Coach. And that is his experience with “A” national team that would, most likely, span from two to six years or from one up to three qualifying cycles.

To conclude on the term of office, let’s look at the following interesting statistics:

FIFA WORLD CUP

The youngest is:

Aliou CISSE	SEN	24.03.1976 (2018 FIFA WC)	42 years
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The oldest is:

Cesare MALDINI	ITA	05.02.1932 (2002 FIFA WC)	70 years
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UEFA EURO

The youngest is:

Leonid Slutski	RUS	04.05.1971 (UEFA EURO 2016)	45 years
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The oldest is:

Vujadin Bošković	SRB	16.05.1931 (UEFA EURO 2000)	69 years
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At the same time, Morten Olsen, probably, is the one who holds the record for working non-stop with one team for 16 years in a row. He surpassed one of the greatest German coaches Sepp Herberger¹⁵⁷ who had been coaching Germany from 1936 to 1964 (with a break between 1942 and 1950) as well as his Nationalmannschaft colleague Helmut Schön (1964–1978). In my opinion, modern professional football can hardly hope for such a long-term service with one team, and — with Zepp Gerberger’s and Helmut Schön’s 14-year term of office with zero break — Oscar Tabarez and Joachim Löw are quite close to Morten Olsen’s record. Joachim Löw can surpass his eminent colleagues, but time still remains not only an old enemy of any coach but dictates harsh conditions for everyone with the German “long-liver” making no exception¹⁵⁸.

Zero experience

Among managers of FIFA and UEFA EURO participating teams, only five coaches had had zero experience before their appointment to a national “A” team, namely:

FIFA WORLD CUP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
CIV	Sabri Lamouchi FRA	09.11.1971	43	41	0	0	–	–	–	–
BRA	Dunga BRA	31.10.1963	47	43	0	0	–	–	–	–

¹⁵⁷ Germany National Football Team Manager. En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/u7jgr7>

¹⁵⁸ Joachim Löw has announced the quit as German coach after UEFA Euro 2020 on 9 March 2021. Joachim Löw to step down as Germany manager after Euro 2020 Guardian sport and agencies Tue 9 Mar 2021. Theguardian.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/fyfte7ef>

GER	Juergen Klinsmann GER	13.07.1964	42	40	0	0	-	-	-	-
GER	Rudi Voeller GER	13.04.1960	42	40	0	0	-	-	-	-

UEFA EURO

NED	Frank Rijkaard NED	30.09.1962	38	36	0	0	-	+	-	-
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Key to the charts:

- 1 — country;
- 2 — name and nationality;
- 3 — date of birth;
- 4 — age at the time of the tournament;
- 5 — age when appointed to national "A" team for the first time;
- 6 — service background before appointment to current national "A" team (years);
- 7 — service background before appointment to national "A" team for the first time (years);
- 8 — previous experience as national "A" team head coach (+/-);
- 9 — previous experience as national "A" team assistant coach (+/-);
- 10 — previous experience with youth and U-21/23 NT (+/-);
- 11 — break in service before their appointment to current national "A" team (years).

Three of them have reached some significant success at these tournaments, namely Rudi Voeller as 2002 FIFA World Cup runner-up, Juergen Klinsmann as 2006 FIFA World Cup bronze medalist and Frank Rijkaard as UEFA Euro 2000 semifinalist. Meanwhile, Dunga lost 2010 FIFA WC quarterfinal but celebrated success in the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup and 2007 Copa América.

It should be noted that Frank Rijkaard has been an assistant coach to the Netherlands national "A" team led by Guus Hiddink¹⁵⁹ for 167 days, from 14.01 to 30.06.1998¹⁶⁰. After Rudi Voeller's appointment as head coach of Nationalmannschaft, he was coaching Bayer Leverkusen for 23 days, from 21.10 to 13.11.2000¹⁶¹.

That said, two out of five coaching debutants represent German football. In principle, Germany has quite a long-established tradition of appointing absolute beginners as head coaches of the national "A" team. In September 1984, Deutscher Fussball-Bund started this tradition by appointing Franz Beckenbauer who has just retired as NY Cosmos player and at once became a true leader of Nationalmannschaft for six very successful consecutive years — from 12.09.1984 to 08.07.1990¹⁶².

To sum up, let's recall one more story from France. Upon his retirement, the French player Henri Michel (born on 28.10.1947; 58 caps for *Les Bleus*¹⁶³) debuted as head coach of the Olympic team of France in July 1983¹⁶⁴ (in June 1982, as other sources say¹⁶⁵). He had absolutely no experience before his appointment. Despite this, he celebrated success in football tournament of the 1984 Summer Olympic Games where France yielded gold medals. Two years later, Henry's coaching career led him to the 1986 FIFA World Cup semifinal. *Veni, vidi, vici*, right?

¹⁵⁹ Frank Rijkaard. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/7vz28cz>

¹⁶⁰ Frank Rijkaard. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yxyf2ut8>

¹⁶¹ Rudi Völler // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yx6ncsa6>

¹⁶² Franz Beckenbauer. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ugddx86>

¹⁶³ Henri Michel. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yx38asr9>

¹⁶⁴ Henri Michel. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yx6koam3>

¹⁶⁵ Henri Michel. FFF.fr. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3leuvmsw>

Veni, vidi, vici¹⁶⁶

As a follow-up to the previous topic, I would like to recall the most successful coaches over the last 18 years in world and European football by monitoring their time investments into successful results. Let's start with definitions.

“Working cycle” is the qualification round of the FIFA World Cup (in the structure of the FIFA member confederation) or UEFA EURO including the final tournament. As a rule, it lasts for two (2) years.

Below you will find the number of “working cycles” head coaches of the most successful national “A” teams invested into getting into the FIFA World Cup semifinals and final:

2018 FIFA WC		
1.	FRA	3 cycles
2.	CRO	1 cycle
3.	BEL	1 cycle
4.	ENG	1 cycle

2014 FIFA WC	
GER	4 cycles
ARG	>1 cycle
NED	1 cycle
BRA	1 cycle

2010 FIFA WC	
ESP	1 cycle
NED	1 cycle
GER	2 cycles
URU	3 cycles

2006 FIFA WC	
ITA	1 cycle
FRA	1 cycle
GER	1 cycle
POR	2 cycles

2002 FIFA WC		
1.	BRA	1 cycle
2.	GER	1 cycle
3.	KOR	1 cycle
4.	TUR	1 cycle

The number of “working cycles” invested for UEFA EURO:

UEFA EURO 2016		
1.	POR	1 cycle
2.	FRA	2 cycles
3.	GER	5 cycles
4.	WAL	2 cycles

UEFA EURO 2012	
ESP	2 cycles
ITA	1 cycle
GER	2 cycles
POR	1 cycle

UEFA EURO 2008	
ESP	2 cycles
GER	1 cycle
TUR	>1 cycle
RUS	1 cycle

UEFA EURO 2004	
GRE	>1 cycle
POR	1 cycle
CZE	1 cycle
NED	1 cycle

UEFA EURO 2000		
1.	FRA	1 cycle
2.	ITA	1 cycle
3.	NED	1 cycle
4.	POR	1 cycle

Thus, we see that:

3 out of 5 FIFA WC winners were coached by those who were working with an “A” team for their first cycle (**60%**);

5 out of 5 FIFA WC runners-up were coached by those who were working with an “A” team for their first cycle (**100%**);

¹⁶⁶ “I came; I saw; I conquered” is a Latin phrase popularly attributed to Julius Caesar who, according to Appian, used the phrase in a letter to the Roman Senate around 47 BC after he had achieved a quick victory in his short war against Pharnaces II of Pontus at the Battle of Zela. En.wikipedia.org. <https://tinyurl.com/1taymk3r>

3 out of 5 UEFA EURO winners were coached by those who were working with an "A" team for their first cycle (60%);

4 out of 5 UEFA EURO runners-up were coached by those who were working with an "A" team for their first cycle (80%);

In total:

For 15 out of 20 the most successful FIFA WC head coaches it was the first cycle with their "A" teams (75%);

for 14 out of 20 the most successful UEFA EURO head coaches it was the first cycle with their "A" teams (70%).

Consequently, with minor exceptions, coaches have become successful in the shortest time possible! This is, most probably, stipulated by the quality level of their footballers playing for the winning teams and, of course, the highest level of coaching skills and competences. Let's keep in mind the time that is still being the oldest enemy of a coach. Are we talking about a certain phenomenon or just putting it down to beginner's luck!?

To conclude, you will find some detailed personal statistics below.

Coaches of FIFA WORLD CUP winners

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
BRA	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	09.11.1948	54	42	18	8	+	-	-	0
ITA	Marcello Lippi ITA	12.04.1948	58	56	20	20	-	-	-	0
ESP	Vicente Del Bosque ESP	23.12.1950	60	58	18	18	-	-	-	3
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	54	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
FRA	Didier Deschamps FRA	15.10.1968	50	44	8	8	-	-	-	0

Coaches of FIFA WORLD CUP runners-up

GER	Rudi Voeller GER	13.04.1960	42	40	0	0	-	-	-	-
FRA	Raymond Domenech FRA	24.01.1952	54	52	20	20	-	-	+	0
NED	Bert Van Marwijk NED	19.05.1952	58	56	13	13	-	-	-	0
ARG	Alejandro Sabella ARG	05.11.1954	60	57	18	18	-	+	-	0
CRO	Zlatko Dalic CRO	26.10.1966	52	51	13	13	-	-	-	1

Coaches of FIFA WORLD CUP semifinalists

TUR	Senol Gunes TUR	01.06.1952	50	48	10	10	-	-	-	1
KOR	Guus Hiddink NED	08.11.1946	54	49	16	11	+	-	-	0
GER	Juergen Klinsmann GER	13.07.1964	42	40	0	0	-	-	-	-
POR	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	09.11.1948	58	42	19	8	+	-	-	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	50	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
URU	Oscar Tabarez URU	03.03.1947	63	41	16	8	+	-	+	4
NED	Louis van Gaal NED	08.09.1951	63	49	21	14	+	-	+	1
BRA	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	09.11.1948	66	42	28	8	+	-	-	0
BEL	Roberto Martinez ESP	13.07.1973	45	43	9	9	-	-	-	0
ENG	Gareth Southgate ENG	03.09.1970	48	46	7	7	-	-	+	0

The most successful coaches at the FIFA WC are representatives from 11 countries:

GER	4
BRA	3
NED	3
FRA	2
ESP	2
ARG	1
CRO	1
ENG	1
ITA	1
TUR	1
URU	1

Coaches of UEFA EURO winners

FRA	Roger Lemerre FRA	18.06.1941	59	57	21	21	-	-	-	0
GRE	Otto-Heinz Rehhagel GER	09.08.1938	66	63	27	27	-	-	-	1
ESP	Luis Aragonés Suárez ESP	28.07.1938	70	66	22	22	-	-	-	0
ESP	Vicente del Bosque ESP	23.12.1950	62	58	18	18	-	-	-	3
POR	Fernando Santos POR	10.10.1954	62	56	26	22	+	-	-	0

Coaches of UEFA EURO runners-up

ITA	Dino Zoff ITA	28.02.1942	58	56	6	6	-	-	-	1
POR	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	19.11.1948	56	42	19	8	+	-	-	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	48	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
ITA	Cesare Prandelli ITA	19.08.1957	55	53	18	18	-	-	-	0
FRA	Didier Deschamps FRA	15.10.1968	48	44	8	8	-	-	-	0

Coaches of UEFA EURO semifinalists

POR	Humberto Coelho POR	20.04.1950	50	48	2	2	-	-	-	11
NED	Frank Rijkaard NED	30.09.1962	38	36	0	0	-	+	-	-
CZE	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	65	62	27	27	-	+	+	0
NED	Dick Advocaat NED	27.09.1947	57	45	17	8	+	+	-	0
RUS	Guus Hiddink NED	08.11.1946	62	49	22	11	+	-	-	0
TUR	Fatih Terim TUR	04.09.1953	55	40	14	6	+	+	+	1
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	52	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
POR	Paulo Bento POR	20.06.1969	43	41	5	5	-	-	-	1
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	56	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
WAL	Chris Coleman WAL	10.06.1970	46	42	8	8	-	-	-	0

The most successful coaches at the UEFA EURO are representatives from 10 countries:

GER	4
NED	3
POR	3
ESP	2
FRA	2
ITA	2
BRA	1
CZE	1
TUR	1
WAL	1

About German consistency, succession and tradition

Before I referred to Franz Beckenbauer as an example and to the tradition of the Deutscher Fussball-Bund (DFB) to appoint novices as head coaches of national "A" team. It was the case in 1984 with Beckenbauer, followed by Rudi Voeller in 2000 and Juergen Klinsmann in 2004. However, Germany has one more tradition, which is likely to be the rule. Five out of ten Nationalmannschaft coaches have worked as national "A" team assistant coaches and 4 of them have succeeded at the big tournaments.

Since the Germany "A" team first entry to the FIFA competition, 10 coaches and the DFB Committee had been working with the team for the FIFA competitions from 1908 to 1926¹⁶⁷:

- Third coach Helmut Schön was an assistant to the second coach Sepp Herberger from 01.07.1963 to 03.11.1964¹⁶⁸;
- Fourth coach Jupp Derwall was an assistant to the third coach Helmut Schön from 01.07.1970 to 30.06.1978¹⁶⁹;
- Seventh coach Erich Ribbeck was an assistant to the fourth coach Jupp Derwall from 01.07.1978 to 27.09.1984¹⁷⁰, as well as to fifth coach Franz Beckenbauer for one match;
- Sixth coach Berti Vogts was an assistant to the fifth coach Franz Beckenbauer from 01.07.1986 to 08.08.1990, and had been coaching Germany U-21 for 11 years — from 01.07.1979 to 08.08.1990¹⁷¹;
- Tenth coach Joachim Löw was an assistant coach to the ninth coach Jürgen Klinsmann from 01.08.2004 to 11.07.2006¹⁷².

¹⁶⁷ Germany National Football Team Manager. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/u7jgcr7>

¹⁶⁸ Helmut Schön. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/qnx5sgk>

¹⁶⁹ Jupp Derwall. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v253eal>

¹⁷⁰ Erich Ribbeck. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tpxzzws>

¹⁷¹ Berti Vogts. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/w8ld2xa>

¹⁷² Joachim Löw. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tx9tnfd>

For 20 consecutive years, 1964 – 1984, the DFB was steadily appointing a specialist with previous experience as an assistant coach (to the former one, as a rule). After six years, the tradition was resumed and interrupted later in 2000 following the appointment of a famous football player Rudy Völler, who had no coaching experience nor did Beckenbauer and Jürgen Klinsmann. Six years later, the DFB reverted to the old rule, and managerial reins were handed to Klinsmann's assistant Joachim Löw. In 1990 the DFB also returned to the old tradition of appointing assistant coaches by having appointed Bertie Vogts in 1990 and Erich Ribbek in 1998. Taking 1964 as a starting year for a tradition, it turns out that DFB has been using this model for more than 42 years (1964–1984, 1990–2000, from 2006 till now)! Given that two out of five assistant coaches, namely Helmut Schön and Joachim Löw won the FIFA World Cups with three out of five, namely Helmut Schön, Jupp Dervall and Berti Vogts have become European champions, apart from three bronze medals at the FIFA World Cup and three silver medals at the UEFA EURO, it should be admitted that approach as such towards national “A” team management is both effective and efficient, to say the least.

At the end of May 2021¹⁷³, DFB confirmed that Hansi Flick (Hans-Dieter «Hansi» Flick), one of Löw's assistants during their victorious World Cup campaign in 2014, would replace Löw as head coach after UEFA EURO 2020. Therefore, Germany continues its tradition to appoint former assistant coaches as head coaches of the Nationalmannschaft.

What other national associations can boast of coaches who achieved remarkable success in the FIFA and UEFA competitions but, before stepping up as “A” managers themselves, had been assistant coaches?

France

Michel Hidalgo¹⁷⁴ was an assistant coach to Georges Boulogne and Ștefan Kovács from June 1972 to March 1976. He won UEFA EURO in 1984.

Roger Lemerre¹⁷⁵ was an assistant coach to Aimé Jacquet from 01.07.1997 to 27.07.1998.

He won UEFA EURO 2000.

Italy

Enzo Bearzot was an assistant coach to Fulvio Bernardini from September 1975 to June 1977¹⁷⁶ and won 1982 FIFA World Cup.

Cesare Maldini was himself assisting to Enzo Bearzot for six consecutive years — from 01.07.1980 to 30.06.1986¹⁷⁷ and took charge of “*Gli Azzurri*” from

¹⁷³ Germany confirm Hansi Flick to replace Joachim Low as head coach after Euro 2020. Skysports.com, Tuesday 25 May 2021 11:44, UK. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yejnk4bd>

¹⁷⁴ Michel Hidalgo. FFE.fr. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/rp8wjqwz>

¹⁷⁵ Roger Lemerre. FFE.fr. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1kbk40zl>

¹⁷⁶ Enzo Bearzot. It.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wvptdkw>

¹⁷⁷ Cesare Maldini. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/u76fxbh>

22.01.1997 to 30.07.1998 preceded by his appointment as Italy U-21 head coach from 01.07.1986 to 31.12.1996. He won UEFA European U-21 Championship — in 1992, 1994 & 1996 — three editions in a row! being an absolute triumphantor of the UEFA U-21 EURO!

Denmark

Richard Møller Nielsen was assisting to Sepp Piontek from 01.07.1987 to 30.06.1990.

He won UEFA EURO 1992 and was at the helm of U-21 team for 11 years — from 01.07.1978 to 30.06.1989¹⁷⁸.

USSR

Gavriil Kachalin was assisting to Vasily Sokolov¹⁷⁹, head coach of USSR men's senior football team in 1954. He won UEFA EURO 1960 and football tournament of the 1956 Summer Olympics. In the meantime, Gavriil Kachalin was at the helm of USSR U-21 in 1965¹⁸⁰.

Brazil

Mario Zagallo was assisting (as a coordination coach^{181 182}) to Carlos Alberto Parreira, Brazil national team head coach, during the 1994 FIFA World Cup. He also won 1970 FIFA World Cup.

Available coaching statistics of former assistant coaches, starting from the second half of the 20th century and those who won World Cups or UEFA EUROs as head coaches, is rather limited with Germans ranked first, as four out of eight coaches are German. Mario Zagallo's story is the opposite; taking Cesare Maldini as an example of succession of coaches in NA with the effective National Team Institute at place, where success came with U-21 national team, is very revealing.

GER	4
FRA	2
ITA	1
USSR	1

Statistics of coaches leading their teams in the FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO in 2000–2018 is as follows (participating teams with more than one coach were considered >1):

2002–2018 FIFA WORLD CUP

POL	2
KOR	3

¹⁷⁸ Richard Möller Nielsen. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/rjn9sln>

¹⁷⁹ Vasily Sokolov (footballer) En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/2mtrh4md>

¹⁸⁰ Gavriil Kachalin. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/sta55ct>

¹⁸¹ Mario Zagallo. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/w6o5r3l>

¹⁸² Mário Zagallo. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uooyfow>

2000–2016 UEFA EURO

NED	2
GER	2
CZE	3
CRO	2

Today, among the winners of the FIFA and UEFA tournaments, only Joachim Löw has had previous experience as an assistant coach. At the same time, of course, one should admit that German principles of building up the national “A” team not only have a right to exist, but, probably, should serve as a good example for others, if modern, and I emphasize it, modern environment allows national associations to apply the German rule or the German model.

Step-by-step model

Back to German traditions and rules, let us dig deep into the model of collaboration between the NA’s National Team Institute and national team coaches when it comes to appointing a national “A” team head coach with previous experience of working within the National Team Institute at lower levels. We have already considered a similar model with reference to succession pattern in Germany, by which assistant coach is appointed as head coach, as well as highlighted their coaching accomplishments. Now, let’s extend the range, since there is certain logic behind appointing someone with previous experience with U-21 team and /or as an assistant to the “A” team head coach. After all, national team coach and club coach’s workload differs a lot and, to name a few, experience as such would be very useful.

Let’s look at the statistics of the FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO participating teams led by coaches with previous experience as U-21/23 national team head coach and “A” team assistant coach.

Teams	FIFA WC	UEFA EURO
U-21/23 NT	32 (25,4%)	13 (18,06%)
“A” team assistant coach	26 (20,64%)	17 (23,61%)

The List and percentage of coaches with previous experience of both working with U-21 national teams and as “A” team assistant coaches before taking charge of national “A” team are given below.

FIFA WC
8 (6,35%)
Aliou Cisse SEN
Cesare Maldini ITA
James Appiah GHA
Karel Brückner CZE
Lars Lagerback SWE
Rabah Saadane ALG
Victor Pua URU
Shin Taeyong KOR

UEFA EURO
5 (6,94%)
Aleksandrs Starkovs LVA
Fatih Terim TUR
Ante Čačić CRO
Karel Brückner CZE
Lars Lagerbäck SWE

The number of coaches with previous experience on all three levels who were working with UEFA and FIFA final tournament participating teams is much less.

FIFA WC
4 (3,18%)
Cesare Maldini ITA
Lars Lagerback SWE
Victor Pua URU
Rabah Saadane ALG

UEFA EURO
2 (2,78%)
Fatih Terim TUR
Lars Lagerbäck SWE

The coaches who made a strong presence — qualified for top four teams in the FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO — with previous experience with U-21/23 national teams and as "A" national assistant coaches deserve special attention.

FIFA WC
0 (-%)
0 (-%)

UEFA EURO
2 (2,78%)
2 (2,78%)

U-21/23 NT & "A" national team assistant coach (UEFA EURO):

Fatih Terim	TUR
Karel Brückner	CZE

If we divide successful coaches into two groups — those who have had experience with national youth teams and as former assistant coaches — the figures will be very different.

Teams	FIFA WC
U-21/23 NT	4 (3,18%)
NAT assistant coach	2 (1,59%)

UEFA EURO
2 (2,78%)
3 (4,17%)

U-21/23 national team (FIFA WC):

Raymond Domenech	FRA
Tabarez Oscar	URU
Louis van Gaal	NED
Gareth Southgate	ENG

Louis van Gaal has worked with Netherlands U-20.

U-21/23 NT (UEFA EURO):

Fatih Terim	TUR
Karel Brückner	CZE

National “A” team assistant coaches (FIFA World Cup):

Joachim Löw	GER
Alejandro Sabella	ARG

National “A” team assistant coaches (UEFA EURO):

Fatih Terim	TUR
Karel Brückner	CZE
Frank Rijkaard	NED

Frank Rijkaard — 167 days as Netherlands “A” team assistant coach in 1998.

The number of managers with significant coaching accomplishments over 2000–2018 at 5 UEFA EUROs and 5 FIFA World Cups is 40 (20 + 20), which means that the proportion of those who were successful on the highest level with previous experience with younger national teams is higher in comparison to those 126 coaches involved in FIFA WC vs. 72 involved in UEFA EURO.

U-21/23 NT & “A” team assistant coaches

FIFA WC	UEFA EURO
0 (-%)	2 (10%)
0 (-%)	2 (10%)

National teams	FIFA WC	UEFA EURO
U-21/23 NT	4 (20%)	2 (10%)
“A” team assistant coach	2 (10%)	3 (15%)

In this regard, we cannot but mention Argentinean coach Jose Pekerman who was coaching Argentina and Colombia national teams at three FIFA World Cups (2006, 2014 and 2018). He is a three-time winner of U-20 FIFA World Cup — in 1995, 1997 and 2001. He did not achieve any success with “A” teams, but before stepping up as “A” team coach, he became a three-time FIFA U-20 WC winner. By the by, Jose Pekerman’s team was defeated in 2006 FIFA World Cup quarterfinal, so Cesare Maldini’s team was in 1998. Both coaches lost to host teams — France and Germany— on penalty shootout.

On average, every fifth coach of national “A” team has experience with either youth teams or as an assistant coach. Number of coaches who took these two steps sequentially is three times less. The number of those who took charge of participating teams in the FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO after having climbed up all three levels of the NA’s National Team Institute is extremely low.

Considering German experience and relevant experience of coaching those national teams who won & qualified for Top 4 teams in FIFA and UEFA

tournaments, given step-by-step model, when a manager with previous experience at lower levels within the National Team Institute is appointed as national “A” team head coach, is very applicable and can be recommended to the NAs as an option in decision-making process on “A” team head coach candidates. However, such approach calls for establishing a specific system within the National Team Institute, since it calls national association to close collaboration with head coach candidates at early stages when coaches of minor and senior youth teams — the U-21 team may be under command of a coach with previous experience with minor youth team — as well as “A” team coaching staff are appointed (assistant coach should have a potential for independent work, which now is a challenging task due to a narrow area of expertise). In this case, the next coach of national “A” team is trained and grows professionally within the national association.

It seems to be more complex and time-consuming solution to the problem compared to the option of appointing a coach from a professional football club or a foreigner. But there is a choice, and it depends on senior officials of football federations. In the meantime, coaching accomplishments, obviously, remain the one and the only significant criterion to prove that the applied approach is the right one. If the coach was previously successful with junior teams, it is logical to entrust him with the senior team. The examples of Jose Pekerman and Cesare Maldini are very revealing.

Punctuality is the politeness of kings or impending doom of no-win situation?

Referring to Maurizio Sarri’s comment that *“it is impossible to get a team together very well in 30 days”*, let’s compare club and national team coach’s workload. To continue with mathematical precision in calculating a period of managerial service with “A” team before the final competition of FIFA or UEFA tournaments starts, let us refer to the provisions of the Regulations highlighted in the “Murphy’s laws and paradoxes of FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players” — but first, to the original source of information, i.e. 2018 FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

Three paragraphs of the Annex 1 “Release of players to association teams” determine the timeframe of player’s stay with national “A” team.

Par. 3 Annex 1

“After consultation with the relevant stakeholders, FIFA publishes the international match calendar for the period of four or eight years. It will include all international windows for the relevant period (cf. paragraph 4 below). Following the publication of the international match calendar only the final competitions of the FIFA World Cup™, the FIFA Confederations Cup and the championships for “A” representative teams of the confederations will be added.”

4.

“An international window is defined as a period of nine days starting on a Monday morning and ending on Tuesday night the following week, which is reserved for representative teams’ activities... The pertinent matches can be scheduled any day as from Wednesday during the international window, provided that a minimum of two full calendar days are left between two matches (e.g. Thursday/Sunday or Saturday/Tuesday).”

7.

“...For a final competition in the sense of paragraphs 2 and 3 above, players must be released and start the travel to their representative team no later than Monday morning the week preceding the week when the relevant final competition starts...”

That said, and considering UEFA slots for FIFA World Cup or UEFA EURO qualification, a head coach of a national team from UEFA member association has 8 international windows at his disposal as the qualification starts on FIFA international autumn windows in the year of the previous UEFA or FIFA final tournament (depending on the current year) and runs until November of the year preceding the final part of the competition. However, starting from 2018/19 season, the UEFA Nations League takes place every two years. The next tournament starts in autumn 2020¹⁸³ taking three autumn international windows in the year of the FIFA WC or UEFA EURO. Before this innovation, the European participants used to enter a qualification round of the UEFA EURO or FIFA World Cup earlier, i.e. during the three autumn windows mentioned above. As a result, only 5 windows remain available for UEFA EURO next year not to mention the fact that four finalists of the new UEFA competition from League A will have one window less, since they will be busy in June by taking part in the final matches of the UEFA Nations League. Only four national “A” teams will be facing these extra challenges. In total, national “A” teams representing 55 UEFA member associations take part in UEFA EURO 2020 with four finalists representing only 7,27% of the 55 participating teams. Thus, “A” team will take part in two tournaments at the same time during the next edition of the UEFA EURO provided there is a standard two-year interval between FIFA and UEFA final tournaments.

Taking into account that UEFA EURO play-off round is played in March in the year of the final round of the UEFA EURO and is based upon team performance in the UEFA Nations League, these tournaments should be considered either as ones sharing a common goal — to qualify for the UEFA EURO — or as two different competitions. The first tournament can serve as a sort of a training ground for UEFA EURO participating teams, if a NA is willing to sacrifice the Nations League for the UEFA EURO. In the meantime, group winners of the respective league in the Nations League — should they fail to qualify for UEFA EURO — are entitled to compete for four slots in the UEFA EURO final round by playing play-off matches in March.

¹⁸³ How the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League Will Line Up, 24 September 2019. UEFA.com. or 2020–21 UEFA Nations League En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/36sneeuw>

In my opinion, with Nations League — especially for teams from League A and B — getting both an authentic sporting character and prestige, for a coach of the participating team it will only mean to find himself in even more restricted conditions. Frankly speaking, sacrificing one tournament for the sake of another will be difficult, as they will have to fight for winning the group in their league. Meanwhile, the number of matches in the 2020/21 UEFA Nations League will increase from 138 to 162 at the group stage. In autumn 2020, League A, B and C will be busy exclusively with the matches of the tournament and will play all 6 matches in three FIFA autumn windows. Indeed, new UEFA tournament is getting both more sporting and commercial.

The duration of UEFA EURO qualification has been reduced from 7 down to 5 international windows, compared, for example, with the qualification for the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Even though there are only 8 windows in the cycle, one international window matched the play-off round of the FIFA World Cup in November. Apparently, the reduction will affect the European qualifications for the next FIFA World Cups too. Let's get back to math and calculate the number of days a national team coach has at his disposal within the framework of the UEFA or FIFA tournament.

In total, in the European qualification for the 2018 FIFA World Cup, a national team coach had 9 FIFA dates at his disposal. Those were September, October, November in 2016 and March, June, September, October, November in 2017 plus March 2018. In the first 7 dates, only qualification matches were played. In November 2017, play-off matches were held, and in March 2018 the finalists have already started their preparations for the final round. Each date lasted for 9 days and, with strict adherence to provisions of the 2016 FIFA regulations in force back then, coaches of the national teams qualified for the final round had only 11 additional days before the start of the final tournament, since the kick-off match took place on Thursday, June 14th.

But, contrary to the 2016 FIFA Regulations on Status and Transfer of Players, by FIFA Circular Letter No. 1578 dated March 30, 2017 "*preparatory phase for member associations participating in the final FIFA World Cup 2018 in Russia*" was expanded from May 28 to June 13, 2018. Consequently, instead of 11 days, national teams got 17 (+ 6 days) days for preparations which meant that coaches had 98 days ($9 \times 9 + 17 = 98$) to get their teams ready within the entire qualifying cycle for the World Cup not taking into account 17 days outside the FIFA dates. This is, of course, not a 30 day-period — as Maurizio Sarri put it — but, it is not, let's say, a 19-month service with the team a club coach has for a similar almost two-year period.

From a 24-month period let's deduct three summer months in 2018, provided that preparations began in September 2016 when the qualifying cycle started. In case of Western Europe or, for instance, Top 5 Championships, the above mentioned period should be further reduced by at least two months — one in summer and one in winter — from pre-season (after 2016/17) and inter-season (2016/17 and 2017/18) breaks. Although there is no winter break in the Premier League and the Spanish League has a short break for Christmas. As a result, $24 - 3 - 2 = 19$

which is significantly higher than 98 days (a bit more than 3 months) an “A” team head coach has at his disposal, even if 17 days right before the final round (115 days or a bit less than 4 months) are added.

At the same time, a national team coach will play a maximum of 18 matches (two in each international window), plus, as a rule, no more than 3 matches during his team preparation period for the final round of FIFA or UEFA competitions which is expanded by FIFA’s goodwill and contrary to the FIFA Regulations. But this is completely different subject and to be discussed separately; however, it is directly connected to the National Teams Institute of the FIFA member associations.

In total, we get a maximum of 21 matches over almost a two-year period compared to at least 60 matches in the national championship involving, for example, 16 participants. Referring to TOP-5 Championships, Germany alone has 18 while England, Spain, Italy and France — 20 participants each! Let’s take an average minimum here plus 4 matches of the National Cup. Let’s assume that conditions are as follows: club poor performance in the National Cup and no League’s Cup which could provide for additional matches. At the same time, UEFA competitions, which will undoubtedly increase the total number of matches, are not taken into account. Thus, we get “formally conditional” 64 matches played by a club’s team excluding pre-season friendly matches, where the number of those is three times higher compared to matches played by national “A” team.

Simple calculations below show the gap between national “A” and club coach’s workload in terms of service duration.

4 months	vs.	19 months	or	21 matches	vs.	> 60 matches
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Thus, Maurizio Sarri’s comments are based on precise and, unfortunately, killing statistics and arguments in relation to national “A” team coaches. Time is not just their enemy, but a constant unfriendly companion putting coaches under extremely difficult conditions regardless of national team’s status — an outsider or a favorite. Despite obviously desperate environment for coaches to work in, the FIFA and UEFA competitions for national “A” teams not only maintain their relevance, but also enjoy incredibly high popularity generating considerable financial profit for organisers to be generously shared with member associations. This does not create conditions for shutting this “hopeless project” down yet but leaves national “A” team coach face-to-face with ruthless time and circumstances, which, from the point of view of the common sense of an ordinary club coach, should be recognized as unbearable. However, coaches, as our protagonists, keep on working because, contrary to the described logic, for 15 out of 20 (75%) the most successful national “A” team head coaches in the FIFA World Cups it had been the first service cycle with the team before any success was achieved. So it had been for 14 out of 20 (70%) the most successful national “A” team head coaches in the UEFA EUROs. Is this a paradox? As Ukrainian coach Viktor Prokopenko puts it: “*Do not look for logic in football.*” Apparently, he was right.

Appendix 1

Information about head coaches of the 2002–2018 FIFA World Cup participating teams

Key to the charts below:

- 1 — country;
- 2 — name and nationality;
- 3 — date of birth;
- 4 — age at the time of the tournament;
- 5 — age when appointed to national "A" team for the first time;
- 6 — service background before appointment to current national "A" team (years);
- 7 — service background before appointment to national "A" team for the first time (years);
- 8 — previous experience as national "A" team head coach (+/-);
- 9 — previous experience as national "A" team assistant coach (+/-);
- 10 — previous experience with youth and U-21/23 NT (+/-);
- 11 — break in service before their appointment to current national "A" team (years).

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ARG	Marcelo Bielsa ARG	21.07.1955	47	43	14	14	-	-	-	0
BEL	Robert Waseige BEL	26.08.1939	63	60	28	28	-	-	-	0
BRA	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	09.11.1948	54	42	18	8	+	-	-	0
CHN	Bora Milutinovic YUG	07.09.1944	58	39	18	6	+	-	-	0
CRO	Mirko Jozic CRO	08.04.1940	62	54	29	23	+	-	+	0
CMR	Winni Schaefer GER	10.01.1950	52	51	17	17	-	-	-	1
CRC	Alexandre Guimaraes CRC	07.11.1959	43	42	5	5	-	-	-	1
DEN	Morten Olsen DEN	14.08.1949	53	50	7	7	-	-	-	1
ECU	Hernan Gomez COL	03.02.1956	46	39	17	4	+	-	-	2
ENG	Sven-Göran Eriksson SWE	05.02.1948	54	53	24	24	-	-	-	0
FRA	Roger Lemerre FRA	18.06.1941	61	57	21	21	-	+	-	0
GER	Rudi Voeller GER	13.04.1960	42	40	0	0	-	-	-	-
ITA	Giovanni Trapattoni ITA	17.03.1939	63	61	26	26	-	-	-	0
IRL	Mick Mc Carthy IRL	07.02.1959	43	37	4	4	-	-	-	0
JPN	Philippe Troussier FRA	21.03.1955	47	37	15	9	+	-	-	0
KOR	Guus Hiddink NED	08.11.1946	54	49	16	11	+	-	-	0
KSA	Nasser Al Johar KSA	06.01.1946	56	54	13	13	+	-	-	2
PAR	Cesare Maldini ITA	05.02.1932	70	65	23	21	+	+	+	0
MEX	Javier Aguirre MEX	01.12.1958	44	43	3	3	+	-	-	0
NGA	Adegboye Onigbinde NGA	05.03.1938	64	43	n/a	n/a	+	-	-	n/a
POL	Jerzy Engel POL	06.10.1952	50	48	18	18	-	+	-	3
POR	Antonio Oliveira POR	10.06.1952	50	43	8	6	+	-	-	0
ESP	Jose Antonio Camacho ESP	08.06.1955	47	43	9	9	-	-	-	0
RSA	Jomo Sono RSA	17.07.1955	47	43	20	16	+	-	-	0
RUS	Oleg Romantsev RUS	04.01.1954	48	40	14	10	+	-	-	0
SEN	Bruno Metsu FRA	28.01.1954	48	46	11	11	-	-	-	1
SVN	Srecko Katanec SVN	16.07.1963	39	35	2	2	-	-	+	0
SWE	Tommy Soderberg SWE	19.08.1948	54	50	21	21	-	-	+	0
TUN	Khemais Labidi TUN	30.08.1950	52	52	5	5	-	-	-	5
TUR	Senol Gunes TUR	01.06.1952	50	48	10	10	-	-	-	1
URU	Victor Pua URU	31.03.1956	46	41	11	7	+	+	+	0
USA	Bruce Arena USA	21.09.1951	51	47	21	21	+	-	+	0

n/a — no reliable source of information available

2006 FIFA WORLD CUP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ARG	Jose Pekerman ARG	03.09.1949	57	55	21	21	+	-	+	0
ANG	Luis Goncalves ANG	22.06.1960	46	42	n/a	n/a	-	-	+	1
AUS	Guus Hiddink NED	08.11.1946	60	49	20	11	+	-	-	0
BRA	Carlos Alberto Parreira BRA	27.02.1943	63	35	28	5	+	-	-	0
CIV	Henri Michel FRA	28.10.1947	59	37	13	2	+	-	-	2
CRO	Zlatko Kranjcar CRO	15.11.1956	50	48	12	12	-	-	-	0
CRC	Alexandre Guimaraes CRC	07.11.1959	47	42	8	5	-	-	-	0
CZE	Karel Bruckner CZE	13.11.1939	67	62	27	27	-	+	+	0
ECU	Luis Fernando Suárez COL	23.12.1959	47	45	4	4	-	-	-	2
ENG	Sven-Göran Eriksson SWE	05.02.1948	58	53	24	24	-	-	-	0
FRA	Raymond Domenech FRA	24.01.1952	54	52	20	20	-	-	+	0
GER	Juergen Klinsmann GER	13.07.1964	42	40	0	0	-	-	-	-
GHA	Ratomir Dujkovic SRB	24.02.1946	60	47	17	8	+	-	-	0
IRN	Branko Ivankovic CRO	28.02.1954	52	48	10	10	-	+	-	1
ITA	Marcello Lippi ITA	12.04.1948	58	56	20	20	-	-	-	0
JPN	Zico BRA	03.03.1953	53	49	0	0	-	-	-	2
KOR	Dick Advocaat NED	27.09.1947	59	45	20	8	+	+	-	0
KSA	Marcos Paqueta BRA	27.08.1958	48	47	18	18	-	-	+	0
MEX	Ricardo La Volpe ARG	06.02.1952	54	50	16	16	-	-	-	0
NED	Marco Van Basten NED	31.10.1964	42	40	1	1	-	-	-	0
PAR	Anibal Ruiz Leites URU	01.01.1941	65	61	10	10	-	-	-	10
POL	Pawel Janas POL	04.03.1953	53	49	12	12	-	-	+	1
POR	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	09.11.1948	58	42	19	8	+	-	-	0
ESP	Luis Aragones ESP	28.07.1938	68	66	22	22	-	-	-	0
SCG	Ilija Petkovic SCG	22.09.1945	61	55	9	7	+	+	-	0
SWE	Lars Lagerback SWE	16.07.1948	58	52	19	19	-	+	+	0
SUI	Koebi Kuhn SUI	12.10.1943	63	58	7	7	-	-	+	0
TRI	Leo Beenhakker NED	02.08.1942	64	43	33	19	+	-	-	1
TOG	Otto Pfister GER	24.11.1937	69	35	45	11	+	-	+	0
TUN	Roger Lemerre FRA	18.06.1941	65	57	25	21	+	+	-	0
UKR	Oleg Blokhin UKR	05.11.1952	54	51	8	8	-	-	-	2
USA	Bruce Arena USA	21.09.1951	55	47	21	21	+	-	+	0

n/a — no reliable source of information available

2010 FIFA WORLD CUP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ARG	Diego Maradona ARG	30.10.1960	50	48	0	0	-	-	-	13
ALG	Rabah Saadane ALG	03.05.1946	64	38	13	5	+	+	+	0
AUS	Pim Verbeek NED	12.03.1956	54	50	20	19	+	+	-	0
BRA	Dunga BRA	31.10.1963	47	43	0	0	-	-	-	-
CHI	Marcelo Bielsa ARG	21.07.1955	55	43	18	11	+	-	-	2
CIV	Sven-Göran Eriksson SWE	05.02.1948	62	53	31	24	+	-	-	1
CMR	Paul Le Guen FRA	01.03.1964	46	45	9	9	-	-	-	0

DEN	Morten Olsen DEN	14.08.1949	61	50	7	7	-	-	-	1
ENG	Fabio Capello ITA	18.06.1946	64	61	24	24	-	-	-	0
FRA	Raymond Domenech FRA	24.01.1952	58	52	20	20	-	-	+	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	50	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
GRE	Otto Rehhagel GER	09.08.1938	72	63	27	27	-	-	-	1
GHA	Milovan Rajevac SRB	25.08.1956	54	52	11	11	-	-	-	0
HON	Reinaldo Rueda COL	16.04.1957	53	47	9	6	+	-	+	0
ITA	Marcello Lippi ITA	12.04.1948	62	56	22	20	+	-	-	2
JPN	Takeshi Okada JPN	25.08.1956	54	41	14	7	+	+	-	1
KOR	Jungmoo Huh KOR	13.01.1955	55	40	9	5	+	+	-	0
PRK	Jong Hun Kim PRK	01.09.1956	54	51	n/a	n/a	-	-	-	0
MEX	Javier Aguirre MEX	01.12.1958	52	43	11	3	+	-	-	0
NED	Bert Van Marwijk NED	19.05.1952	58	56	13	13	-	-	-	0
NZL	Ricki Herbert NZL	10.04.1961	49	44	9	9	-	-	+	0
NGA	Lars Lagerback SWE	16.07.1948	62	52	29	19	+	+	+	0
PAR	Gerardo Martino ARG	20.11.1962	48	44	8	8	-	-	-	0
POR	Carlos Queiroz POR	01.03.1953	57	38	17	2	+	-	+	0
RSA	Carlos Alberto Parreira BRA	27.02.1943	67	35	33	5	+	-	-	0
ESP	Vicente Del Bosque ESP	23.12.1950	60	58	18	18	-	-	-	3
SRB	Radomir Antic SRB	22.11.1948	62	60	10	10	-	-	-	4
SVK	Vladimir Weiss SVK	22.09.1964	46	44	8	8	-	-	-	0
SVN	Matjaz Kek SVN	09.09.1961	49	46	4	4	-	-	+	0
SUI	Ottmar Hitzfeld GER	12.01.1949	61	59	21	21	-	-	-	0
URU	Oscar Tabarez URU	03.03.1947	63	41	16	8	+	-	+	4
USA	Bob Bradley USA	03.03.1958	52	49	26	26	-	-	+	0

n/a — no reliable source of information available

2014 FIFA WORLD CUP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ARG	Alejandro Sabella ARG	05.11.1954	60	57	18	18	-	+	-	0
ALG	Vahid Halilhodzic BIH	15.05.1952	62	59	13	13	-	-	-	0
AUS	Ange Postecoglou AUS	27.08.1965	49	48	17	17	-	-	+	0
BEL	Marc Wilmots BEL	22.02.1969	45	43	4	4	-	+	-	0
BIH	Safet Susic BIH	13.04.1955	59	54	6	6	-	-	-	1
BRA	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	09.11.1948	66	42	28	8	+	-	-	0
COL	Jose Pekerman ARG	03.09.1949	65	55	24	21	+	-	+	3
CHI	Jorge Sampaoli ARG	13.03.1960	54	52	9	9	+	-	-	0
CIV	Sabri Lamouchi FRA	09.11.1971	43	41	0	0	-	-	-	-
CMR	Volker Finke GER	24.03.1948	66	65	35	35	-	-	-	2
CRC	Jorge Luis Pinto COL	02.01.1952	62	52	20	14	+	-	-	0
CRO	Niko Kovac CRO	15.10.1971	43	42	4	4	-	-	+	0
ECU	Reinaldo Rueda COL	16.04.1957	57	47	12	6	+	-	+	0
ENG	Roy Hodgson ENG	09.08.1947	67	45	32	14	+	-	-	0
FRA	Didier Deschamps FRA	15.10.1968	46	44	8	8	-	-	-	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	54	46	11	11	-	+	-	0

GRE	Fernando Santos POR	10.10.1954	60	56	22	22	-	-	-	0
GHA	James Appiah GHA	30.06.1960	54	52	5	5	-	+	+	0
HON	Luis Fernando Suárez COL	23.12.1959	55	45	9	3	+	-	-	1
ITA	Cesare Prandelli ITA	19.08.1957	57	53	18	18	-	-	-	0
IRN	Carlos Queiroz POR	01.03.1953	61	38	18	2	+	-	+	1
JPN	Alberto Zaccheroni ITA	01.04.1953	61	57	19	19	-	-	-	0
KOR	Hong Myung-Bo KOR	12.02.1969	45	44	6	6	-	+	+	0
MEX	Miguel Herrera MEX	18.03.1968	46	45	6	6	-	-	-	0
NED	Louis van Gaal NED	08.09.1951	63	49	21	14	+	-	+	1
NGA	Stephen Keshi NGA	23.01.1962	52	42	16	10	+	+	-	0
POR	Paulo Bento POR	20.06.1969	45	41	5	5	-	-	-	1
RUS	Fabio Capello ITA	18.06.1946	68	61	28	24	+	-	-	0
ESP	Vicente Del Bosque ESP	23.12.1950	64	58	18	18	-	-	-	3
SUI	Ottmar Hitzfeld GER	12.01.1949	65	59	21	21	-	-	-	0
URU	Oscar Tabarez URU	03.03.1947	67	41	16	8	+	-	+	4
USA	Juergen Klinsmann GER	13.07.1964	50	40	3	0	+	-	-	2

2018 FIFA WORLD CUP

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ARG	Jorge Sampaoli ARG	13.03.1960	58	52	13	9	+	-	-	0
AUS	Bert Van Marwijk NED	19.05.1952	66	56	19	13	+	-	-	0
BEL	Roberto Martinez ESP	13.07.1973	45	43	9	9	-	-	-	0
BRA	Tite BRA	25.05.1961	57	55	17	17	-	-	-	0
COL	Jose Pekerman ARG	03.09.1949	69	55	24	21	+	-	+	3
CRC	Oscar Ramirez CRC	08.12.1964	54	51	10	10	-	+	-	0
CRO	Zlatko Dalic CRO	26.10.1966	52	51	13	13	-	-	-	1
DEN	Age Hareide NOR	23.09.1953	65	50	25	15	+	-	-	0
EGY	Hector Cuper ARG	16.11.1955	63	53	17	12	+	-	-	1
ENG	Gareth Southgate ENG	03.09.1970	48	46	7	7	-	-	+	0
FRA	Didier Deschamps FRA	15.10.1968	50	44	8	8	-	-	-	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	58	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
ISL	Heimir Hallgrímsson ISL	10.06.1967	51	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
IRN	Carlos Queiroz POR	01.03.1953	65	38	18	2	+	-	+	1
JPN	Akira Nishino JPN	07.04.1955	63	63	21	21	+	-	+	2
KOR	Shin Taeyong KOR	11.10.1970	48	44	11	6	+	+	+	0
MEX	Juan Carlos Osorio COL	08.06.1961	57	54	15	15	-	-	-	0
MAR	Herve Renard FRA	30.09.1968	50	39	13	4	+	-	-	0
NIG	Gernot Rohr GER	28.06.1953	65	57	14	9	+	-	-	1
PAN	Hernan Gomez COL	03.02.1956	62	39	17	4	+	-	-	1
PER	Ricardo Gareca ARG	10.02.1958	60	57	10	10	-	-	-	1
POL	Adam Nawalka POL	23.10.1957	61	56	13	13	-	+	-	0
POR	Fernando Santos POR	10.10.1954	64	56	26	22	+	-	-	0
RUS	Stanislav Cherchesov RUS	02.09.1963	55	53	9	9	-	-	-	0
KSA	Juan Antonio Pizzi ESP	07.06.1968	50	48	8	7	+	-	-	0
SEN	Aliou Cisse SEN	24.03.1976	42	39	5	5	-	+	+	0

SRB	Mladen Krstajic SRB	04.03.1974	44	43	2	2	-	+	-	0
ESP	Fernando Hierro ESP	23.03.1968	50	50	2	2	-	-	-	1
SWE	Janne Andersson SWE	29.09.1962	56	54	27	27	-	-	-	0
SUI	Vladimir Petkovic SUI	15.08.1963	55	51	15	15	-	-	-	1
TUN	Nabil Maaloul TUN	25.12.1962	56	51	7	5	+	+	+	0
URU	Oscar Tabarez URU	03.03.1947	71	41	16	8	+	-	+	4

The List of Head Coaches at the helm of FIFA World Cup participating teams over 2002–2018

- 1 — name;
 2 — nationality;
 3 — DOB;
 4 — years of service with national "A" team which took part in the FIFA WC;
 5 — years of service with different (or the same) national "A" team qualified for the FIFA WC;
 6 — number of national "A" teams coached by then.

Nº	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Cesare Maldini	ITA	05.02.1932	1		2
2	Otto Pfister	GER	24.11.1937	1		12
3	Adegboye Onigbinde	NGA	05.03.1938	1		1
4	Luis Aragones	ESP	28.07.1938	4		1
5	Otto Rehhagel	GER	09.08.1938	9		1
6	Giovanni Trapattoni	ITA	17.03.1939	4		2
7	Robert Waseige	BEL	26.08.1939	3		2
8	Karel Bruckner	CZE	13.11.1939	7		2
9	Mirko Jozic	CRO	08.04.1940	2		2
10	Anibal Ruiz Leites	URU	01.01.1941	4		1
11	Roger Lemerre	FRA	18.06.1941	4 (FRA)	6 (TUN)	3
12	Leo Beenhakker	NED	02.08.1942	1		3
13	Carlos Alberto Parreira	BRA	27.02.1943	4 (BRA)	1 (RSA)	5
14	Koebi Kuhn	SUI	12.10.1943	6		1
15	Bora Milutinovic	YUG	07.09.1944	2		8
16	Ilija Petkovic	SCG	22.09.1945	3		2
17	Nasser Al Johar	KSA	06.01.1946	1		1
18	Ratomir Dujkovic	SRB	24.02.1946	2		4
19	Rabah Saadane	ALG	03.05.1946	3		1
20	Fabio Capello	ITA	18.06.1946	4 (ENG)	3 (RUS)	2
21	Guus Hiddink	NED	08.11.1946	2 (KOR)	2 (AUS)	5
22	Oscar Tabarez	URU	03.03.1947	>13 since 13.02.06		1
23	Roy Hodgson	ENG	09.08.1947	4		3
24	Dick Advocaat	NED	27.09.1947	1		6
25	Henri MICHEL	FRA	28.10.1947	2		8
26	Sven-Göran Eriksson	SWE	05.02.1948	6 (ENG)	1 (CIV)	4
27	Volker Finke	GER	24.03.1948	2		1
28	Marcello Lippi	ITA	12.04.1948	2 (ITA)	2 (ITA)	2
29	Lars Lagerback	SWE	16.07.1948	10 (SWE)	1 (NGA)	4

30	Tommy Soderberg	SWE	19.08.1948	7		1
31	Luiz Felipe Scolari *	BRA	09.11.1948	1 (BRA) & 2 (BRA)	5 (POR)	3
32	Radomir Antic	SRB	22.11.1948	2		1
33	Ottmar Hitzfeld	GER	12.01.1949	6		1
34	Morten Olsen	DEN	14.08.1949	16		1
35	Jose Pekerman	ARG	03.09.1949	2 (ARG)	7 (COL)	2
36	Winni Schaefer	GER	10.01.1950	3		3
37	Khemais Labidi	TUN	30.08.1950	1		1
38	Vicente Del Bosque	ESP	23.12.1950	8		1
39	Louis van Gaal	NED	08.09.1951	2		1
40	Bruce Arena	USA	21.09.1951	8		1
41	Jorge Luis Pinto	COL	02.01.1952	3		3
42	Raymond Domenech	FRA	24.01.1952	6		1
43	Ricardo La Volpe	ARG	06.02.1952	4		1
44	Vahid Halilhodzic	BIH	15.05.1952	3		3
45	Bert Van Marwijk	NED	19.05.1952	4 (NED)	1 (AUS)	2
46	Senol Gunes	TUR	01.06.1952	4		1
47	Antonio Oliveira	POR	10.06.1952	2		1
48	Jerzy Engel	POL	06.10.1952	2		1
49	Oleg Blokhin	UKR	05.11.1952	4		1
50	Carlos Queiroz	POR	01.03.1953	2 (POR)	8 (IRN)	4
51	Zico	BRA	03.03.1953	4		2
52	Pawel Janas	POL	04.03.1953	4		1
53	Alberto Zaccheroni	ITA	01.04.1953	4		2
54	Rohr Gernot	GER	28.06.1953	>2 since 09.08.16		4
55	Age Hareide	NOR	23.09.1953	>2 since 01.03.16		2
56	Oleg Romantsev	RUS	04.01.1954	4		1
57	Bruno Metsu	FRA	28.01.1954	2		3
58	Branko Ivankovic	CRO	28.02.1954	3		1
59	Fernando Santos **	POR	10.10.1954	4 (GRE)	>4 (POR)	2
60	Alejandro Sabella	ARG	05.11.1954	3		1
61	Jungmoo Huh	KOR	13.01.1955	3		1
62	Philippe Troussier	FRA	21.03.1955	4		7
63	Akira Nishino	JPN	07.04.1955	1		1
64	Safet Susic	BIH	13.04.1955	5		1
65	Jose Antonio Camacho	ESP	08.06.1955	4		3
66	Jomo Sono	RSA	17.07.1955	1		1
67	Marcelo Bielsa	ARG	21.07.1955	7 (ARG)	3 (CHI)	2
68	Hector Cuper	ARG	16.11.1955	3		3
69	Hernan Gomez	COL	03.02.1956	5 (COL)	4 (PAN)	4
70	Pim Verbeek	NED	12.03.1956	3		3
71	Victor Pua	URU	31.03.1956	2		1
72	Milovan Rajevac	SRB	25.08.1956	2		4
73	Takeshi Okada	JPN	25.08.1956	3		1
74	Jong Hun Kim	PRK	01.09.1956	3		1

75	Zlatko Kranjcar	CRO	15.11.1956	2		1
76	Reinaldo Rueda	COL	16.04.1957	4 (HON)	4 (ECU)	3
77	Cesare Prandelli	ITA	19.08.1957	4		1
78	Adam Nawalka	POL	23.10.1957	5		1
79	Ricardo Gareca	ARG	10.02.1958	> 4 since 09.02.15		1
80	Bob Bradley	USA	03.03.1958	5		2
81	Marcos Paqueta	BRA	27.08.1958	1		2
82	Javier Aguirre	MEX	01.12.1958	1		3
83	Mick Mc Carthy	IRL	07.02.1959	7		1
84	Alexandre Guimaraes	CRC	07.11.1959	1		2
85	Luis Fernando Suárez	COL	23.12.1959	3 (ECU)	3 (HON)	2
86	Löw Joachim	GER	03.02.1960	>12 since 12.07.06		1
87	Jorge Sampaoli	ARG	13.03.1960	3 (CHI)	1 (ARG)	2
88	Rudi Voeller	GER	13.04.1960	4		1
89	Luis Goncalves	ANG	22.06.1960	7		1
90	James Appiah	GHA	30.06.1960	2		1
91	Diego Maradona	ARG	30.10.1960	2		1
92	Ricki Herbert	NZL	10.04.1961	9		1
93	Tite	BRA	25.05.1961	>2 since 16.06.16		1
94	Carlos Osorio Juan	COL	08.06.1961	3		2
95	Matjaz Kek	SVN	09.09.1961	5		1
96	Stephen Keshi	NGA	23.01.1962	2		3
97	Janne Andersson	SWE	29.09.1962	>2 since 23.06.16		1
98	Gerardo Martino	ARG	20.11.1962	5		3
99	Maaloul Nabil	TUN	25.12.1962	1		2
100	Srecko Katanec	SVN	16.07.1963	4		4
101	Vladimir Petkovic	SUI	15.08.1963	>4 since 01.08.14		1
102	Stanislav Cherchesov	RUS	02.09.1963	>2 since 11.08.16		1
103	Dunga	BRA	31.10.1963	4		1
104	Paul Le Guen	FRA	01.03.1964	1		2
105	Juergen Klinsmann	GER	13.07.1964	2 (GER)	5 (USA)	2
106	Vladimir Weiss	SVK	22.09.1964	4		2
107	Marco Van Basten	NED	31.10.1964	4		1
108	Ramirez Oscar	CRC	08.12.1964	3		1
109	Ange Postecoglou	AUS	27.08.1965	4		1
110	Zlatko Dalic	CRO	26.10.1966	>1 since 07.10.17		1
111	Heimir Hallgrímsson	ISL	10.06.1967	5		1
112	Miguel Herrera	MEX	18.03.1968	2		1
113	Hierro Fernando	ESP	23.03.1968	1		1
114	Pizzi Juan Antonio	ESP	07.06.1968	>1 since 28.11.17		2
115	Herve Renard	FRA	30.09.1968	>2 since 16.02.16		6
116	Didier Deschamps	FRA	15.10.1968	>6 since 08.07.12		1
117	Hong Myung-Bo	KOR	12.02.1969	1		1
118	Marc Wilmots	BEL	22.02.1969	4		2
119	Paulo Bento	POR	20.06.1969	4		2

120	Gareth Southgate	ENG	03.09.1970	>2 since 30.11.16		1
121	Shin Taeyong	KOR	11.10.1970	1		1
122	Niko Kovac	CRO	15.10.1971	2		1
123	Sabri Lamouchi	FRA	09.11.1971	2		1
124	Roberto Martinez	ESP	13.07.1973	>2 since 03.08.16		1
125	Krstajic Mladen	SRB	04.03.1974	>1 since 29.01.18		1
126	Aliou Cisse	SEN	24.03.1976	>3 since 05.03.15		1

* Luiz Felipe Scolari was at the helm of Brazil national team twice — at FIFA World Cups in 2002 and 2014.

** Fernando Santos has been coaching Portugal national team since 23.09.2014.

Appendix 2

Information about Head Coaches at the helm of 2000–2016 UEFA EURO participating teams

Key to the charts below:

1 — country;

2 — name and nationality;

3 — date of birth;

4 — age at the time of the tournament;

5 — age when appointed to national “A” team for the first time;

6 — service background before appointment to current national “A” team (years);

7 — service background before appointment to national “A” team for the first time (years);

8 — previous experience as national “A” team head coach (+/-);

9 — previous experience as national “A” team assistant coach (+/-);

10 — previous experience with youth and U-21/23 NT (+/-);

11 — break in service before their appointment to current national “A” team (years).

UEFA EURO 2000

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
BEL	Robert Waseige BEL	26.08.1939	61	60	28	28	-	-	-	0
CZE	Jozef Chovanec CZE	07.03.1960	40	37	2	2	-	-	-	0
DEN	Bo Johansson SWE	28.11.1942	54	48	15	12	+	-	-	1
ENG	Kevin Keegan ENG	14.02.1951	49	48	6	6	-	-	-	0
FRA	Roger Lemerre FRA	18.06.1941	59	57	21	21	-	-	-	0
GER	Erich Ribbeck GER	13.06.1937	63	61	27	27	-	+	-	2
ITA	Dino Zoff ITA	28.02.1942	58	56	6	6	-	-	-	1
NED	Frank Rijkaard NED	30.09.1962	38	36	0	0	-	+	-	-
NOR	Nils Johan Semb NOR	24.02.1959	41	39	8	8	-	+	-	0
POR	Humberto Coelho POR	20.04.1950	50	48	2	2	-	-	-	11
ROU	Emeric Ienei ROU	22.03.1937	63	49	17	8	+	-	-	0
ESP	José Antonio Camacho ESP	08.06.1955	45	43	9	9	-	-	-	0
SVN	Srečko Katanec SVN	16.07.1963	39	35	2	2	-	+	-	0
SWE	Tommy Soderberg SWE	19.08.1948	52	50	21	21	-	-	+	0
TUR	Mustafa Denizli TUR	10.11.1949	51	38	10	3	+	-	-	0
YUG	Vujadin Boškov SRB	16.05.1931	68	40	35	9	+	-	-	0

UEFA EURO 2004

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
BUL	Plamen Markov BUL	11.09.1957	47	44	5	5	-	-	-	0
CRO	Otto Barić CRO	19.06.1933	69	66	31	28	+	+	-	1
CZE	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	65	62	27	27	-	+	+	0

DEN	Morten Olsen DEN	14.08.1949	55	50	7	7	-	-	-	1
ENG	Sven-Göran Eriksson SWE	05.02.1948	56	53	24	24	-	-	-	0
FRA	Jacques Santini FRA	25.04.1952	52	50	12	12	-	-	-	0
GER	Rudolf Völler GER	13.04.1960	42	40	0	0	-	-	-	-
GRE	Otto-Heinz Rehhagel GER	09.08.1938	66	63	27	27	-	-	-	1
ITA	Giovanni Trapattoni ITA	17.03.1939	65	61	21	21	-	-	-	0
LVA	Aleksandrs Starkovs LVA	26.07.1955	49	46	11	11	-	+	+	0
NED	Dick Advocaat NED	27.09.1947	57	45	17	8	+	+	-	0
POR	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	19.11.1948	56	42	19	8	+	-	-	0
RUS	Georgy Yartsev RUS	11.04.1948	56	55	11	11	-	-	-	0
ESP	José Ignacio Sáez ESP	23.04.1943	61	59	13	13	-	-	+	0
SWE	Tommy Soderberg SWE	19.08.1948	56	50	21	21	-	-	+	0
SUI	Jakob Kuhn SUI	12.10.1943	61	58	7	7	-	-	+	0

UEFA EURO 2008

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
AUT	Josef Hickersberger AUT	27.04.1948	60	40	19	3	+	-	+	0
CRO	Slaven Bilić CRO	11.09.1968	40	38	5	5	-	-	+	0
CZE	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	69	62	27	27	-	+	+	0
FRA	Raymond Domenech FRA	24.01.1952	56	52	20	20	-	-	+	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	48	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
GRE	Otto-Heinz Rehhagel GER	09.08.1938	70	63	27	27	-	-	-	1
ITA	Roberto Donadoni ITA	09.09.1963	45	43	3	3	-	-	-	0
NED	Marco van Basten NED	31.10.1964	44	40	1	1	-	-	-	0
POL	Leo Beenhakker NED	02.08.1942	66	43	34	19	+	-	-	0
POR	Luiz Felipe Scolari BRA	19.11.1948	60	42	19	8	+	-	-	0
ROU	Victor Piturca ROU	08.05.1956	52	42	8	3	+	-	+	0
RUS	Guus Hiddink NED	08.11.1946	62	49	22	11	+	-	-	0
SUI	Jakob Kuhn SUI	12.10.1943	65	58	7	7	-	-	+	0
SWE	Lars Lagerbäck SWE	16.07.1948	60	52	19	19	-	+	+	0
ESP	Luis Aragonés Suárez ESP	28.07.1938	70	66	22	22	-	-	-	0
TUR	Fatih Terim TUR	04.09.1953	55	40	14	6	+	+	+	1

UEFA EURO 2012

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
CRO	Slaven Bilić CRO	11.09.1968	44	38	3	3	-	-	+	0
CZE	Michal Bilek CZE	13.04.1965	47	44	8	8	-	+	-	0
DEN	Morten Olsen DEN	14.08.1949	63	50	7	7	-	-	-	1
ENG	Roy Hodgson ENG	09.08.1947	65	45	32	14	+	-	-	0
FRA	Laurent Blanc FRA	19.11.1965	47	45	3	3	-	-	-	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	52	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
GRE	Fernando Santos POR	10.10.1954	58	56	22	22	-	-	-	0
ITA	Cesare Prandelli ITA	19.08.1957	55	53	18	18	-	-	-	0
IRL	Giovanni Trapattoni ITA	17.03.1939	73	61	34	26	+	-	-	0
NED	Bert van Marwijk NED	19.05.1952	60	56	13	13	-	-	-	0

RUS	Dick Advocaat NED	27.09.1947	65	45	25	8	+	+	-	0
POL	Franciszek Smuda POL	22.06.1948	64	61	20	20	-	-	-	0
POR	Paulo Bento POR	20.06.1969	43	41	5	5	-	-	-	1
SWE	Erik Hamrén SWE	27.06.1957	55	52	27	27	-	-	-	0
ESP	Vicente del Bosque ESP	23.12.1950	62	58	18	18	-	-	-	3
UKR	Oleh Blokhin UKR	05.11.1952	60	51	13	8	+	-	-	3

UEFA EURO 2016

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ALB	Giovanni de Biasi ITA	16.06.1956	60	55	17	17	-	-	-	2
AUT	Marcel Koller SUI	11.11.1960	56	51	16	16	-	-	-	2
BEL	Marc Wilmots BEL	22.02.1969	47	43	4	4	-	+	-	0
CRO	Ante Čačić CRO	29.09.1953	63	62	19	19	-	+	+	0
CZE	Pavel Vrba CZE	06.12.1963	53	51	17	17	-	+	-	0
ENG	Roy Hodgson ENG	09.08.1947	69	45	32	14	+	-	-	0
FRA	Didier Deschamps FRA	15.10.1968	48	44	8	8	-	-	-	0
GER	Joachim Löw GER	03.02.1960	56	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
HUN	Bernd Storck GER	25.01.1963	53	45	14	10	+	-	+	0
ITA	Antonio Conte ITA	31.07.1969	47	45	7	7	-	-	-	0
IRL	Martin O'Neill NIR	01.03.1952	64	61	22	22	-	-	-	0
ISL	Heimir Hallgrímsson ISL	10.06.1967	49	46	11	11	-	+	-	0
NIR	Michael O'Neill NIR	05.07.1969	47	42	7	7	-	-	-	0
ROU	Anghel Iordănescu ROU	04.05.1950	66	43	18	7	+	-	-	8
RUS	Leonid Slutski RUS	04.05.1971	45	44	9	9	-	-	-	0
POL	Adam Nawalka POL	23.10.1957	59	56	13	13	-	+	-	0
POR	Fernando Santos POR	10.10.1954	62	56	26	22	+	-	-	0
SVK	Ján Kozák SVK	17.04.1954	62	59	12	12	-	-	-	0
SUI	Vladimir Petković SUI	15.08.1963	53	51	15	15	-	-	-	1
SWE	Erik Hamrén SWE	27.06.1957	59	52	27	27	-	-	-	0
TUR	Fatih Terim TUR	04.09.1953	63	40	14	6	+	+	+	1
ESP	Vicente del Bosque ESP	23.12.1950	58	56	18	18	-	-	-	3
UKR	Mykhailo Fomenko UKR	19.09.1948	68	64	26	26	-	-	-	2
WAL	Chris Coleman WAL	10.06.1970	46	42	8	8	-	-	-	0

The List of Head Coaches at the helm of 2000–2016 UEFA EURO participating teams

Key to the charts below:

1 — name;

2 — nationality;

3 — DOB;

4 — years of service with national "A" team which took part in UEFA EURO;

5 — years of service with another national "A" team which qualified for UEFA EURO;

6 — number of national "A" teams coached by then

№	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Vujadin Boškov	SRB	16.05.1931	1		1
2	Otto Barić	CRO	19.06.1933	2		3
3	Emeric Ienei	ROU	22.03.1937	1		2

4	Erich Ribbeck	GER	13.06.1937	2		1
5	Luis Aragonés Suárez	ESP	28.07.1938	4		1
6	Otto-Heinz Rehhagel	GER	09.08.1938	9		1
7	Giovanni Trapattoni	ITA	17.03.1939	5 (IRL)	4 (ITA)	2
8	Robert Waseige	BEL	26.08.1939	3		2
9	Karel Brückner	CZE	13.11.1939	7		2
10	Roger Lemerre	FRA	18.06.1941	4		3
11	Dino Zoff	ITA	28.02.1942	2		1
12	Leo Beenhakker	NED	02.08.1942	3		3
13	Bo Johansson	SWE	28.11.1942	4		2
14	José Ignacio Sáez	ESP	23.04.1943	2		1
15	Jakob Kuhn	SUI	12.10.1943	7		1
16	Guus Hiddink	NED	08.11.1946	4		5
17	Roy Hodgson	ENG	09.08.1947	4		3
18	Dick Advocaat	NED	27.09.1947	2 (RUS)	2 (NED)	6
19	Sven-Göran Eriksson	SWE	05.02.1948	6		4
20	Georgy Yartsev	RUS	11.04.1948	2		1
21	Josef Hickersberger	AUT	27.04.1948	3		2
22	Franciszek Smuda	POL	22.06.1948	3		1
23	Lars Lagerbäck	SWE	16.07.1948	10 (SWE)	5 (ISL)	4
24	Tommy Soderberg	SWE	19.08.1948	7		1
25	Mykhailo Fomenko	UKR	19.09.1948	4		2
26	Luiz Felipe Scolari	BRA	19.11.1948	5		3
27	Morten Olsen	DEN	14.08.1949	16		1
28	Mustafa Denizli	TUR	10.11.1949	4		1
29	Humberto Coelho	POR	20.04.1950	3		4
30	Anghel Iordănescu	ROU	04.05.1950	2		1
31	Vicente del Bosque	ESP	23.12.1950	8		1
32	Kevin Keegan	ENG	14.02.1951	2		1
33	Raymond Domenech	FRA	24.01.1952	6		1
34	Martin O'Neill	NIR	01.03.1952	5		1
35	Jacques Santini	FRA	25.04.1952	2		1
36	Bert van Marwijk	NED	19.05.1952	4		2
37	Oleh Blokhin	UKR	05.11.1952	2		1
38	Fatih Terim	TUR	04.09.1953	4 (TUR)	4 (TUR)	1
39	Ante Čačić	CRO	29.09.1953	2		1
40	Ján Kozák	SVK	17.04.1954	5		1
41	Fernando Santos	POR	10.10.1954	>4 since 23.09.2014 (POR)	4 (GRE)	2
42	José Antonio Camacho	ESP	08.06.1955	4		3
43	Aleksandrs Starkovs	LVA	26.07.1955	3		1
44	Victor Piturca	ROU	08.05.1956	4		1
45	Giovanni de Biasi	ITA	16.06.1956	6		1
46	Erik Hamrén	SWE	27.06.1957	7		2
47	Cesare Prandelli	ITA	19.08.1957	4		1
48	Plamen Markov	BUL	11.09.1957	3		1

49	Adam Nawalka	POL	23.10.1957	5		1
50	Nils Johan Semb	NOR	24.02.1959	5		1
51	Joachim Löw	GER	03.02.1960	>12 since 12.07.2006		1
52	Jozef Chovanec	CZE	07.03.1960	4		1
53	Rudolf Völler	GER	13.04.1960	4		1
54	Marcel Koller	SUI	11.11.1960	6		1
55	Frank Rijkaard	NED	30.09.1962	2		1
56	Bernd Storck	GER	25.01.1963	2		2
57	Srečko Katanec	SVN	16.07.1963	4		4
58	Vladimir Petković	SUI	15.08.1963	>4 since 01.08.2014		1
59	Roberto Donadoni	ITA	09.09.1963	2		1
60	Pavel Vrba	CZE	06.12.1963	3		1
61	Marco van Basten	NED	31.10.1964	4		1
62	Michal Bílek	CZE	13.04.1965	4		1
63	Laurent Blanc	FRA	19.11.1965	2		1
64	Heimir Hallgrímsson	ISL	10.06.1967	5		1
65	Slaven Bilić	CRO	11.09.1968	6		1
66	Didier Deschamps	FRA	15.10.1968	> 6 since 08.07.2012		1
67	Marc Wilmots	BEL	22.02.1969	4		2
68	Paulo Bento	POR	20.06.1969	4		2
69	Michael O'Neill	NIR	05.07.1969	>7 since 28.12.2011		1
70	Antonio Conte	ITA	31.07.1969	2		1
71	Chris Coleman	WAL	10.06.1970	6		1
72	Leonid Slutski	RUS	04.05.1971	1		1

THE PORTRAIT OF U-21 HEAD COACH COMPARED TO “A” ONE IN THE LIGHT OF 10 UEFA U-21 EURO FINAL TOURNAMENTS

“All things are known by comparison.”
— Leon Battista Alberti ¹⁸⁴

The previous chapter describes a comprehensive statistical profile of a national team head coach in relation to major FIFA and UEFA final tournaments. Ten criteria were applied to analyse “A” team head coach profiles who led their teams at five FIFA World Cups and UEFA EUROs. Now, to paint a portrait of U-21 head coach, the same indicators are used as follows:

- 1 — average age of U-21 head coach at the time of his first appointment;
- 2 — average work experience before his first U-21 appointment;
- 3 — average work experience before his appointment to the current U-21 team;
- 4 — average break at work before his appointment to the current U-21 team;
- 5 — number of coaches experienced in working with youth and U-20 NTs;
- 6 — number of coaches with previous experience as U-21 head coach;
- 7 — number of coaches with previous experience as “A” or U-21 national team assistant coach;
- 8 — number of coaches with zero experience before their appointment to U-21 NT;
- 9 — number of foreign coaches;
- 10 — number of coaches with zero break in service before their appointment to the current U-21 NT.

Note: current U-21 NT is a participating team of the given final tournament.

To analyse coach profiles for “A” and U-21 national teams, a comparative chart is presented below (**Table No. 1**).

For statistical analysis of U-21 coaches, 2000–2018 was considered spanning over 10 UEFA European U-21 Championships. Eight (8) teams took part in 9 final

¹⁸⁴ All things are known by comparison. Leon Battista Alberti, *On Painting*. <http://www.noteaccess.com/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/sd8gm9m>
Alberti, Leon Battista. *On Painting*. [First appeared 1435-36] Translated with Introduction and Notes by John R. Spencer. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1970 [First printed 1956].
Leon Battista Alberti, (born Feb. 14, 1404, Genoa—died April 25, 1472, Rome), Italian humanist, architect, and principal initiator of Renaissance art theory. In his personality, works, and breadth of learning, he is considered the prototype of the Renaissance “universal man.” *Britannica.com*. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/f41843ft>

tournaments during 2000–2015. Only in 2017 the number of participating teams was increased to 12 (16 teams for the final round of 2019/21 qualifying cycle).

Table No. 2, the Summary Table, features 10 tournaments with relevant data. **Table No. 3** shows average of a data based on the results at 10 UEFA EUROS.

All things are known by comparison. That's true. To prove this, one more Summary Table (**Table No. 4**) with information on "A" and U-21 national team head coaches in relation to the tournaments described in this and previous chapters is given below. The final tournament of UEFA U-21 EURO 2017 was played with 12 participating teams, while the remaining 9 involved 8 participating teams. The table below has an additional column to make sure this fact is taken into consideration. So, to create U-21 head coach profile, starting from the 5th criterion, the tournament data with a larger number of participants is applied.

Table 1

	UEFA U-21 EURO	FIFA WORLD CUP and UEFA EURO
1	Average age of U-21 head coach at the time of his first appointment	Average age of "A" team head coach at the time of his first appointment
2	Average work experience before his first U-21 appointment	Average work experience before his first "A" team appointment
3	Average work experience before his appointment to the current U-21 team	Average work experience before his appointment to the current "A" team
4	Average break at work before his appointment to the current U-21 team	Average break at work before his appointment to the current "A" NT
5	Number of coaches experienced in working with youth and/or U-20 NTs	Number of coaches experienced in working with youth and U-21/U-23 NTs
6	Number of coaches with previous experience as U-21 head coach	Number of coaches with previous experience as "A" team head coach
7	Number of coaches with previous experience as "A" or U-21 national team assistant coach	Number of coaches with previous experience as "A" national team assistant coach
8	Number of coaches with zero experience before their appointment to U-21 NT	Number of coaches with zero experience before their appointment to "A" team
9	Number of foreign coaches	Number of foreign coaches
10	Number of coaches with zero break in service before their appointment to the current U-21 NT	Number of coaches with zero break in service before their appointment to the current "A" team

Table 2

	2000	2002	2004	2006	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015	2017
1	50,00	44,88	47,38	49,5	45,25	45,63	42	44,75	44	44
2	13,625	8,25	11,625	9,75	11,375	8,25	6,75	11,125	8,875	8,33
3	13,625	8,25	11,625	9,75	11,375	9,63	7,875	11,375	9,375	8,33
4	0,75	0,25	0,125	0,375	0,25	0,125	0,125	0,25	1,375	1,67
5	0 (0%)	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	2 (25%)	4 (50%)	4 (50%)	3 (37,5%)	3 (37,5%)	5 (41,67%)
6	0 (0%)	1 (12,5%)*	0 (0%)	1 (12,5%)*	0 (0%)	1 (12,5%)	2 (25%)	1 (12,5%)	2 (25%)	1 (8,33%)
7	0 (0%)	3 (37,5%)	2 (25%)	3 (37,5%)	1 (12,5%)	3 (37,5%)	3 (37,5%)	1 (12,5%)	1 (12,5%)	1 (8,33%)
8	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (12,5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
9	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8,33%)
10	5 (62,5%)	7 (87,5%)	7 (87,5%)	6 (75%)	7 (87,5%)	7 (87,5%)	7 (87,5%)	6 (75%)	6 (75%)	10 (83,33%)

* Agostinho Oliveira was coaching Portugal U-20 for 1993 FIFA U-20 WC and Portugal U-21 in 1998. However, no information about the exact period of his collaboration with Portuguese FA is available.

Table 3

On average	2000–2015	2000–2017
1		45,739
2		9,7955
3		10,121
4		0,5295
5	3,11 (38,89%)	39,167%
6	0,89 (11,11%)	10,83%
7	1,89 (23,61%)	22,08%
8	0,11 (1,39%)	1,25%
9	0 (0%)	0,833%
10	6,44 (80,56%)	80,833%

Table 4

	UEFA U-21 EURO		FIFA WC	UEFA EURO
	2000–2015	2000–2017	2002–2018	2000–2016
1	45,739		48,472	49,58
2	9,7955		11,65	12,679
3	10,121		14,85	15,33
4	0,5295		0,688	0,523
5	3,11 (38,89%)	39,167%	8,4 (26,2%)	3,6 (21%)
6	0,89 (11,11%)	10,83%	13,8 (43,15%)	4,4 (25,42%)
7	1,89 (23,61%)	22,08%	6 (18,75%)	22 (25,58%)
8	0,11 (1,39%)	1,25%	0,8 (2,5%)	0,4 (2,5%)
9	0 (0%)	0,833%	11,6 (36,26%)	2,8 (15,83%)
10	6,44 (80,56%)	80,833%	21,4 (68,34%)	13,2 (77,3%)

So, an average U-21 head coach is about **46** years old. He has almost **10** years of experience or slightly more. Before his appointment, his average break in service was slightly exceeding **half-a-year break** with some notable exceptions to be discussed below. About **40%** of coaches have experience of working within the National Team Institute in their NAs. For slightly over **11%** of coaches it was their second appointment as U-21 head coaches. The number of those who worked as "A" or U-21 national team assistant coach among them is **twice as many**. **Only one** coach with zero experience before his appointment (Miroslav Djukić, SRB 19.02.1966) was at the helm of U-21 NT in the final tournament. **Only one** foreign coach has led his national U-21 team towards the final round of UEFA U-21 EURO (Pavel Hapal CZE, Slovakia team in 2017). The majority of coaches (almost **81%**) were appointed as U-21 head coaches for the given qualifying cycles without any pause in their coaching career.

Now, it is time to make comparisons. U-21 head coach is three or four years younger than "A" team one. In principle, this fact is in tune with the status of the "second" national team (at least in Ukraine), because it is a junior national "A" team. At the time of his first appointment, he has two to three years less of coaching experience. The gap in coaching experience between current U-21 coaches

and their “A” team colleagues is getting bigger. In principle, the average break in service for U-21 and “A” team coach is relatively close with making almost no difference, but is less for coaches involved in the FIFA WC. That said, a percentage of coaches with previous experience with youth national teams is much higher among managers of national U-21 teams, especially in comparison to those coaches who were involved in the UEFA EURO: 39,2% vs. 21%. It seems logical. You can even say by its name that Under-21 team is closer to junior national youth teams — U-15/16/17/18/19/20 than to “A” one. The U-21 team is made once every two years and involves U-19/U-20 players, although its strong connection with “A” team is more than obvious. The situation with coaches with previous experience with the teams in question is dramatically different, i.e. national “A” team coaches have an advantage — 10,8% vs. 43,2% at FIFA WC and 10,8% vs. 25,4% at UEFA EURO. The ratio of coaches with previous experience as an assistant coach is almost equal: 22,1% vs. 18,8% and 22,1% vs. 25,6%. As seen above, U-21 and “A” team coaches share the same pattern.

Coaches with zero experience can be found among U-21 national team managers as well. By the way, the same story happened at the UEFA EURO. Frank Rijkaard had no service background before his appointment nor did Miroslav Djukić at the UEFA EURO U-21 tournament. But for FIFA WC, there were four “zero-experienced” coaches. As to appointing foreign coaches, the vast majority of national U-21 teams rely on home-grown coaches, which is not the case for “A” team. Finally, the ratio of managers appointed as head coaches immediately after their previous contract expires is slightly higher for national U-21 teams; but figures are more or less the same for FIFA WC and UEFA EURO.

That said, only detailed comparative analysis can reveal significant differences between statistically average profile of U-21 and “A” head coach in the light of official tournaments for national teams of FIFA/UEFA member associations. Those differences can be seen not in every of 10 indicators mentioned above. If not too big, but the difference is still there to emphasize general tendency in the National Team Institute at the NAs.

To sum up, **69** coaches from **25** countries have had previous experience of working with U-21 teams in **10** UEFA final tournaments. At the same time, **126** coaches from **44** countries were involved in the FIFA World Cups. **72** managers from **29** countries were at the helm of their teams at the UEFA EURO. Reappointment of above-mentioned coaches is not included into the tournament statistics, because some of them were at the helm of their teams in the final rounds of FIFA and UEFA championships more than once.

Period of office of head coaches

To start with, let’s us once again refer to the classical comparative analysis and compare coaching data available for coaches at the helm of UEFA EURO U-21 participating teams with managerial data of those involved in FIFA World Cup and

UEFA EURO (**Tables No. 5.1 and No. 5.2**). Over the referred period, **71** coaches have led their teams at UEFA U-21 EURO with **145** — at the FIFA World Cup and **77** — at the UEFA EURO. With reference to the last paragraph of the previous Chapter, it means that only **2** coaches have had more than one team qualified for the UEFA U-21 EURO final tournament; **19** coaches have led their teams to the FIFA World Cups and **5** — to the UEFA EURO more than once too making a total pool of 24 coaches who made their appearance at the above final tournaments not only more than once, but every time they did, it was with a different team. In contrast, **2** U-21 team coaches have been coaching the same team but with a break in their coaching career.

Let us consider **Tables 5.1 and 5.2** for comparison. We can't help but notice that the very first three indicators for all three tournaments are alike. However, as to their terms of office, unlike “A” head coaches, U-21 ones work for one cycle only. The majority of coaches, or let's say, about a quarter of them, prefer not to stay with national U-21 team for more than one cycle. In principle, it is a very natural pattern, especially taking into account the status U-21 team has as the “second” one. However, roots in this story go deeper as it may seem at first, so it does deserve some more attention. The rest of characteristics for coaching terms of office are quite similar where only the period of office with “A” team and U-21 team is more variable.

It seems so natural, because most of the managers consider U-21 team as a transitional step or one more stop, if you like, on the way in their coaching career, but neither a final destination nor a climax which “A” team happens to be. This could potentially explain why the number of managers who were leading their teams into the UEFA U-21 EURO final tournament more than once is significantly less.

Let's compare coaching data for those coaches who led their “A”s and U-21s in the FIFA and UEFA competitions in relation to an overall number of managers taking part in the final tournaments (excluding reappointments or coaching the team in the championships for the second or third time. That would make **69** for the UEFA U-21 EURO, **126** for the FIFA World Cup and **72** for UEFA EURO):

UEFA U-21 EURO
82,61%

FIFA WC
53,18%

UEFA EURO
65,28%

The statistics above only reinforces the statement that U-21 team is just one more step in coaching career with more that 80% of managers never getting a step back to — at least not until April 2019 (U-21 coaching statistics from April 2019). Over 50% of national “A” team head coaches — for the UEFA EURO this number is higher — has never stepped into the same “national “A” team river” twice. Regardless of obvious prestige of coaching country's representative “A” team, in fact, there are “unavoidable difficulties and peculiarities”, as was so well-spotted by Maurizio Sarri.

As a result, among U-21 coaches you will find no such managers like Dane Morten Olsen with over 16-year experience with his “A” team. Top record in coaching U-21 teams is 11 years.

Jean-François De Sart BEL	>11 years
Raymond Domenech FRA	11 years or 4028 days
Eyjólfur Sverrisson ISL	<10 years or 3470 days
Rui Jorge POR	>8 years, since 19.11.2010
Tommy Söderberg SWE	>8 years or 3058 days
Raşit Çetiner TUR	7 years
Håkan Ericson SWE	<7 years or 2372 days

If you recall coaches with the longest service with national U-21 teams, here Portuguese Rui Jorge will win as he is still at the helm of Portugal U-21. In the meantime, 5 more coaches have continued to coach their teams after 2017 UEFA U-21 EURO.

Rui Jorge POR	>8 since 19.11.2010
Luigi Di Biagio ITA	<6 since 02.07.2013
Niels Frederiksen DEN	>3 since 27.08.2015
Aidy Boothroyd ENG	>2 since 28.06.2016
Stefan Kuntz GER	>2 since 01.09.2016

Well, only two coaches have had experience with U-21 team in the final tournament twice — Agostinho Oliveira (POR) and Horst Hrubesch (GER) — as they both were involved with their native national teams of Portugal and Germany respectively.

Let’s look at the shortest U-21 managerial reins:

Nenad Lalatović (SRB)	114 days
Mladen Dodić (SRB)	189 days
Horst Hrubesch (GER)	241 days
Devis Mangia (ITA)	347 days

5 managers who were coaching their U-21 for one year or a little bit longer are:

Vítězslav Lavička (CZE)	1
Ulrich Stielike (GER)	>1
Miroslav Djukić (SRB)	1
Miroslav Beranek (CZE)	1
Dragomir Okuka (SRB)	>1

The youngest coaches (at the time of their appointment) are:

Marcin Dorna POL	17.09.1979	34 years
Jakub Dovalil CZE	08.02.1974	34 years
David Platt ENG	10.06.1966	35 years

The most senior coaches (at the time of their appointment) are:

Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	58 years
Horst Hrubesch GER	17.04.1951	57 years
Foppe de Haan NED	26.06.1943	61 years

It is noteworthy that all three above-mentioned managers were very successful with their teams. Horst Hrubesch and Foppe de Haan yielded Champions gold medals, and the Dutch did it twice in a row, while Karel Brückner's team became a vice-champion. Well, success knows no such hindrance as manager's age.

To cut a long conversation about terms of office shot, let's compare the years of coaching experience “A” and U-21 coaches have had at the time of their appointments in relation to their presence at the FIFA World Cup and UEFA EURO. As a starting point, only coaches with more than a 20-year experience will be considered (**Tables No. 6.1** and **No. 6.2**).

On the one hand, ratio of national “A” team coaches with vast experience before taking reins as head coaches is much higher compared to U-21, i.e. 15,08% (for the FIFA World Cup), 19,44% (for the UEFA EURO) and 10,15% (for the UEFA U-21 EURO). On the other hand, there are highly qualified coaches at the helm of national U-21 teams whose coaching experience is equal to “A” team managers. The Netherlands and the Czech Republic are clear demonstration of this fact. These national football associations entrusted their U-21 national teams to coaches with over a 30-year experience.

Certainly, the specifics of working with U-21 teams affects the period of coach's employment. In general, it is less than 6 years. More than 55% of coaches have had experience of working with teams from one to a maximum of three qualifying cycles. It should be noted that every new qualifying cycle requires making a new national team because of new age categories and new footballers joining the team. And later we will talk more about some specific aspects.

To conclude on U-21 coach's employment period and before getting on to managers who achieved success at UEFA U-21 EURO, there is one more detail to foreground which was not mentioned in the “A” coaching statistics. There are two managers who won UEFA U-21 EURO in 2015 and 2017 respectively who, before their appointments as head coaches of next European champions, had a long break in their coaching careers — a 13-year long one for Stefan Kuntz (GER)¹⁸⁵ before winning European U-21 Championship in 2017 and a 7-year long one for his Swedish colleague Hakan Ericson! Are we talking about a phenomenon? One thing is clear — the figures are very impressive! Now — time to speak about one more common phenomenon for FIFA and UEFA major tournaments.

¹⁸⁵ Germany U-21s are winners of the 2019/21 UEFA European U-21 Championship. Stefan Kuntz has led his team into the final match for the third time in a row. 2017 winner and 2019 runner-up secured the second victory in June 2021 thus, having repeated Cesaro Maldini's achievement (at the helm of Italy U-21 in 1985–1996). Paolo Maldini's father was a three-time participant of the UEFA U-21 EURO himself — in 1992, 1994 and 1996 — where Italy won all three finals.

Table No. 5.1

UEFA U-21 EURO		
1	2	3
1 cycle (2 years)	16	22,54%
2 cycles (4 years)	12	16,9%
<2 cycles (3 years)	12	16,9%
3 cycles (6 years)	10	14,09%
<1 cycle (1 year)	9	12,68%
<3 cycles (5 years)	5	7,04%
<4 cycles (7 years)	2	2,82%
4 cycles (8 years)	2	2,82%
>5 cycles (11 years)	2	2,82%
5 cycles (10 years)	1	1,41%

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FIFA WORLD CUP		
1	2	3
2 cycles (4 years)	33	22,76%
1 cycle (2 years)	28	19,31%
<2 cycles (3 years)	27	18,62%
<1 cycle (1 year)	26	17,93%
<3 cycles (10 years)	10	6,90%
<4 cycles (7 years)	6	4,14%
3 cycles (6 years)	6	4,14%
4 cycles (8 years)	3	2,07%
>6 cycles (12 years)	2	1,38%
<5 cycles (9 years)	2	1,38%
8 cycles (16 years)	1	0,69%
5 cycles (10 years)	1	0,69%

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Table No. 5.2

UEFA U-21 EURO		
1	2	3
1 cycle (2 years)	16	22,54%
2 cycles (4 years)	12	16,9%
<2 cycles (3 years)	12	16,9%
3 cycles (6 years)	10	14,09%
<1 cycle (1 year)	9	12,68%
<3 cycles (5 years)	5	7,04%
<4 cycles (7 years)	2	2,82%
4 cycles (8 years)	2	2,82%
>5 cycles (11 years)	2	2,82%
5 cycles (10 years)	1	1,41%

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UEFA EURO		
1	2	3
2 cycles (4 years)	24	31,17%
1 cycle (2 years)	17	22,08%
<2 cycles (3 years)	8	10,39%
<3 cycles (5 years)	8	10,39%
3 cycles (6 years)	7	9,09%
<4 cycles (7 years)	5	6,49%
<1 cycle (1 year)	3	3,90%
6 cycles (12 years)	1	1,3%
5 cycles (10 years)	1	1,3%
4 cycles (8 years)	1	1,3%
<5 cycles (9 years)	1	1,3%
8 cycles (16 years)	1	1,3%

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1 — number of cycles (one cycle means 2 years);

2 — number of coaches;

3 — % of total number of coaches;

Note: last line shows the total number of head coaches.

Table No. 6.1

UEFA U-21 EURO			FIFA WC			
1	2	3	1	2	3	
1.	Ladislav Škorpil CZE	06.06.1945	35	Volker Finke GER	24.03.1948	35
2.	Foppe de Haan NED	26.06.1943	30	Robert Waseige BEL	26.08.1939	28
3.	Han Berger NED	17.06.1950	26	Otto Rehhagel GER	09.08.1938	27
4.	Bernard Challandes SUI	26.07.1951	24	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	27
5.	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	22	Janne Andersson SWE	29.09.1962	27
6.	Rainer Adrion GER	10.12.1953	21	Giovanni Trapattoni ITA	17.03.1939	26
7.	Cor Pot NED	08.06.1951	21	Bob Bradley USA	03.03.1958	26
8.				Fabio Capello ITA	18.06.1946	24
9.				Sven-Göran Eriksson SWE	05.02.1948	24
10.				Mirko Jozic CRO	08.04.1940	23
11.				Luis Aragonés ESP	28.07.1938	22
12.				Santos Fernando POR	10.10.1954	22
13.				Cesare Maldini ITA	05.02.1932	21
14.				Roger Lemerre FRA	18.06.1941	21
15.				Tommy Soderberg SWE	19.08.1948	21
16.				Ottmar Hitzfeld GER	12.01.1949	21
17.				Jose Pekerman ARG	03.09.1949	21
18.				Bruce Arena USA	21.09.1951	21
19.				Akira Nishino JPN	07.04.1955	21

Table No. 6.2

UEFA U-21 EURO			UEFA EURO			
1	2	3	1	2	3	
1.	Ladislav Škorpil CZE	06.06.1945	35	Robert Waseige BEL	26.08.1939	28
2.	Foppe de Haan NED	26.06.1943	30	Otto Barić CRO	19.06.1933	28
3.	Han Berger NED	17.06.1950	26	Otto-Heinz Rehhagel GER	09.08.1938	27
4.	Bernard Challandes SUI	26.07.1951	24	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	27
5.	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	22	Erik Hamrén SWE	27.06.1957	27
6.	Rainer Adrion GER	10.12.1953	21	Erich Ribbeck GER	13.06.1937	27
7.	Cor Pot NED	08.06.1951	21	Mykhailo Fomenko UKR	19.09.1948	26
8.				Giovanni Trapattoni ITA	17.03.1939	26
9.				Sven-Göran Eriksson SWE	05.02.1948	24
10.				Martin O'Neill NIR	01.03.1952	22
11.				Luis Aragonés Suárez ESP	28.07.1938	22
12.				Fernando Santos POR	10.10.1954	22
13.				Tommy Soderberg SWE	19.08.1948	21
14.				Roger Lemerre FRA	18.06.1941	21

1 — name;

2 — DOB;

3 — years of experience before their first appointment.

Veni, vidi, vici

To carry on with our comparative analysis of U-21 and “A” NT coaching data, let’s bring the most successful ones — winners and other medallists — in the spotlight to reveal an interesting phenomenon where a vast majority of coaches achieve success during the first cycle (“working cycle”) of their service with the team.

Just to remind, “working cycle” is a qualifying round of the FIFA World Cup (within FIFA Confederation) or UEFA EURO, including the final tournament which spans, as a rule, over two years. Speaking of U-21 coaches, the qualifying competition or qualifying round/cycle has a different naming.

The figures from ten editions of the UEFA EURO in relation to working cycles taken by coaches to achieve a success — i.e. qualify for the four best teams — are as follows:

2000		
1.	ITA	1 cycle
2.	CZE	1 cycle
3.	ESP	2 cycles
4.	SVK	1 cycle

2002		
	CZE	1 cycle
	FRA	>5 cycles
	ITA	1 cycle
	SUI	1 cycle

2004		
	ITA	2 cycles
	SCG	1 cycle
	POR	1 cycle
	SWE	1 cycle

2006		
	NED	1 cycle
	UKR	1 cycle
	FRA	1 cycle
	SCG	1 cycle

2007		
1.	NED	>1 cycle
2.	SRB	1 cycle
3.	ITA	1 cycle
4.	POR	1 cycle

2009		
	GER	1 cycle
	ENG	1 cycle
	ITA	2 cycles
	SWE	3 cycles

2011		
	ESP	1 cycle
	SUI	1 cycle
	BLR	1 cycle
	CZE	1 cycle

2013		
	ESP	1 cycle
	ITA	1 cycle
	NOR	1 cycle
	NED	2 cycles

2015		
1.	SWE	1 cycle
2.	POR	2 cycles
3.	DEN	1 cycle
4.	GER	1 cycle

2017		
	GER	1 cycle
	ESP	>1 cycle
	ENG	1 cycle
	ITA	2 cycles

For 30 coaches — runners-up and bronze medallists — out of 40 (75%) it was their first working cycle with the team.

8 out of 10 winning managers (80%) became successful in the first cycle of their experience with the team.

For 7 runners-up out of 10 coaches (70%), it was their first working cycle with the team.

Among semifinalists (some final tournaments did not have 3rd place matches), 15 out of 20 coaches (75%) became successful in their first working cycle.

The 3rd place matches were played in the following final rounds or qualifying cycles:

1998/2000,
2002/2004,

2007/2009,
2009/2011.

That is why semifinalists of the final rounds, where no 3rd place matches were played, are included in the above-mentioned table randomly.

Let's get back to U-21 and “A” team head coaches and their comparative data at FIFA and UEFA tournaments.

	UEFA U-21 EURO	FIFA WORLD CUP	UEFA EURO
1.	80%	60%	60%
2.	70%	100%	80%
3.	75%	70%	70%
4.	75%	75%	70%

- 1 — % of winning coaches who achieved success in their first working cycle;
- 2 — % of runner-up coaches who achieved success in their first working cycle;
- 3 — % of semifinalist coaches who achieved success in their first working cycle;
- 4 — % of coaches for whom it was the first working cycle of the total number of successful managers.

Before reading the List of “Laureates” of European U-21 Championships there are more interesting facts to reveal.

José Ignacio Sáez as Spain U-21 head coach for UEFA U-21 EURO in 2000 won the 1998 Championship. And it was his first working cycle with U-21s!

Raymond Domenech too, at the helm of France U-21 in UEFA EURO 2002 reached the semi-final of the 1994 UEFA U-21 EURO in his first working cycle with U-21s!

Later on José Ignacio Sáez and Raymond Domenech not only took the reins at “A” team but were coaching U-21s in their home countries within the indicated time span.

2006/07 qualifying cycle was very short and lasted for a year. That said, three out of four successful coaches at this tournament were coaching their teams for one year only. Among them was Serbian coach Miroslav Djukić. He was the only one who reached the final tournament of UEFA U-21 EURO with zero coaching experience behind his back. But we will get back to his story and coaching career later. Foppe de Haan won both — 2006/2007 Championship and its previous edition too. It was his second working cycle with the Netherlands team, and at the time the 2007 final match was played, he had had 3 years of experience with the team. Technically, it is more than one “working cycle” but less than two.

To compare with FIFA and UEFA tournaments for national “A” teams, where a number of the most successful coaches is even less — **11** for FIFA and **10** for UEFA — the number **16** for U-21 managers should, at first glance, show a higher level of competition between UEFA member associations on the U-21 level. On the other hand, the number of given U-21 final tournaments is twice higher than the FIFA WC and UEFA EURO ones during the same period — from 2000 to 2018 — with 10 against 5 finals for each of the national “A” team tournaments respectively. Let's not forget that 9 out of 10 finals of the UEFA U-21 EURO involved only 8 teams, which is twice less compared to 16 participants of the UEFA EURO in four out of five final rounds, and four times less compared to 32 participants of the FIFA WC in all five final competitions. From mathematic perspective, a competition

level in the final U-21 tournament was certainly higher than in the national “A” team competitions. Such a large number of national football associations, which found themselves among top four participants of the championship, testify to the fact that participating teams of U-21 competitions have quite good competitive potential. Although there are unconditional leaders. It is fair enough to say that an absolute majority of their coaches are domestic managers. At 10 tournaments there was just one team coached by a foreign manager but dropped out of the competition before the semi-final.

The majority of coaches are Italians (7). Spaniards follow them (4). Six (6) national football associations each have three (3) U-21 managers who are the best among the best. As said before, the most successful coaches at UEFA U-21 EURO are representatives from 16 countries.

ITA	7
ESP	4
CZE	3
GER	3
NED	3
SWE	3
POR	3
SRB	3
ENG	2
FRA	2
SUI	2
BLR	1
DEN	1
NOR	1
SVK	1
UKR	1
Σ	16

The third tournament brings very interested and unexpected statistics which tends to become a general rule and prove a phenomenon. And that is that coaches achieve greater success during their first working cycle. It is no longer just a beginner's luck.

Detailed data showing the most successful U-21 coaches is given below.

Key to the tables below:

- 1 — country;
- 2 — name and nationality;
- 3 — DOB;
- 4 — age at the time of the tournament;
- 5 — age at the time of their first U-21 appointment;
- 6 — years of experience before their appointment to the current U-21 NT;
- 7 — years of experience at the time of their first appointment to U-21 NT;
- 8 — previous experience as U-21 head coach (+/-);
- 9 — years of experience as "A" or U-21 NT assistant coach (+/-);
- 10 — years of experience with youth and/or U-20 NT (+/-);
- 11 — break in coaching career before their appointment to the current U-21 NT.

The list of the winning coaches

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GER	Stefan Kuntz GER	30.10.1962	55	54	4	4	-	-	-	13
SWE	Håkan Ericson SWE	29.05.1960	55	51	17	17	-	-	-	7
ESP	Julen Lopetegui ESP	28.08.1966	47	44	4	4	-	-	+	1
ESP	Luis Milla ESP	12.03.1966	43	42	4	4	-	-	+	0
GER	Horst Hrubesch GER	17.04.1951	58	57	15	15	-	+	+	0
NED	Foppe de Haan NED	26.06.1943	64	61	30	30	-	-	-	0
NED	Foppe de Haan NED	26.06.1943	63	61	30	30	-	-	-	0
ITA	Claudio Gentile ITA	27.09.1951	51	47	2	2	-	+	+	0
CZE	Miroslav Beranek CZE	24.04.1957	45	44	8	8	-	+	-	0
ITA	Marco Tardelli ITA	24.09.1954	46	44	6	6	-	+	-	2

The list of the runner-up coaches

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ESP	Albert Celades ESP	29.09.1975	42	39	1	1	-	-	+	0
POR	Rui Jorge POR	27.03.1973	42	37	4	4	-	-	-	0
ITA	Devis Mangia ITA	06.06.1974	39	38	16	16	-	-	-	1
SUI	Pierluigi Tami SUI	12.09.1961	50	48	8	8	-	+	+	0
ENG	Stuart Pearce ENG	24.04.1962	47	45	5	5	-	-	-	0
SRB	Miroslav Djukić SRB	19.02.1966	41	40	0	0	-	-	-	0
UKR	Oleksiy Mykhaylychenko UKR	30.03.1963	43	41	5	5	-	-	-	0
SCG	Vladimir Petrović SCG	01.07.1955	49	47	6	6	-	-	-	1
FRA	Raymond Domenech FRA	24.01.1952	50	41	9	9	-	-	-	0
CZE	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	61	58	22	22	-	+	-	0

The list of the semifinalist coaches

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
ITA	Luigi Di Biagio ITA	03.06.1971	46	42	4	4	-	-	+	0
ENG	Aidy Boothroyd ENG	08.02.1971	46	45	14	14	-	-	+	0
DEN	Jess Thorup DEN	21.02.1970	45	43	8	8	-	-	-	0
GER	Horst Hrubesch GER	17.04.1951	64	57	19	15	+	+	+	0
NOR	Tor Ole Skullerud NOR	10.12.1970	43	40	10	8	+	+	+	0
NED	Cor Pot NED	08.06.1951	62	58	21	21	-	-	+	0
BLR	Georgi Kondratiev BLR	07.01.1960	51	49	11	11	-	+	-	0
CZE	Jakub Dovalil CZE	08.02.1974	37	34	14	14	-	-	+	0
SWE	Tommy Söderberg SWE	19.08.1948	59	48	24	13	+	-	+	0
ITA	Pierluigi Casiraghi ITA	04.03.1969	40	37	4	4	-	+	-	0
ITA	Pierluigi Casiraghi ITA	04.03.1969	38	37	4	4	-	-	-	0
POR	José Couceiro POR	04.10.1962	45	44	4	4	-	-	-	0
SCG	Dragomir Okuka SRB	02.04.1954	52	51	8	8	-	-	-	1
FRA	René Girard FRA	04.04.1954	52	50	9	9	-	+	+	0
POR	José Pratas Romão POR	13.04.1954	50	48	15	15	-	+	-	0
SWE	Torbjörn Nilsson SWE	09.07.1954	50	48	12	12	-	-	-	0
ITA	Claudio Gentile ITA	27.09.1953	49	47	2	2	-	+	+	0
SUI	Bernard Challandes SUI	26.07.1951	51	50	24	24	-	-	+	0
ESP	José Ignacio Sáez ESP	23.04.1943	57	53	13	13	-	-	-	1
SVK	Dušan Radolský SVK	13.11.1950	50	48	11	11	-	-	-	0

Less than One¹⁸⁶

“The main thing is the grandeur of the design”

— Joseph Brodsky

If we think of an “A” team as the first team of the country, then “youth team” or U-21 team is the second one or, alternatively, the team that follows the first one. The comparison is quite revealing and even numerical. The structure of the National Team Institute sees the “youth team” as the last step before reaching the top level where the vast majority of U-21 players are, at least, candidates for “A” team with further potential to make it to the Player List for “A” NT training camp and later on to join “A” squad. After all, U-21 pool is a feeder team for the first national team and that is what makes it a backbone element of the NA’s National Team Institute.

This section contains an epigraph which is a direct reference to the well-known essay by Joseph Brodsky, the Nobel Laureate for Literature, who published his work under this title a year before his worldwide recognition in 1986. But this reference is given rather for literary and lyrical purposes rather than for exact matching with the topic of the final part of this analysis, because not a single statistical indicator

¹⁸⁶ Less Than One: Selected Essays is a collection of literary and autobiographical essays by the Russian poet and Nobel Prize-winning author Joseph Brodsky // En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/fja6cbck>

has a value less than 1 (with the exception of the average percentage of foreign coaches of all coaches participating in the final tournaments), but many indicators though are very close to unity or equal to it.

To move on, below are “bullets” in the average or comparative profile of the team head coach with “<1”.

- The vast majority of coaches who reached the semi-finals have been coaching their teams for one working cycle.
- The vast majority of U-21 coaches has had experience of qualifying for the final tournament of the UEFA European U-21 Championship with their teams just once in their careers and has never come back to coaching U-21s again.
- For the majority of coaches the period of employment with the team was limited for just one qualifying or working cycle.
- The U-21 team does exist during one cycle only. Age category of its players is changing dramatically upon the end of the qualifying round. The next age is one year younger.
- To sum up, only one was coaching the team in the final tournament of the European Championship with previous zero coaching experience; and only one foreign coach led his team to the UEFA U-21 EURO final tournament.

In my opinion, there are more than enough examples to show an exclusive working environment even for statistically average team coach with «<1». The exception to the rules (as it was the case for Serbian coach Miroslav Djukić who, with zero coaching experience, made his team reach the final of the 2007 UEFA U-21 EURO) only proves the rule that there is no place for inexperienced coaches in the final round.

Let's recall transitional 2006/2007 tournament played to the shortened format when qualifying round consisted of two matches plus two play-offs. Miroslav Djukić got his coaching education in Spain. Finally, in two previous championships, Serbia and Montenegro reached the round of semi-final (at least!) which makes the 2007 final match the second one over the last three qualifying cycles. Back then Serbia had plenty of good young players. This fact helped the coach as a newcomer a lot to deliver a top performance. Since then, scenarios as such have never happened again in the UEFA EURO U-21 history.

The equation in three variables

If we disregard all variables equal to “1” except for the one saying that U-21 team is made for just one qualifying round/cycle, we will find out that “limited lifetime of a player” and impossibility of its extension for the next qualifying cycle gives an exhaustive explanation why the majority of coaches prefer to be involved with the team for no longer than just one working cycle and, as a rule, never to

return. Among challenges and difficulties faced by “A” NT head coach what truly stands out is time pressure. As Carlo Ancelotti put it: *“Time is the old enemy of any manager”*. This is true to national U-21 team “<1”. However, there are some other factors speaking in favour of choosing head coaches in such a way.

Every two years younger football players join the team. And if they have already had an opportunity to play with footballers of senior age category, they will inevitably be willing to take a step forward and be promoted to national “A” team. As a result, they lose motivation, because a young footballer may just not be interested in making his path through a “<1” team again. There are exceptions, but those are only to confirm the rule. However, a coach still has to make a new team in a short time, especially if his previous team qualified for the UEFA U-21 EURO final round which takes place in June with a new cycle starting in September. So the question is: how and when to make two teams simultaneously as they both play on the same FIFA dates? And here we are dealing with equation in three variables. The third variable may appear as a participating team of the FIFA U-20 World Cup inevitably leading to the parallel functioning of three teams at a time — the old one, the new one and the new one No. 2 — with the latter composed of football players of the required age category but involved, like the old team were, in the final tournament. But is it FIFA final tournament this time? The question is utterly interesting and extremely complex. Well, the UEFA U-21 EURO and FIFA U-20 World Cup final rounds take place the same year.

Obviously, the above equation in three variables is predominantly a prerogative of successful or so-called big national football associations with higher performance skills of young players, permanent availability of U-20 NT within the structure of the National Team Institute, rich experience and variety of methods to tackle tasks as a facilitating factor at their disposal.

There is a sequel to the story. And that is a football tournament of the Summer Olympic Games. However, the sequel impacts more coaching staff of the team which qualified for the Olympics. For UEFA member associations, the UEFA European U-21 Championship is a qualifying competition. National football association together with the coach, if he was reappointed as a head coach of a new «<1» team now, are challenged with getting the Olympic team ready but without reinforcing senior players and players of even age to count on in the course of the new qualifying cycle. Today, the football Olympic tournament is held a year later than the preceding final round of the UEFA U-21 EURO. Here, dear reader, I have to take a little detour and say the following.

Generally, national U-21 team involves players of two age categories — odd and even. For example: players born on and after 01.01.1983 were involved in 2004/06 cycle, i.e. players born in 1983 and 1984; in 2007/09 cycle — players born in 1986 and 1987 respectively. Certainly, a team may have players of the third age category too, who are two years younger than players in the main even age category.

Now, let's continue with the Olympics story. Only players of U-23 age category are eligible to play in the Olympics (seniors, even age category fall under this age

restriction) and only **three**¹⁸⁷ from the Player List can be older than the given odd age category eligible to take part in the European Championship. Consequently, a younger half of preceding age category is training for the Olympics that can constitute a minority with all the consequences.

Undoubtedly, “Olympic equation” to be resolved in the process of the qualifying round is only a derivative of the whole range of problems a manager of «<1» team has to face. However, in this situation, he needs to make a new team. After all, the equation can be solved by appointing a new coach and releasing the ex-one from his U-21 service. However, time pressure and a need to arrange a new national team still remain. Both coaches will tackle these problems and have to deal with time pressure and lack of players. By the way, the “Olympic equation” may cause some losses for the current U-21 team too. It often happens when the players of junior age category, whose cycle begins later, can be involved in the previous team which takes part in the Olympic tournament. Inevitably, a question of priority comes to the foreground, where one of the teams will miss their players.

Under such circumstances a paired Olympic team will be looking for the replenishment, first of all, among the new «<1» team players. It cannot be the case with “A” team. It cannot happen in national youth teams either. On rare occasion U-19 players escape playing in the qualifying cycle of their age category and found themselves, for example, with national U-21s or “A” squads that play their qualifying matches on the same dates as U-19 team do. This can happen when super talents like Jadon Malik Sancho, Wayne Rooney, Theo Walcott, Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi are involved as they are the ones who debuted in their national “A” at a very young age. So, exclusive position of the head coach of an «<1» team with negative sign is aggravated by additional challenge that he tackles during his team preps for the qualification and during the qualifying round. That said, tournament organisers face even more difficulties.

...By gaining more knowledge they double their sorrows, or The best is the enemy of good

Before UEFA switched to staging its final rounds in the odd years, teams that qualified for the football tournament of the Summer Olympic Games participated in this tournament a few months later, after the key matches of the UEFA EURO U-21 had been played. On the other hand, FIFA U-20 WC was quite a problem for the current «<1» team, because the FIFA tournament was staged in the middle of the U-21 qualification and in the odd year. It was the second variable in the equation of the U-21 NT provided that U-21 team involved players who were two years younger than their eldest footballers (as it was the case with Ukraine in the 2004/06 qualifying cycle when «<1» team involved a large group of players born in 1985 who, in their turn, took part in 2005 FIFA U-20 WC). The third variable was not needed

¹⁸⁷ Regulations for the Olympic Football Tournaments Games of the XXXII Olympiad Tokyo 2020// Digitalhub.fifa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3aetz6yc>

in this equation until the shift was made in 2006/07 season, because the final of the UEFA U-21 EURO was played in the same year as the Summer Olympic Games. In the meantime, the Olympics take place every four years and the FIFA U-20 WC — every second odd year. Before, players of «-2» age category, if you consider the age category of the current «<1» team, took part in this tournament. Consequently, the probability of the “third variable” was doubled. UEFA’s decision as such has made life even more difficult for U-21 teams, their coaches and national associations, especially for those whose teams are successful. Difficulties, challenges and problems are enough now to understand how working environment for a statistically average head coach of the “second” team look like. One may also add collaboration with “A” team described in the previous chapters, and sometimes collaboration as such has a negative shadow and causes a head coach of «<1» team a stronger headache.

Now, the life of an «<1» team is full of the above key challenges which cannot be ignored or described as insignificant. That said, the «<1» team model can be simplified in theory only. In its common understanding, a model is a format of an effective and successful operation of a football team. On more practical terms, competition participation criteria do now allow for any simplification. The coach has to work with all that to either win or suffer a defeat.

Limited number of the final tournament participants should be mentioned too — before 2015/17 qualifying round they were just 8. This means higher level of competition in comparison, for example, with the tournament for “A” teams, making things for U-21 coach even more difficult. However, factors beyond his control can support him.

Firstly, we are talking about high level of skills players of the specific age category have, plus a large number of qualified and internationally competitive footballers of the specific age category that contribute to team competitiveness and wide choice of players. Secondly, it is efficiently operational National Team Institute and functional U-20 team within its structure, because the above-mentioned equation in three variables is nothing else than a fair justification why U-20 team should be a permanent element in the structure of the National Team Institute.

At the same time, clubs develop players while national football associations may have other priorities when it comes to the National Team Institute. After all, UEFA U-21 EURO maintained higher level of competition than among “A” teams, even though the final round format has been expanded since 2019/21 season to 16 teams. Qualification for the Olympics still requires prior qualification for the semi-final, and this is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow in comparison to the national football association daily operations. So, a question of additional allocations for U-20 team is quite rhetorical. From coaching perspective in a professional football club, working conditions of an average coach of «<1» representative team are extraordinary and, let’s say, even unacceptable. This is a distinctive feature of a portrait of a national team coach against the backdrop of the UEFA U-21 EURO final stages. There are plenty of unusual and demanding features in his portrait with great leadership included forcing him to leapfrog this stage of his career.

In my opinion, U-21 head coach, unlike his colleagues from the National Team Institute, including “A” team manager and all other national youth team managers, works in the harshest environment. Key factor here is time of team’s existence or “lifetime” of footballers. In many football associations a national youth team coach has experience with the age group during the whole cycle of team’s existence, starting with, for example, U-15 and ending with U-19/20 — so, a minimum of four years. In case of division into juniors (U-15/16/17) and seniors (U-18/19/20), a coach of a senior team operates in similar working environment, i.e. just one qualifying cycle. However, he has much more time to get his team ready for the start in the new qualifying round — more than a year at least, starting from the end of the final round of the UEFA European U-17 Championship in May. In the meantime, a coach of the «<1» team which failed to qualify for the final round of the European championship, can start making his new team in November. Anyway he will start to do so with a five-month delay compared to a potentially new U-19 coach who will have much less newcomers than U-21 team will. The paradox is that successful coach of the «<1» team operates under more severe conditions than his less successful colleagues based on the competition regulations and the number of participating teams in the final tournament (for example, 54 vs. 12 in the 2017/19 tournament). The truth is that the new format of the 2019 UEFA European Championship entering into force already in 2022/23 season¹⁸⁸ makes working conditions for U-19 coaches similar to those of U-21s. But we will still get back to it.

The time still remains an old enemy of any manager and one of the key factors defining the principles or a business strategy a national team coach has to follow. In particular, for «<1» team manager working environment is the hardest. Thus, the words from “Old Testament” (Ecclesiastes 1:18) make a point in this analysis: *“For in much wisdom is much vexation, and he who increases knowledge increases sorrow.”* Nevertheless, *“Praemonitus, praemunitus”* (or *“forewarned is forearmed”*). And the time is just right to quote Joseph Brodsky’s *“The main thing is the grandeur of the design”* and his words uttered in his dialogue¹⁸⁹ with Anna Akhmatova: *“I recall I thought that if you faced a great task it spurred you on to new technical devices.”*

To conclude, comprehensive statistics of head coaches involved in ten final tournaments mentioned in this chapter and the most striking facts and comments, in particular, about Julen Lopetegui who was coaching European champions in 2011/13 cycle and later on Spain “A”, is given below. As a final touch to our analysis, “The List of Head Coaches at the helm of the participating teams of the 2000–2017 UEFA U-21 EUROS” is presented below too.

¹⁸⁸ The new format of the tournament begins in 2022/23 sports season. New Nations League format for U19 EURO: how it works. Friday 5 February 2021 UEFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1bspen5i>

¹⁸⁹ The quote from the book “Conversations with Joseph Brodsky”. A poet’s journey through the twentieth century by Solomon Volkov, translated by Marian Schwartz. Published in 1998 by Free Press in New York <https://openlibrary.org> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/19lhb1s> or <https://archive.org> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1r4a6hsx>

Appendix 1

The List of Head Coaches at the helm of the participating teams of the 2000–2017 UEFA U-21 EUROs

Key to the tables below:

- 1 — country;
- 2 — name and nationality;
- 3 — DOB;
- 4 — age at the time of the tournament;
- 5 — age at the time of their first U-21 NT appointment;
- 6 — years of experience before appointment to the current U-21 NT;
- 7 — years of experience at the time of their first appointment to U-21 NT;
- 8 — previous experience as U-21 head coach (+/-);
- 9 — years of experience as "A" or U-21 national team assistant coach (+/-);
- 10 — years of experience with youth and/or U-20 NT (+/-);
- 11 — break in coaching career before their appointment to the current U-21 NT.

UEFA U-21 EURO 2000

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
NED	Han Berger NED	17.06.1950	50	48	26	26	-	-	-	0
CRO	Ivo Susak CRO	10.06.1946	54	51	9	9	-	-	-	0
ESP	José Ignacio Sáez ESP***	23.04.1943	57	53	13	13	-	-	-	1
CZE	Karel Brückner CZE	13.11.1939	61	58	22	22	-	+	-	0
ENG	Howard Wilkinson ENG*	13.11.1943	57	56	17	17	-	-	-	3
ITA	Marco Tardelli ITA	24.09.1954	46	44	6	6	-	+	-	2
TUR	Raşit Çetiner TUR	10.09.1956	44	42	5	5	-	-	-	0
SVK	Dušan Radolský SVK **	13.11.1950	50	48	11	11	-	-	-	0

* Interim coach of the England "A" from 02.02 to 17.02.1999 (15 days).

**Head coach of the Slovakia "A" from 23.10 to 10.11.1998 (18 days). Dušan Radolský was working as a club and U-21 coach, in particular in BSC JAS Bardejov from 01.07.1999 to 30.06.2000.

***Head coach of the Spain "A" from 01.07.2002 to 30.06.2004; he then took managerial reins of U-21 team again for 4 more years.

UEFA U-21 EURO 2002

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
BEL	Jean-François De Sart BEL	18.12.1961	41	38	4	4	-	+	+	0
FRA	Raymond Domenech FRA	24.01.1952	50	41	9	9	-	-	-	0
SUI	Bernard Challandes SUI	26.07.1951	51	50	24	24	-	-	+	0
CZE	Miroslav Beranek CZE**	24.04.1957	45	44	8	8	-	+	-	0
ENG	David Platt ENG	10.06.1966	36	35	2	2	-	-	-	0
ITA	Claudio Gentile ITA*	27.09.1953	49	47	2	2	-	+	+	0
GRE	Andreas Michalopoulos GRE	23.01.1949	53	51	11	11	-	-	-	0
POR	Agostinho Oliveira POR***	05.02.1947	55	53	6	6	+	-	+	2

* Before his appointment as U-21 head coach was working exclusively in the structure of the NA.

** Miroslav Beranek worked in the professional football club Slavia Prague from 01.01.2002 to 15.12.2003 at the time he was coaching U-21s.

*** Agostinho Oliveira was coaching Portugal U-20 in FIFA U-20 WC in 1993 and Portugal U-21 in 1998. However, information on dates of his collaboration with FPF is missing.

UEFA U-21 EURO 2004

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
SCG	Vladimir Petrović SCG	01.07.1955	49	47	6	6	-	-	-	1
SWE	Torbjörn Nilsson SWE	09.07.1954	50	48	12	12	-	-	-	0
GER	Ulrich Stielike GER**	15.11.1954	50	49	10	10	-	+	+	0
BLR	Yuri Puntus BLR***	08.10.1960	44	40	11	11	-	-	-	0
SUI	Bernard Challandes SUI	26.07.1951	53	50	24	24	-	-	+	0
ITA	Claudio Gentile ITA*	27.09.1951	51	47	2	2	-	+	+	0
CRO	Martin Novoselac CRO	10.11.1950	54	50	13	13	-	-	+	0
POR	José Pratas Romão POR	13.04.1954	50	48	15	15	-	+	-	0

* Before his appointment as U-21 head coach was working exclusively in the structure of the national association.

** Ulrich Stielike was appointed as Switzerland "A" head coach immediately after his retirement as a player.

*** Yuri Puntus remained with BATE Borisov until 30.11.2004, practically throughout the entire period of his collaboration with U-21 team.

UEFA U-21 EURO 2006

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
NED	Foppe de Haan NED	26.06.1943	63	61	30	30	-	-	-	0
UKR	Oleksiy Mykhaylychenko UKR	30.03.1963	43	41	5	5	-	-	-	0
GER	Dieter Eilts GER	13.12.1964	42	40	1	1	-	-	+	0
SCG	Dragomir Okuka SRB	02.04.1954	52	51	8	8	-	-	-	1
FRA	René Girard FRA	04.04.1954	52	50	9	9	-	+	+	0
ITA	Claudio Gentile ITA	27.09.1953	53	47	2	2	-	+	+	0
DEN	Flemming Serritslev DEN	18.02.1947	59	53	17	17	-	+	-	0
POR	Agostinho Oliveira POR*	05.02.1947	59	53	6	6	+	-	+	2

* Agostinho Oliveira was coaching Portugal U-20 in the FIFA WC U-20 in 1993 and Portugal U-21 in 1998. However, information on dates of his collaboration with FPF for the referred period is missing. He replaced António Oliveira to become an interim manager of the Portugal A before Luiz Felipe Scolari's appointment in 2002. He managed the team during four matches — two won (3:2 vs. Sweden and 2:0 vs. Scotland) and two drawn (vs. England and Tunisia; both matches ended in a 1:1 draw).

UEFA U-21 EURO 2007

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
NED	Foppe de Haan NED	26.06.1943	63	61	30	30	-	-	-	0
SRB	Miroslav Djukić SRB	19.02.1966	41	40	0	0	-	-	-	0
CZE	Ladislav Škorpil CZE	06.06.1945	62	59	35	35	-	-	+	0
ENG	Stuart Pearce ENG	24.04.1962	45	45	5	5	-	-	-	0
ISR	Guy Levi ISR	08.09.1966	41	38	9	9	-	-	-	2
ITA	Pierluigi Casiraghi ITA	04.03.1969	38	37	4	4	-	-	-	0
BEL	Jean-François De Sart BEL	18.12.1961	46	38	4	4	-	+	+	0
POR	José Couceiro POR	04.10.1962	45	44	4	4	-	-	-	0

UEFA U-21 EURO 2009

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
FIN	Markku Tapio Kanerva FIN***	24.05.1964	45	39	3	3	-	-	-	0
GER	Horst Hrubesch GER	17.04.1951	58	57	15	15	-	+	+	0
SRB	Slobodan Krčmarević SRB	12.06.1965	44	42	4	4	-	-	+	1
ENG	Stuart Pearce ENG	24.04.1962	47	45	5	5	-	-	-	0
SWE	Tommy Söderberg SWE*	19.08.1948	59	48	24	13	+	-	+	0
ITA	Pierluigi Casiraghi ITA	04.03.1969	40	37	4	4	-	+	-	0
BLR	Yury Kurnenin BLR**	14.06.1954	55	52	11	11	-	+	+	0
ESP	Juan Ramon Lopez Caro ESP	23.03.1963	47	45	11	11	-	-	-	0

* Sweden "A" head coach from 01.01.1998 to 30.06.2004. Before he managed Sweden U-21 from 01.01.1994 to 31.12.1997.

** Syria "A" head coach for 183 days in 1996, and an interim coach of Belarus "A" for 74 days in winter 2005/06.

*** Markku Tapio Kanerva is the current Finland "A" head coach (information from May 2019).

UEFA U-21 EURO 2011

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
SUI	Pierluigi Tami SUI	12.09.1961	50	48	8	8	-	+	+	0
UKR	Pavlo Yakovenko UKR	19.12.1964	47	38	11	6	+	-	+	1
DEN	Keld Bordinggaard DEN	22.11.1962	49	44	6	6	-	+	-	0
ENG	Stuart Pearce ENG	24.04.1962	49	45	5	5	-	-	-	0
CZE	Jakub Dovalil CZE*	08.02.1974	37	34	14	14	-	-	+	0
ISL	Eyjólfur Sveinsson ISL**	03.08.1968	43	36	4	0	+	-	-	0
BLR	Georgi Kondratiev BLR	07.01.1960	51	49	11	11	-	+	-	0
ESP	Luis Milla ESP	12.03.1966	43	42	4	4	-	-	+	0

* Jakub Dovalil was Czech Republic "A" assistant coach in 2012.

** Eyjólfur Sveinsson was Iceland "A" head coach from 01.11.2005 to 29.10.2007, which means that he was coaching the U-21s (01.01.2004–31.10.2005) with no coaching experience before his appointment.

UEFA U-21 EURO 2013

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GER	Rainer Adrion GER	10.12.1953	60	56	21	21	-	-	-	0
NED	Cor Pot NED	08.06.1951	62	58	21	21	-	-	+	0
RUS	Nikolai Pisarev RUS	23.11.1968	45	42	6	6	-	-	-	0
ENG	Stuart Pearce ENG	24.04.1962	51	45	5	5	-	-	-	0
ISR	Guy Luzon ISR	07.08.1975	38	35	8	8	-	-	-	0
NOR	Tor Ole Skullerud NOR	10.12.1970	43	40	10	8	+	+	+	0
ITA	Devis Mangia ITA	06.06.1974	39	38	16	16	-	-	-	1
ESP	Julen Lopetegui ESP*	28.08.1966	47	44	4	4	-	-	+	1

*Julen Lopetegui continued to work with Spain national youth teams while he was coaching Spain U-21: Spain U-20 (01.08.2010–30.04.2014 or for 1368 days) and Spain U-19 (01.08.2010–30.05.2013 or for 1033 days).

He got through all the levels of the National Team Institute of Real Federación Española De Fútbol by working as an U-17 assistant coach (2003), U-19 coach (and won 2011/12 UEFA European U-19 Championship), working also with U-20, U-21 (2011/13 European champions) and the "A"

team (21.07.2016 –13.06.2018). He stepped down as Spain "A" head coach right before 2018 FIFA WC final tournament. Had Julen Lopetegui coached the team in 2018 FIFA WC final tournament he would have joined a rather limited group of managers with previous experience with junior teams of the National Team Institute. For more details please see the Chapter "Step-by-step" model. In particular, two wins with U-19s and U-21s could rank him together with Cesare Maldini and Jose Pekerman who were three-time U-21 and U-20 winners respectively. Thus, the FA of Spain confirmed that it was advisable and reasonable to appoint Spain "A" head coach who had successively completed all stages of the National Team Institute even in such successful football country with national teams of all levels as leaders of European and world football and one of the strongest club football in Europe.

UEFA U-21 EURO 2015

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GER	Horst Hrubesch GER	17.04.1951	64	57	19	15	+	+	+	0
CZE	Jakub Dovalil CZE	08.02.1974	41	34	14	14	+	-	+	0
SWE	Håkan Ericson SWE	29.05.1960	55	51	17	17	-	-	-	7
ENG	Gareth Southgate ENG	03.09.1970	45	43	3	3	-	-	-	4
POR	Rui Jorge POR	27.03.1973	42	37	4	4	-	-	-	0
DEN	Jess Thorup DEN	21.02.1970	45	43	8	8	-	-	-	0
ITA	Luigi Di Biagio ITA	03.06.1971	44	42	4	4	-	-	+	0
SRB	Mladen Dodić SRB	17.10.1969	46	45	6	6	-	-	-	0

UEFA U-21 EURO 2017

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
GER	Stefan Kuntz GER	30.10.1962	55	54	4	4	-	-	-	13
POR	Rui Jorge POR	27.03.1973	44	37	4	4	-	-	-	0
SWE	Håkan Ericson SWE	29.05.1960	57	51	17	17	-	-	-	7
ENG	Aidy Boothroyd ENG	08.02.1971	46	45	14	14	-	-	+	0
SVK	Pavel Hapal CZE	27.07.1969	48	46	9	9	-	+	-	0
DEN	Niels Frederiksen DEN	05.11.1970	47	45	9	9	-	-	-	0
ITA	Luigi Di Biagio ITA	03.06.1971	46	42	4	4	-	-	+	0
SRB	Nenad Lalatović SRB	22.12.1977	40	40	7	7	-	-	+	0
POL	Marcin Dorna POL	17.09.1979	38	34	12	12	-	+	+	0
MKD	Blagoja Milevski MKD	21.03.1971	46	43	2	2	-	-	-	0
CZE	Vítězslav Lavička CZE	30.04.1963	54	52	17	17	+	-	-	0
ESP	Albert Celades ESP	29.09.1975	42	39	1	1	-	-	+	0

Appendix 2

The List of Head Coaches at the helm of the participating teams of the 2000–2017 UEFA U-21 EUROs

Key to the table:

1 — name;

2 — nationality;

3 — DOB;

4 — the first working period with U-21 NT;

5 — the second working period with the second U-21 NT.

Note: coaches who have led U-21s into the UEFA U-21 EURO final tournament twice are marked in **bold**.

№	1	2	3	4	5
1	Karel Brückner	CZE	13.11.1939	4 (4)	
2	José Ignacio Sáez	ESP	23.04.1943	6 (6)	4 (4)
3	Foppe de Haan	NED	26.06.1943	5 (5)	
4	Howard Wilkinson	ENG	13.11.1943	2 (2)	
5	Ladislav Škorpil	CZE	06.06.1945	>3 (4)	
6	Ivo Susak	CRO	10.06.1946	3 (3)	<2 (2)
7	Agostinho Oliveira	POR	05.02.1947	<2 (2)	<2 (2)
8	Flemming Serritslev	DEN	18.02.1947	> 6 (6)	<2 (2)
9	Tommy Söderberg	SWE	19.08.1948	4 (4)	> 8 (8)
10	Andreas Michalopoulos	GRE	23.01.1949	>2 (2)	
11	Han Berger	NED	17.06.1950	2 (2)	
12	Martin Novoselac	CRO	10.11.1950	4(4)	
13	Dušan Radolský	SVK	13.11.1950	2 (2)	
14	Horst Hrubesch	GER	17.04.1951	< 1 (1) 241 or 0,66	3 (3)
15	Cor Pot	NED	08.06.1951	4 (4)	
16	Bernard Challandes	SUI	26.07.1951	>5 (6)	
17	Raymond Domenech	FRA	24.01.1952	11 (11)	
18	Claudio Gentile	ITA	27.09.1953	>5 (6)	
19	Rainer Adrion	GER	10.12.1953	4 (4)	
20	Dragomir Okuka	SRB	02.04.1954	>1 (1)	
21	René Girard	FRA	04.04.1954	4 (4)	
22	José Pratas Romão	POR	13.04.1954	<2 (2)	
23	Yury Kurnenin	BLR	14.06.1954	>3 (3)	
24	Torbjörn Nilsson	SWE	09.07.1954	3 (3)	
25	Marco Tardelli	ITA	24.09.1954	>2 (2)	
26	Ulrich Stielike	GER	15.11.1954	>1 (1)	
27	Vladimir Petrović	SCG	01.07.1955	2 (2)	
28	Raşit Çetiner	TUR	10.09.1956	7 (7)	<2 (2)
29	Miroslav Beranek	CZE	24.04.1957	1 (1)	
30	Georgi Kondratiev	BLR	07.01.1960	<2 (2)	
31	Håkan Ericson	SWE	29.05.1960	<7 (7)	
32	Yuri Puntus	BLR	08.10.1960	>5 (6)	
33	Pierluigi Tami	SUI	12.09.1961	<6 (6)	
34	Jean-François De Sart	BEL	18.12.1961	>11 (11)	
35	Stuart Pearce	ENG	24.04.1962	6 (6)	

36	José Couceiro	POR	04.10.1962	>1 (1)	
37	Stefan Kuntz	GER	30.10.1962	>2 (2) since 01.09.2016	
38	Keld Bordinggaard	DEN	22.11.1962	5 (5)	
39	Juan Ramon Lopez Caro	ESP	23.03.1963	<2 (2)	
40	Oleksiy Mykhaylychenko	UKR	30.03.1963	>3 (3)	
41	Vítězslav Lavička	CZE	30.04.1963	1 (1)	> 3(3)
42	Markku Tapio Kanerva	FIN	24.05.1964	6 (6)	
43	Dieter Eilts	GER	13.12.1964	>4 (4)	
44	Pavlo Yakovenko	UKR	19.12.1964	<2 (2)	< 5 (5)
45	Slobodan Krčmarević	SRB	12.06.1965	2 (2)	>1 (2)
46	Miroslav Djukić	SRB	19.02.1966	1 (1)	
47	Luis Milla	ESP	12.03.1966	2 (2)	
48	David Platt	ENG	10.06.1966	3 (3)	
49	Julen Lopetegui	ESP	28.08.1966	<5 (5)	
50	Guy Levi	ISR	08.09.1966	4 (4)	
51	Eyjólfur Sværriðsson	ISL	03.08.1968	<2 (2)	< 10 (10)
52	Nikolai Pisarev	RUS	23.11.1968	> 4 (5)	1 (1)
53	Pierluigi Casiraghi	ITA	04.03.1969	>4 (4)	
54	Pavel Hapal	CZE	27.07.1969	>3(3)	
55	Mladen Dodić	SRB	17.10.1969	<1 (1) 189	
56	Jess Thorup	DEN	21.02.1970	>2 (2)	
57	Gareth Southgate	ENG	03.09.1970	>3 (3)	
58	Niels Frederiksen	DEN	05.11.1970	>3 (3) since 27.08.2015	
59	Tor Ole Skullerud	NOR	10.12.1970	3 (3)	
60	Aidy Boothroyd	ENG	08.02.1971	>2 (2) since 28.06.2016	
61	Blagoja Milevski	MKD	21.03.1971	< 4 (4)	since 28.02.2019
62	Luigi Di Biagio	ITA	03.06.1971	<6 (6) since 02.07.2013	
63	Rui Jorge	POR	27.03.1973	>8 (8) since 19.11.2010	
64	Jakub Dovalil	CZE	08.02.1974	6 (6)	
65	Devis Mangia	ITA	06.06.1974	<1 (1) 347 or 0,95	
66	Guy Luzon	ISR	07.08.1975	<3 (3)	
67	Albert Celades	ESP	29.09.1975	>4 (4)	
68	Nenad Lalatović	SRB	22.12.1977	<1(1) 114	
69	Marcin Dorna	POL	17.09.1979	>4(4)	

FIFA INTERNATIONAL MATCH CALENDAR. HOW IT ALL STARTED

*Devil is in the details*¹⁹⁰

On 01.01.2002 the First International Match Calendar officially came into force.

For the first time they began to talk about the Calendar at top official circles in January 1999 by UEFA's initiative. The first mention of it dates back to January 15, 1999¹⁹¹: *"The meeting at FIFA House, chaired by the FIFA General Secretary Michel Zen-Ruffinen, received a proposal from the UEFA delegation for an annual schedule of international dates through the year 2005, with dates reserved for competitions and for friendly matches between national teams. FIFA will now co-ordinate the needs of the other five confederations, based upon the European proposal, for submission to the FIFA Executive Committee on 11/12 March 1999."*

The first document laying out the Calendar was FIFA Circular No. 719 dated 23 June 2000 followed by official document in August 2001 in relation to the regulations directly linked with the Calendar and national team matches respectively, i.e. The FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. We are talking about the FIFA Circular No. 769, dated 24 August 2001¹⁹² where a new calendar title "The coordinated international match calendar (CIMC)" was introduced. There reference was made to the name of the new calendar "*the coordinated international match calendar (CIMC)*".

Officially the calendar was introduced by the FIFA Circular No. 792 dated 21st of December 2001.¹⁹³ The Circular contained Annexes with the Calendar¹⁹⁴ and

¹⁹⁰ The idiom "God is in the detail" has been attributed to a number of different individuals, most notably to German-born architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (1886–1969) published by The New York Times in Mies's 1969 obituary; however, it is generally accepted not to have originated with him. The expression also appears to have been a favorite of German art historian Aby Warburg (1866–1929), though Warburg's biographer, E. H. Gombrich, is likewise uncertain if it originated with Warburg. An earlier form, "*Le bon Dieu est dans le détail*" ("*the good God is in the detail*") is generally attributed to Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880).[1] Bartlett's Familiar Quotations lists the saying's author as anonymous.[3] The phrase is attested in 1965:[4] in 1969, it is referred to as an existing proverb.[5] En.wikipedia.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/jbsqhq8>

¹⁹¹ FIFA moves towards a coordinated International Calendar (FIFA.com) 15 Jan 1999. FIFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ybg87ajm>

¹⁹² Circular No. 769, Zürich, 24 August 2001 Revised FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yz8gsvn7>

¹⁹³ Circular No. 792, 21 December 2001 Coordinated International Match Calendar. Resources.fifa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/12zsuyhw>

¹⁹⁴ Circular No. 792 — Coordinated international calendar Annex I Fixed Match Dates — National Teams 2002 — 2004 Update: December 2001. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y93kq8rx>

Amendments to the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2001¹⁹⁵ included –Par. 2 Article 36.¹⁹⁶

This could be the end of story about the FIFA International Match Calendar, but there was a specific feature of the first calendar which was reflected in more recent history related to the football tournament of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing.

In this regard, let us foreground the fact that the only tournament other than for “A” teams listed in the Calendar for the first and the last time was the Final Tournament of the UEFA U-21 EURO with its dates in May 2002 — “UEFA European Under-21 Championship 16.05–28.05”.

Now let us consider some statistical details and highlight the nuances.

Below are cycles the International Match Calendar was based on since its first introduction:

2002–2004

2006–2008¹⁹⁷

2008–2014¹⁹⁸

2014–2018¹⁹⁹

2018–2024²⁰⁰

Unfortunately, I did not manage to find any official document about the 2005 Calendar nor the Circular about the 2006–2008 Calendar, except for some official documents clearly stating that the above calendars did exist within the indicated period.

Now let’s talk about some subtleties of the Calendar’s title.

¹⁹⁵ 2001 FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players Resources.fifa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8dd6q3o>

¹⁹⁶ Circular No. 792 — Coordinated international calendar Annex II Release of players for national association representative matches in accordance with the Coordinated International Match Calendar (Contrary to the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, Art. 36 Para. 2, which will be modified in accordance with the decision reached by the FIFA Executive Committee.) Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/37n6kz8d>

¹⁹⁷ “On 29 June 2005 the FIFA Executive Committee adopted the currently valid Coordinated International Match Calendar for the years between 2006 and 2014.” Source: Circular No. 1053 Zurich, 28 September 2006 Interpretation of the dates listed in the Coordinated International Match Calendar for double fixtures Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4tnq56wk> & “The coordinated international match calendar (2006–2008 and 2008/09–2014) is available on FIFA.com.” Source: FIFA Media Release dated 21 Feb 2006 Associations and clubs pledge to work together (FIFA.com) URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3cfwk8j>

¹⁹⁸ Circular No. 1157 Zurich, 4 August 2008 Updated international match calendar 2008–2014. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ybocbjsk>

¹⁹⁹ The official document contains amendments that relate to 2013 and formally to 2013–2018.: Circular No. 1355 Zurich, 6 May 2013 Men’s international match calendar for September 2014 — July 2018. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8u7cy6t>

²⁰⁰ Circular No. 1696 Zurich, 6 November 2019 Men’s international match calendar 2018–2024 Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y7ge4bqf>

“CO-ORDINATED” vs “COORDINATED”

Let’s get back to the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. Any modifications to the calendar, in one way or another, were reflected in the relevant article of the FIFA Regulations. In particular, it should be noted that the definition «co-ordinated» has never been used again in the title of the FIFA International Match Calendar since 2006–2008. However, it still remained in the 2014 Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players.

2008²⁰¹

Annex 1, Article 1, Paragraph 2

*“The release of players under the terms of paragraph 1 of this article is mandatory for matches on dates listed in the **coordinated** international match calendar and for all matches for which a duty to release players exists on the basis of a special decision by the FIFA Executive Committee.”*

2010²⁰²

Annex 1, Article 1, Paragraph 2

*“The release of players under the terms of paragraph 1 of this article is mandatory for matches on dates listed in the **coordinated** international match calendar and for all matches for which a duty to release players exists on the basis of a special decision by the FIFA Executive Committee.”*

2014²⁰³

Annex 1, Article 1, Paragraph 2

*“The release of players under the terms of paragraph 1 of this article is mandatory for all international windows listed in the **international match calendar** (cf. paragraphs 3 and 4 below) as well as for the final competitions of the FIFA World Cup™, the FIFA Confederations Cup, and the championships for “A” representative teams of the confederations, subject to the relevant association being a member of the organizing confederation.”*

Now let’s refer to the history of the football tournament of the Olympic Games in Beijing 2008. In particular, we refer to the FIFA Circular No. 1153, dated

²⁰¹ The amendments to the Regulations entered into force in 2005, therefore formally it is 2005–2008 edition: FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players 2008. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/gsnf8fms>

²⁰² 2010 FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8e9gagk>

²⁰³ 2014 FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8oneknd>

23 July 2008.²⁰⁴ The document was released specifically with regard to “Release of Players for the Men’s Olympic Football Tournament Beijing 2008” and there was a reference to “coordinated international match calendar”. However, as mentioned above, word “coordinated” has already disappeared from the title of the FIFA calendars.

International Match Calendar
 FIXED MATCH DATES — NATIONAL TEAMS 2006–2008²⁰⁵
 International Match Calendar
 FIXED DATES FOR NATIONAL TEAM MATCHES 2008–2014
 International Match Calendar
 FIXED DATES FOR INTERNATIONAL "A" MATCHES 2013–2018
 International Match Calendar
 FIXED DATES FOR INTERNATIONAL “A” MATCHES 2018–2024

The title of the first calendar is given for comparison:

Co-ordinated international calendar
 Fixed Match Dates — National Teams 2002–2004

Referring to the tournaments lower than “A” level which have disappeared from the FIFA Calendar, a curious and resonating detail has been noticed. Since 2013 the Calendar has been attributed to the national “A” teams exclusively. Before, in 2002–2004 and 2006–2008 Calendars, national teams were mentioned in plural. Then it changed into singular, and later they started to mention a type of the match too. Devil is in the detail, and is the Calendar for national “A” team only?

WHAT DOES FIFA STATUTES SAY?

Here some more details call for our attention.

Maybe the definition “National Teams” meant not only the national “A” team? Let us refer to the original source, i.e. the FIFA Statutes and its wording which is still relevant today.

Till now, there have been more than 10 editions of the Statutes since the International Match Calendar was introduced. Year per year, all 14 editions are listed below:

²⁰⁴ Circular No. 1153 Zurich, 23 July 2008 Release of Players for the Men’s Olympic Football Tournament Beijing 2008. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8w8b9be>

²⁰⁵ 2006–2008 Calendar formally had the word “coordinated” in its title. However, at the same time, we can meet the full name of this document without the word “coordinated”.

2001 ²⁰⁶	2012 ²¹³
2004 ²⁰⁷	2013 ²¹⁴
2006 ²⁰⁸	2014 ²¹⁵
2008 ²⁰⁹	2015 ²¹⁶
2009 ²¹⁰	2016 ²¹⁷
2010 ²¹¹	2018 ²¹⁸
2011 ²¹²	2019 ²¹⁹

In the 2001 FIFA Statutes four different definitions for a national team of football associations were used: “first national representative team”, “national or representative team”, “national teams” and “national “A” teams”.

In the next edition of 2004, “national team” disappeared, “representative team” and “first representative team” remained and “association team” appeared.

In the edition of 2009 “association team” was not used.

In the edition of 2011 “first representative team” was no longer mentioned and in every next edition of the FIFA Statutes only the “representative team” was used as a definition.

That said, before 2014 the word combination “national team” was used in the Calendar title but it has no longer been used in the FIFA Statutes since 2004. Is devil again in the details? But the thing is that these little details make things clear — for example, why UEFA uses exclusively “national team” as a definition in the UEFA regulations for national team tournaments and why, in addition to the “A” national team as a definition it also says the “first representative team” i.e. No. 1 team.

Thus, the FIFA Statutes provides for only one team in its wording, and that is the main national/representative team of the national football association. Or are there any exceptions?

²⁰⁶ FIFA Statutes 2001 with amendments made in 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998 and 2000: Resources. fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ydh74h2y>

²⁰⁷ FIFA Statutes 2004. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ydh5c59w>

²⁰⁸ FIFA Statutes 2006. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y865cnqd>

²⁰⁹ FIFA Statutes 2008. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/87ohkvbf>

²¹⁰ FIFA Statutes 2009. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ydgu6v7m>

²¹¹ FIFA Statutes 2010. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9js2mmn>

²¹² FIFA Statutes 2011. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y98pbszq>

²¹³ FIFA Statutes 2012. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8p55d5x>

²¹⁴ FIFA Statutes 2013. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ybmbdy9q>

²¹⁵ FIFA Statutes 2014. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb5aynqh>

²¹⁶ FIFA Statutes 2015. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8h2j5uc>

²¹⁷ FIFA Statutes 2016. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yc2rj87z>

²¹⁸ FIFA Statutes 2018. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yc22r8jn>

²¹⁹ FIFA Statutes 2019. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/snqun2z>

SINGULAR AND PLURAL

As said before, the wording “national team” was used in plural and then in singular in the Calendar title. Is this a little detail? In the Chapter on Eligibility to play for the representative team of the national football association or country of the FIFA Statutes, different wording was used too.

“Eligibility for national teams” — 2001

ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR ASSOCIATION TEAMS — 2004

ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR ASSOCIATION TEAMS — 2006

ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR ASSOCIATION TEAMS — 2008

ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR REPRESENTATIVE TEAMS — 2009 and in every edition to follow.

In the Article “Principle” in this chapter with the exception of the 2001 Statutes (it does not contain the Article “Principle”), the word “team” appears both in singular and in plural. Plural in the Chapter heading is followed by using singular in the text itself.

2001 Statutes

VIII. Nationality of players Art. 18

“Eligibility for national teams”

“1 Any player who is a naturalised citizen of a country in virtue of that country’s laws shall be eligible to play for a national or representative team of that country.

2 If a player has been included in a national or representative team of a country for which he is eligible to play...”

The 2004 FIFA Statutes and its subsequent editions use «**representative teams**» in plural. It is still the plural form used in the Chapter heading and the body of the Article:

VII. ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR ASSOCIATION TEAMS

Article 15 Principle

“1 Any person holding the nationality of a country is eligible to play for the representative teams of the Association of his country.”

In 2009’s and the next editions, instead of “association teams”, only “representative teams” has been used in the Chapter heading of the FIFA Statutes. As you see, it is still in plural.

Formally, the only Chapter in the Statutes where references are made to other national/representative teams but without any level/rank indications is the Chapter governing eligibility to play for representative teams of the FIFA member association. By definition, national/representative team can be of any rank —

from the youngest to “A” team — in the context of player eligibility to be in the squad. Unfortunately, “teams” used in plural had no impact on the procedure of the release of players for the events within the FIFA International Match Calendar other than those connected with representative “A” team.

There are some exceptions. But this is just a formality.

“IT IS SAID THAT GOD IS ALWAYS ON THE SIDE OF THE BIG BATTALIONS”²²⁰

Now we are getting back to the only reference ever made to the lower-than-“A”-ranked tournament in the first FIFA Calendar and the FIFA Olympic Circular.

In its rather ornate wording, FIFA, probably, made their first attempt to defend tournaments that were not included in the International Match Calendar but were regularly held, had a “*unique character*” and were important — “*In view of the importance of ...*” — considering “*the specific nature of the event*”, and yet, despite everything, “*not officially included in the coordinated international match calendar because ... would not be congruent with the said calendar.*”

As a result of the lack of congruence and despite “*on the basis of customary law, the release of players below the age of 23 has therefore always been mandatory for all clubs*”, CAS rendered the decision: “*The requirements to justify a legal obligation of clubs to release their players for the Football Tournament Beijing 2008 on the basis of customary law are not met.*”²²¹ Year by year, there is a growing tendency to ignore all events outside of the FIFA International Match Calendar, especially at the U-15 to U-20 level. And there is one more paradox in the FIFA documents. This time it relates not only to the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players, but another one having the most serious influence on the National Team Institute of FIFA members associations.

What would have it taken to include tournaments for “*players below the age of 23*” in the Calendars after 2002 that “*has therefore always been mandatory for all clubs*”, according to the FIFA document in question, although the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer says no word about this obligation? The question is certainly rhetorical, since “*Le bon Dieu est dans le détail*” or “*the good God is in the detail*”. It leaves no doubts that this time the good God was on the side of the “big battalions” where the “A” team was.

²²⁰ François-Marie Arouet (21 November 1694 — 30 May 1778), most famous under his pen name Voltaire, was a French writer, deist and philosopher. “On dit que Dieu est toujours pour les gros bataillons” or “It is said that God is always on the side of the big battalions.” Letter to François-Louis-Henri Leriche (6 February 1770). En.wikiquote.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ooxzrlk> & En.wikiquote.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/nm9pexn>

²²¹ Beijing Olympics: Barcelona and Argentina clash over Lionel Messi. The Telegraph by Mike Norrish. 06 Aug 2008. Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/swrq35t>

INTERNATIONAL MATCH CALENDAR OF THE FFU

If a line segment intersects two straight lines forming two interior angles on the same side that sum to less than two right angles, then the two lines, if extended indefinitely, meet on that side on which the angles sum to less than two right angles.

— Euclid's parallel postulate

For any given line R and point P not on R, in the plane containing both line R and point P there are at least two distinct lines through P that does not intersect R.

— From hyperbolic, also known as Lobachevskian geometry

The International Match Calendar of the FFU (FFU IMC) is a schedule of matches for the current calendar year for men's youth and U-21 national teams intended for developing programmes on Ukraine national youth and U-21 team preparations.

That said, "A" team — playing exclusively on the fixed dates for international "A" set out in FIFA International Match Calendar (for example: 2018–2024 International Match Calendar /fixed dates for international "A" matches 2018–2024²²²) —, has its own calendar that fully coincides with the dates set out in the FIFA International Match Calendar with the exception of the period before the UEFA EURO and FIFA World Cup final rounds — i.e. end of May and beginning of June when international/test matches before the above tournaments are played.

The FFU International Match Calendar got its name following the legal dispute between the FFU and FC Metalurg Zaporizhzhia in 2008–2009 when the club management claimed the FFU right to call players to the national youth teams outside the dates set out by the FIFA International Match Calendar. The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne ruled the dispute in favour of the FFU (Metalurg Zaporizhzhya v. Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) CAS 2009/A/1889 — Lausanne, 11 March 2010). Despite the fact that Football Federation of Ukraine (FFU) was renamed to Ukrainian Association of Football (UAF) in May 2019, in this Chapter we will stick to the FFU acronym.

At the same time, we should understand that any national team activities (NAT, U-21 NT or NYT) are governed by the relevant article of the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players. As a result, the release of a player to association's teams is clearly determined by the Regulations (dates and

²²² Circular No. 1653 Zurich, 19 November 2018 Men's international match calendar 2018–2024. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/tzh2dqd>

duration or time period of release of players) and the FIFA IMC setting out FIFA dates or FIFA weeks.

FIFA had refused to use February, April and August dates for "A" matches since 2013 and has moved to using five double dates or so-called FIFA's weeks (FIFA's week = FIFA international window) in March, June, September, October and November, which begin on Monday morning and finish on Tuesday night the following week. We have highlighted this subject before but in the context of the IMC we need to go into great detail.

The final tournaments of the UEFA European U-17 and U-19 Championships, as well as the final rounds of the FIFA U-17 and U-20 World Cups are held outside so-called FIFA dates, which means that national football associations shall have national procedural rules governing the release of players to the national teams in order to develop the effective programmes of national team preparations. Therefore, in 2008 the FFU Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players was modified to allow players to be released to national teams on the dates specified in the FFU IMC.

Consequently, the FFU IMC falls within the framework of the FFU Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players allowing the FFU and National Team Committee, at their own discretion, to organise training camps with events aimed solely at preparation and selection included, as well as international matches and tournaments, and to schedule official and non-official competitions subject to prior UEFA and FIFA's approval — pursuant to the FIFA Regulations Governing International Matches and depending on the type of the match, international match arrangements within the territory of a national association are subject to prior UEFA or FIFA's approval²²³ — within the territory of the Football Federation of Ukraine outside so-called FIFA dates. Furthermore, the above-mentioned dispute and implementing the FFU IMC set the atmosphere of mutual respect and understanding between the FFU and Ukrainian clubs, and, most importantly, in relation to the procedural rules of FIFA and FFU. Although some difficulties with the release of players, especially in U-18/19 age category and senior, may still happen at times forcing the National Team Committee to demonstrate diplomatic skills and flexibility. We should admit that the interest of clubs and national teams are within completely different, even parallel, non-intersecting planes, and Euclidean geometry should not be disregarded.

In my opinion, I should remark — and it is very important! — that since spring 2018, the FFU has faced an issue with getting their players released to the national youth teams of Ukraine, and not only in the senior age category (U-18/19/20), resulting from the conflict situation with one of the leading clubs. Despite the national regulatory framework, the FFU has been unable to reach a compromise and even to impose minimal disciplinary sanctions. Thus, the issue of coordinating the release of players to the national youth teams between NA and

²²³ Regulations Governing International Matches approved by the FIFA Executive Committee on 21 March 2014 and came into force on May 1, 2014. FIFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wkpuxbw>

clubs falls on national team coaches' shoulders. Consequently, either a coach was able to negotiate all the issues — as it was the case for 2019 FIFA U-20 WC when the coach managed to get his players released within the set time frames —, or he had no players or even, for example, had to refuse to take part in the tournament at the preparation phase for the elite round of the 2018/19 UEFA European U-17 Championship. This situation, on one hand, once again highlights that clubs and the NA's National Team Institute have different interests but, on the other hand, clearly shows national team's dependence on clubs and their need for mutual effective cooperation with adherence to the Regulations and respecting each other's interests for the sake of national football development. A bad peace is better than a good quarrel. It is the national football association who suffers the most if the conflict with a club arises. However, let's get back in time when there was no conflict and every condition was met for mutually beneficial collaboration. After all, clubs and association's teams are interconnected.

As said before on one of the first pages, the FFU IMC was launched in 2002. During all these years the IMC was modified by incorporating specific amendments in accordance with FIFA International Match Calendar (introduction of 10 paired dates or FIFA's weeks), following the establishment of national U-19 Championship and UEFA Youth League as well as UEFA's decision to hold all qualifying rounds of the UEFA European U-19 Championship (including the elite round) in FIFA dates, unless all the participants of UEFA mini-tournament agree otherwise — i.e. to play it outside the FIFA dates. However, already in 2015/16 and 2016/17 seasons, all the groups of UEFA elite rounds were played in FIFA's window in March without any exceptions.

In particular, following the above events, the FFU had to take the following measures:

- To abandon U-18 and U-19 activities/events in January and February. This step was aimed at providing opportunities for clubs to prepare for spring part of the season without any intrusion of national youth teams.
- Having shifted from U-17s to U-18s (formally after the 31st of July), except for the tournament in the Czech Republic in August (Václav Ježek Tournament), U-18 NYT play solely in the FIFA dates or out-of-competition period: e.g. traditional Winter tournament in Israel staged within the second week of December (FFU, unfortunately, refused to take part in 2017's edition with the following reasoning: domestic U-19 championship & UEFA Youth League). Let me give you another example. In 2016/2017 season, U-18 match Ukraine vs. Italy was played. (MD: 12.04.2017). Probably it was the last match in the history of U-18 NYT in April.
- U-19 NYT has to prepare for the elite round of the UEFA European U-19 Championship only in March with considerably limited options. Before elite rounds could be held in the second half of May and the team had minimum three sports training camps (e.g.: match in the beginning of March, two matches in the FIFA date in March and one or two matches in the end of April or in

the beginning of May). But now, U-19 NYT head coach has only two training camps left, both scheduled in March with one of them being a preparatory one before the start of the elite round. At the same time, the spring round of the season starts in the first days of March (Ukrainian Premier League) and domestic U-19 championship (the second round) can be resumed in April instead of early spring (2016/17).

With all that in mind, FFU National Team Committee has worked out the following rules of setting out the FFU IMC based on the national team age categories.

U-14/15 and U-15/16 teams. In my point of view, the ideal option was tested in 2011 for players born on and after 01.01.1997 and incorporated a range of regional selection sports training camps (there were four in 2011) to shape the first-choice squad for the first international match. Activities as such begin in autumn, two years before the start of the UEFA qualifying round. Already in spring of the following year, the team starts playing international friendly matches. Nowadays UEFA conducts development tournaments for U-15s in autumn, just two years before the start of the first UEFA qualifying round.

In Ukraine the preparation starts in spring with one selection sports training camp (one year and a half before the first UEFA mini-tournament) and includes four international double-headers (one in spring and three in autumn, although this number always may be reduced by the NA's decision). Eight international matches played in the first year of the team's existence are completely in line with the European practice and enable coaching staff to carry out qualified first selection of players by gaining sufficient international game experience keeping in mind that matches at national team level differ not only from domestic competitions but also from international game experience at club youth level. **In total: 5–6 activities/training camps** (with a minimum of one selection training camp) and up to **8 international matches**.

U-16/17 team. An annual plan is made with the maximum possible number of the Ukraine appearances at international tournaments to accumulate as much international competition experience as possible. The qualifying round is held in the format of a mini-tournament consisting of three matches and demanding coaching staff and players to have relevant game experience at similar level. Most of non-official international tournaments have the same format. Therefore, U-16/17s traditionally play in January in Turkey (The Aegean Cup). In recent years, Turkey experimented with the dates and age categories and held the U-15 tournament in December. In April, U-16/17s take part in the UEFA Development tournament organised by UEFA since 2013. The team takes part in the domestic Bannikov Memorial Tournament in May (for the first time held in 2002 with recent editions played in 2017, 2018 and 2019 in August thus, leaving almost no opportunity for a team to join traditional Syrenka Cup. However, players born in 1997 played both in Kyiv and in Poland) and in Syrenka Cup in FIFA's dates in September. This tournament is one of the oldest youth international tournaments in Europe,

although the iconic Tournoi de Montaigu or Mondial Football Montaigu is nine years older. Unfortunately, the last time Ukraine participated in this tournament was in 2017 as it was caused by shifting Bannikov Memorial dates. Clearly, overlapping tournaments deprives NA of an opportunity to take part in one of them. At the same time, the team has sports training camp and international double-header in March (e.g. FIFA's date in March). Consequently, U-16/17 team before entering the qualifying rounds can play 15–16 international matches (four international tournaments) thus, meeting the standards of the leading European NAs. **In total: 6 events/training camps** and up to **15–16 international matches** (excluding official matches).

U-17/18 team. The preparation for the second qualifying round of the European championship (elite round) starts in January with the traditional tournament in Minsk and continues at the end of February and the beginning of March with two international matches (e.g., as a rule, FFU seeks to reach an agreement with hosts of the UEFA European Championship). Unfortunately, Ukraine's U-17s were not represented at this tournament in 2019 nor in 2020 as no agreement with clubs was reached.

UEFA elite round starts in the end of March. As a result, before UEFA mini-tournament the team plays five tournament matches in Minsk and two international matches and have three training camps (two as a part of the tournament and double-headers with one held immediately before the qualifying round). Then, irrespective of the team's performance in the qualification — whether it will qualify or not for the final round of the UEFA European U-17 Championship —, an international tournament in August (Václav Ježek Tournament), two matches on FIFA's date in October and Winter tournament in Israel (in December), where, for example, traditionally Germany plays, are on the team's agenda. Unfortunately, the Ukrainian FA has already refused to take part in the Israel tournament in 2017 even though Israel is a regular Memorial Bannikov and Memorial Lobanovskii participant. After May, the intensity of team practice gets less as the final round of UEFA European U-17 Championship is being held. There are three more events on the team's agenda scheduled for the remaining seven months of the year. **In total: 6–7 events/training camps** and up to **15–16 international matches** (excluding official matches).

U-18/19 team. As said above, the team preps resume in March after a months long break. As a rule, two matches are scheduled for the beginning of March, but now, many teams are reluctant to play outside FIFA's dates. In FIFA date in March, Ukraine traditionally takes part in the tournament in Riga. In 2018, tournament dates and age category for this tournament were shifted. In view of resuming the U-19 Championship of Ukraine in spring, FFU planned to refuse to take part in Slovakia Cup traditionally held in the last week of April²²⁴. Despite previous refusal, the Ukrainian team took part in the tournament in Slovakia in 2019. As

²²⁴ The tournament was held in May 2018 and 2019.

a consequence, opportunities for the preparation of U-18 team may be limited in view of non-participation in events in spring outside FIFA windows. In principle, one international match can be played sometime in April on Wednesday since the match day at the U-19 Championship of Ukraine is on Saturday. However, already in 2018 the FFU did not plan to play matches in April in order to avoid any possible overlaps with the domestic U-19 Championship, as it has been the case during the latest three sporting seasons. However, the consent to play in Slovakia in 2019 caused problems with the release of players not only because of complicated relationship between NA and one of the clubs but because of U-19 Championship fixtures. But this is a question of good governance and effective coordination among FFU, league and clubs. Probably, they need to undertake another risk analysis and either reach an agreement on the calendar with clubs and league or, unfortunately, give up on taking part in the event. Therefore, three FIFA dates are still reserved for U-18/19 team. i.e. two matches in June, in September (Ukraine traditionally take part in Stevan Cele Vilotic Tournament in Serbia; it didn't take place in 2018 but FIFA window still remained) and two matches in October. FFU planned to play their first UEFA qualifying round on FIFA's date in November. The specific date depends on the interests of all UEFA mini-tournament participants. Furthermore, not always it is possible to set the most convenient time frame for the mini-tournament. That is why the date can relate to FIFA's week in October. Consequently, U-19 team may play 10–12 international matches and participate in a minimum of two international tournaments before their first UEFA qualifying round starts. **In total: 6 events/training camps** and up to **12 international matches** (excluding official matches).

U-19 team. As said before, team entire preparation for the elite round of the UEFA European U-19 Championship takes place in March. The team plays a maximum of two international matches before the start of the European qualification. Since Ukrainian U-19 Championship resumes in April²²⁵, the role of clubs and the quality of their training camps in January and February become pivotal for the FFU National Team Institute. The U-19 team calendar is the most striking example of, without any exaggeration, a pivotal role professional clubs play in the life of NYT. Given current circumstances, it is difficult to envisage Ukrainian U-19 success when the competition is so high. With only eight teams qualifying for the final round, preparatory phase for this age category is almost twice shorter than it used to be. In Ukraine the season resumes simultaneously with the start of U-19 team preparations. Meanwhile, U-19 national championship may resume only in April. Our main rivals find themselves in a different situation. **In total: 2 events/training camps** and maximum of **2 international matches** (excluding official matches).

²²⁵ Fortunately, since U-19 Championship was introduced in 2015/16 season, it was only once in 2017 that the tournament was resumed in April instead of March as it used to be during all the other editions (2016/17 season).

The new UEFA format makes the above-mentioned U-17/18, U-18/19 and U-19 Calendar history. Since 2020/21²²⁶ season, UEFA launches a new format of the U-19 Championship. So let's talk about it next.

U-20 team. To begin with, let me make a little comment that here I am talking about the FFU's practice only back in 2010–2017 when the team was available on a permanent basis. That said, the Calendar for the team fully reproduced the FIFA International Match Calendar except for one period to be discussed below. When the first two qualifying cycles of the U-21 NT were over and the FFU started to select their U-20 team, we came to conclusion that national team candidates lose their motivation by playing only friendly matches for a year and a half. Therefore, a decision was taken to take part in non-official international tournaments to feel some good competitiveness and keep on track. One of those tournaments was The FA International Trophy Cup. Alongside this tournament, the team plays matches on FIFA's dates, but with less frequency than U-21 or "A" team. In the year when the final rounds of the UEFA EURO or the FIFA World Cup take place and domestic competition season in Europe is supposed to end in the second half of May, except for countries playing to spring-autumn format, the FFU schedules their traditional Lobanovskiy Memorial Tournament outside the FIFA's dates but in the time span when "A" international friendly matches are scheduled before the start of the UEFA EURO or FIFA World Cup. The FFU organises this tournament every year at the end of May or beginning of June, and usually invite U-20 NTs every two years. Therefore, U-20 team may play at the end of May or at the beginning of June outside FIFA's dates. Firstly, this fact speaks of limitations imposed by the FIFA International Match Calendar for national youth and U-21 NTs and, secondly, of the need to implement FFU IMC. **In total: 5 events/training camps and 5–10 international matches.**

U-21 team. It might seem that U-21 fixtures must coincide with the Match Calendar for "A" team and with FIFA dates (matches played in pairs in March, June, September, October and November). But in contrast to "A" team, made only of players from the first teams of their domestic clubs and players playing abroad, the U-21 NT is initially made of players from U-21 teams of their domestic clubs (which later make their way to the first-choice squad). Obviously, the refusal to play UPL (Ukrainian Premier League) U-21 Championship since 2021/22 season will make the life of U-21 NT neither easier nor better. Therefore, clubs are more flexible when it concerns their young or second-choice players, allowing the FFU to call players up to the training camp in January. The January's training camp plays a very important role for U-21 NT. The change of the Commonwealth Cup format to U-21 Tournament by the Russian Football Union back in 2012 allowed U-21 side to play 5 international matches on the level of national teams. Those additional matches were very important at the stage of team preparations for the start of the qualifying round when new U-21 team was being made for new cycle.

²²⁶ The new format of the tournament begins in 2022/23 sports season. New Nations League format for U19 EURO: How it works. Friday 5 February, 2021 UEFA.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1bspen5i>

So, when playing in Russia became impossible, the FFU relocated U-21 team preps to Turkey, where the International tournament took place in 2015 and 2016. And when the Russian FA was no longer staging the Commonwealth Cup to its original format as it used to be, the International tournament in Turkey was likely to become even more popular among NAs who used to play in St. Petersburg over the last four years. Unfortunately, there has been no training camp in January for U-21s since 2017.

At the same time, U-21 coaching staff was forced to foster a flexible policy towards clubs by negotiating a release of players to a national team in January and being solely dependent on the position of clubs. Despite that fact that U-21 activities in January are scheduled in the FFU IMC, clubs, in principle, have the right to refuse to release a player if they need him in this period of time. As said before, FFU does not call U-18/19 players to national team activities in January and February because these players are with professional football clubs (they have contracts), and NAs should take into account the interests of those clubs who prepare candidates to the national teams. That is how FFU's diplomacy and flexibility look like; without these features a full-fledged FFU National Team Institute and its division into national youth teams, in particular, can not be fully operational. This is the case when the FFU and the clubs have to be mutually respectful and put Respect, one of the UEFA fundamental principles, into practice.

U-21 team also plays in the year when the final rounds of the UEFA EURO and FIFA World Cup take place — in the second half of May and at the beginning of June. As a rule, during that period Lobanovskii Memorial and qualifying matches of the UEFA U-21 EURO are held. Apparently, FFU will withdraw from participation in the latter. There are no matches in June 2020 edition in the calendar of “Ukrainian” qualifying group of the 2019/21 UEFA European U-21 Championship; contrary to the national “A” teams, U-21 teams still have the right to shape the calendar of the qualifying round by themselves, so leaving only annual four-U-20 or U-21 Lobanovskiy Memorial on the team's agenda. **In total: 5 events/training camps** and a minimum of **6–7 international matches** (excluding official matches); number of matches depends on the time when they are played. At the start of team preps for the qualifying round, it can be **12** matches provided there is a training camp in January (in my opinion, it's sufficient to get the team ready for qualification²²⁷); but there will be a minimum number of matches during the qualifying round (subject to the calendar of matches in the qualifying group) taking 1,5–2 years (including a year of the final round).

To sum up on U-21 calendar, it should be mentioned that back in 2009 short-term training camps were introduced — so-called preparatory training camps

²²⁷ In summer 2002 I asked Anatolii Kroschenko (at the helm of Ukraine U-21 back then) about the number of matches needed to prepare a national team for the start of the qualifying cycle. He answered “Ten”. Anatolii Kroschenko was coaching U-18 too and under his management the team ended as a runner-up at the 1999/2000 UEFA European Championship. He also led U-20 into the 2001 FIFA World Youth Championship in Argentina for the first time in the history of Ukrainian football.

scheduled right before U-21 official matches (from Monday to Wednesday included) in the week preceding FIFA week of football. As a rule, during this period there are no matches in the domestic championship or domestic Cup of Ukraine, but UEFA club tournaments can be scheduled. Subject to an agreement with the clubs involved, for those training camps players, who did not participate in the UEFA club competitions, were called up. Activities as such allowed coaches and players to extend team preparations for qualifying matches and for a match with a specific opponent and thus, were devoted exclusively to practicing standard playing combinations and specific tactical formation for the upcoming opponent both on the field and at tactical classes. Such training prep scheme was put into practice for two qualifying cycles (2009/11 & 2011/13) but it has never been used again after U-21 head coach Pavlo Yakovenko resigned from the FFU. In 2016 one preparatory training camp was scheduled for August right before qualifying matches against France (02.09.2016) and Scotland (06.09.2016). And Ukraine U-21 won both matches! That said, the above practical approach is effective and has proved to work well over the years. The number of such preparatory training camps is equal to the number of FIFA dates reserved for the qualifying matches but, of course, it goes at U-21 head coach and NAs management discretion.

Now, coming back to Euclidean geometry as an epigraph and diverging interests clubs and national teams have, the hyperbolic geometry²²⁸ should be considered. What geometry has to do with that? But the interests of clubs, if we talk about “A” team, are in intersecting planes indeed! The transfer price of a footballer playing for an “A” team in the final tournaments of the UEFA EURO or FIFA World Cup can either grow almost exponentially just in a month or, on the contrary, drop significantly. The final rounds of the UEFA EURO or FIFA World Cup are striking illustration. National “A” teams are used by clubs as an excellent and practically complimentary advertising and marketing platform which promotes the image/brand of the club and its products — i.e. their players. FIFA and UEFA now pay to the clubs for their players’ participation in their championship/cup — for example, 641 clubs received UEFA payments to the amount of € 150 million for UEFA Euro 2016²²⁹ and US \$ 209 million were received by clubs for the participation of their players in the 2018 FIFA World Cup²³⁰. National football associations have to operate in such a controversial and often aggressive environment, where negative things eventually turn into positive and *vice versa*, where clubs are sworn enemies and better allies at the same time depending on the age category of national teams, their commercial interests, and other football trivia. Along with that, NAs spend

²²⁸ Hyperbolic geometry (also called Bolyai–Lobachevskian geometry or Lobachevskian geometry) is a non-Euclidean geometry. The parallel postulate of the Euclidean geometry is replaced with the following: *for any given line R and point P not on R, in the plane containing both line R and point P there are at least two distinct lines through P that do not intersect R.*

²²⁹ 641 clubs receive UEFA EURO 2016 benefits. Thursday 2 February 2017. UEFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/18r9jv2n>

²³⁰ How do clubs benefit from the World Cup? 30 Nov 2017. FIFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uazsr2r>

their own funds which now bring benefits to the clubs too. It is a paradox, isn't it? It is not. These are modern football and sports business regularities.

To proceed with the topic of club's diverging interests, we would like to present German view on this issue.

General manager of Nationalmannschaft Oliver Bierhoff put it this way in his interview to *The Telegraph*, commenting the stand-off the FA vs. Arsenal and Liverpool regarding Jack Wilshere and Andy Carroll being selected for U-21 duty for England for the final round of the 2009/11 UEFA European U-21 Championship in Denmark: *"It is "crucial" for clubs to work with national teams"*, and added: *"I think the development of Bastian Schweinsteiger, Philipp Lahm and Thomas Müller would not have been the same at Bayern Munich if they hadn't played in the national side. Each helps each other. We try to show there is a relationship between the Under-21 team and the senior team which is very important. "If you let players feel, by communicating, that it is very important for their development and their personality that they have a good under-21 tournament, then they do well"*²³¹.

German expert is of the following opinion: *"A national team is a national icon, the property of people, and we [the national teams] don't pay our players anywhere near what they get for their clubs, so it is more a matter of pride at being selected among the 20–23 best players in the country. Put glory before money: German footballers are told that, while they can earn big money and fame by starring in club football, they must achieve success at a World Cup to become legends and earn their place in the history of the game."*

Finally, there is one more thing to be said about the FFU IMC and national team events/activities in relation to the FIFA International Match Calendar and the FFU's match calendar. Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio (**Annex 7**) once a month (except for two summer months) gathers their national U-17, U-19 & 21 teams — those who play their official matches in the current season — either for domestic training camps or to play international matches regardless of the FIFA International Match Calendar or FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (this practice was in place early 2010s). Therefore, FFU's practice and the FFU IMC fall in line with the approach implemented by leading football countries in Europe. However, a calendar is not something fixed but a living growing organism in need of constant development and improvement as it plays a very important role for the National Team Institute. Each national football association acquires more of its own experience and develops its own principles to make a calendar and set up its structure.

²³¹ Germany general manager Oliver Bierhoff warns England they must develop team spirit to be successful. *The Telegraph* by Ogden M. 31 March 2011. *Telegraph.co.uk* URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8jjlaj3>

INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS FOR NATIONAL YOUTH TEAMS AND WHY DO NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ORGANISE THEM?

«To be, or not to be, that is the question...»

— Hamlet's soliloquy. Shakespeare

This seems to be quite an ordinary matter and a trivial topic in the context of the National Team Institute. However, as per UEFA and FIFA competition structure, national teams are divided into groups of four, five or six teams, depending on the competition stage. As a result, teams need appropriate game experience at the tournaments, especially when competition structure of national championships is fundamentally different from international one, and participating teams are divided into groups only for final rounds of the domestic youth tournaments. UEFA club competitions are built on group principle (group stage). However, like qualifying rounds for “A” and U-21 NTs and unlike qualifying rounds of the UEFA U-17/19 Championships and final rounds of the UEFA U-17/19, UEFA EURO and FIFA World Cup they are not staged during one week. Thus, specific character of UEFA U-17/19 Championships requires National Youth Team Institute (NYTI) to think of some specific game experience. After all, all those taking part in UEFA mini-tournament should always remember this “rule” — **no way you lose your first match at the tournament** if you set a goal to win this competition. Only winner qualifies for the next stage of the championship!

Naturally, international friendly or so-called unofficial tournaments (for example, in accordance with the FIFA Statutes “*official competition*” means “*a competition for representative teams organised by FIFA or any confederation*”²³²) are meant to prepare national youth teams for the UEFA and FIFA official tournaments. The list of the most well-known tournaments on the territory of the UEFA (**Annex 6**) is not so impressive making it 22 tournaments. 15 of them are organised by UEFA member associations. To name a few, an annual “Nordic Under-17 Championship” is alternately organised by one of the six NAs: **Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden**; two most well-known — **Mondial Football Montaigu & Tournoi de Toulon** — are organised by the entities, which are not associated with a NA, in this particular case, with the Fédération Française de Football. This does not prevent them from being probably the most popular unofficial football tournaments in the world. Apparently, in accordance with the FIFA Regulations Governing International Matches, every NA in some way contributes to organising this event, but it is not always a NA carrying the

²³² Point 17 of the chapter Definitions FIFA Statutes, Regulations governing the application of the statutes, Standing orders of the congress June 2019 edition. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/snqun2z>

financial burden that often plays a decisive role in answering whether a tournament under the auspices of NA is “to be or not to be”.

NA of **Turkey, Belarus, Russia, Norway, Slovakia, Latvia, Ukraine, Hungary, Czech Republic, Serbia, Poland and Israel**, excluding the “north” six NAs (each of them stages the above-mentioned Nordic Championship once every six years) organise international tournaments independently, the history of which sometimes counts to more than thirty editions (for example, Polish **Syrenka Cup**). The above-mentioned tournaments in France date back to mid-70s of the last century, and **La Copa del Atlántico** takes its roots in the early 70s. However, competition format in the Canary Islands was adapted to realities in 2009. Of course, it often happens that NAs find both governmental and regional sources of funding, as well as commercial partners and sponsors, but the main burden inevitably falls on the shoulders of national football associations.

All this, on the one hand, shows that only 21% of the UEFA member associations organise their own international youth tournaments. On the other hand, the fact that in 2013 so-called **UEFA Development Tournaments** were implemented for national U-16/17 youth teams in the format of four participants almost with full funding from UEFA, speaks for itself. Without exception, all NAs need game experience at the tournaments, but not every NA is able to independently host such competitions or to join them due to a simple lack of slots in the current tournaments and their organisers’ preferences. In addition, not every NA gets an invitation to Montaigu or Toulon. At the same time, **the UEFA Development Tournaments** played a nasty trick on a number of international competitions conducted by NAs for many years. They no longer exist. Among them is “**Four Nations**” **Tournament in Belgium** for four national U-16 youth teams traditionally held at the beginning of March and **U-17 Tournament in Palanga (Lithuania)** held in August. On the one hand, UEFA has taken the financial burden off the NAs, but on the other hand, has slightly limited the NA opportunities to gain game experience at these tournaments. Well, there are two sides of the same coin.

To be fair, tournaments cease to exist not only because of UEFA. Probably, the fact is that clubs are very reluctant to release their players to NA national teams outside the FIFA’s dates. For example, U-20 club tournament within the framework of the very famous **Milk Cup** held in July in Northern Ireland has already ceased to exist, because there is no FIFA date in July.

At the same time, so-called Big-5 is absent on the list of international tournament organisers as independent “players”. The DFB, as well as the FA England (**International Trophy Cup**) do conduct U-20/23 tournaments, which firstly, are very time consuming (one and a half season) and secondly, are subsidised by participants themselves because tournament matches are played on the territory of the host association and participating teams cover their own expenses. **Only two national associations, i.e. Football Federation of Ukraine and the Norwegian FA**, conduct two of their own international tournaments per calendar year, where Norway may host two editions only once every six years (when the country

welcomes the “**Nordic Under-17 Championship**”), as their **La Manga International Youth Tournament** is staged for U-19 and U-17 age categories in turn. France is the only country hosting three international tournaments for national youth teams of different age categories at one time, however, not all of them are organised by the French FF. Today, Norway is the only country organising its own tournaments on the territory of other NA — in Spain, where Norway has a training centre in La Manga.

In what way organisation of such events is beneficial for NA? **Firstly**, it is all about prestige and a good way to promote national football and a national association itself. Although, one may argue that so-called target group of such tournaments is quite specific and, in contrast to club or “A” level tournament, quite small making its TV prospects frankly negligible. After all, we are talking about youth football and its goals and objectives are somewhat different and far from business and commercial success with visible results to follow some years later. It is a long-term project and a long-term investment, which has evidently a strategic, not a tactical or even not a medium-term character. **Secondly**, international tournament hosts “reserve” participation for their national teams in similar events on the territory of those NAs whose teams are invited to take part in these events too. This literally means **geographical expansion and higher quality of international game experience** on a national youth team level. **Thirdly**, NA’s home tournament gives **perfect working experience** for so-called **match managers** and the entire NA’s administration responsible for national team event management. **Fourth**, it is an **international officiating experience for young national referees**. One can’t but agree how important it is for NA.

To sum up, an international tournament under the auspices of a national football association is a kind of **versatile training ground or education platform** serving not only for national youth teams development (coaches and players), but also for expert training in the area of event management, stadium safety and security, as well as for football referees of the national association.

At the same time let’s face it — hosting a tournament is always expensive. Here, the NA is forced to either sacrifice or save funds. Far from being rich and without big international victories the FA of Norway has its training centre overseas and holds two tournaments at a time. Despite its series of setbacks at international level with the last and big success after the “finest” 50s and 60s of the 20th century dating back to UEFA EURO 2016, **the FA of Hungary** conducts its own **Annual U-17 Youth Tournament of Eight — Telki Cup**. No doubt, hosting international youth tournaments depends to a greater extent on the goals and tasks NA sets and its policy in the area of the National Team Institute. This is either a long-term and strategic project or a solution to current problems. In its turn, one cannot but agree that an international tournament is an effective tool for training and development of both, a national youth team and the National Team Institute as a whole. Since home tournament on the territory of a national association “brings benefits” for all national teams of the NA, it is a versatile player holding the ball not just on the half of the pitch where participating national teams are.

THE NEW FORMAT OF THE UEFA EUROPEAN U-19 CHAMPIONSHIP

“And an eternal fight, we only dream of rest”

— Alexander Blok²³³

On October 28, 2019 on their official website UEFA published information about modifying the format of the UEFA European U-19 Championship from 2020/21 season²³⁴. On December 3, 2019 the draw for the first round of the 2020/22 UEFA European U-19 Championship took place where players born in 2003 would take part in.

In this regard it is interesting to analyse the impact the new tournament format would have on the National Team Institute. National association may start in U-19 Championship with its U-18 team in autumn 2020 and either finish with the selfsame U-18 team or qualify for the next competition stages and finish its performance in the Championship with U-19 team. Is this a paradox? Far from it. This is because formally the age category of national teams changes in July only. For example, when the age category has been attributed to the date of birth on August 1, and not January 1 as today, a new representative team will appear in August. Today sports season in the NA continues until 30th of June in the national associations where the domestic championship is played to autumn-to-spring format. However, this will be discussed below. Now we will go step by step and see what changes the new U-19 Championship format will bring.

Increased number of matches

Before, final round participants played 6 matches in the qualification phase. Now, they will play 12. Although in theory, a team from League C, which will play in the group with three other teams (League C encompasses 4 groups of four teams and one group of three teams), will be able to qualify for the final after 10 matches (in the group of three teams every team plays two matches). In any case, it is $6 < 10$.

²³³ The words from a poem by Alexander Blok “On Kulikovo Field”, published on June 7, 1908. The same line “And an eternal fight, we only dream of rest” <https://context.reverso.net/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4em3zb2s> we can find in Joseph Brodsky, only in a slightly different wording as “And the eternal battle rest only in our dreams,” <https://brodskiy.su/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/vxl9xcag> Of course, those lines were written much later. Original poem is <http://iosif-brodskiy.ru/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v4hyqx7>

²³⁴ New Nations League format for U-19 EURO: how it works. 28 October 2019. UEFA.com

The extended duration of the tournament

Now the UEFA European Championship's duration will be equal to two seasons and will have numerical value similar to U-21 tournament — 2020/22 (the dates of the first U-19 Championship to the new format), and not habitual 2021/22. The old or traditional competition structure — we called it traditional since U-17 championship has this format too — provided for qualification and final round played during one sports season (for example, 2019/20). The final round though still takes place in July as per the new format, but the sports season for associations' representative teams too ends on the 30th of June²³⁵, as said before.

The participating teams will be split into leagues similar to the UEFA Nations League

To draw an analogy with the UEFA Nations League, U-19 Championship will be split into three leagues (A, B & C) based on the U-19 ranking coefficient following their performance in the competitions 2015/16 — 2018/19. The number of the participating teams is 55: League A — 20, League B — 16 and League C — 19. The tournament has four stages/rounds now and had two before — qualification and elite round. Each stage is held in the format of a mini-tournament. The first round, as well as the third one, is played in autumn, the second one can be played before the summer of the following year, and the fourth one is played during the FIFA window in March in the last/second year of the qualification. At the same time, the third round is attached to the FIFA windows in September, October and November; and time frame of the first stage is stretched across autumn of the first year of the qualifying cycle. The results of the first draw on December 3, 2019 showed participants' commitment to the FIFA dates/windows, except for two groups in League C having chosen to play their matches late September. This example is very revealing. If UEFA U-17 Championship mini-tournaments, as a rule, are conducted strictly in the dates scheduled in the FIFA Men's International Match Calendar, then U-19 teams will certainly play in the FIFA windows, even though there are no clear bindings to them in the first and the second rounds of the U-19 competition.

Above was statement of facts. Now let's move on to detailed analysis.

Comparative arithmetic

As per previous tournament format — let's say, for 2019/20 Championship — 52 teams started their qualification (with two best-ranked teams automatically

²³⁵ 2019/20 UEFA Champions League 2018–21 Regulations or the 2020/21 Regulations [Documents. uefa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/9idgd6g6>] contain such term as the last official match of the season/national championship in the definition “club-trained player” “*i.e. a period starting with the first official match of the relevant national championship and ending with the last official match of that relevant national championship*” (Article 44.04). The Article also contains a reference to the 30th of June but already in the context of commercial and media rights.

qualifying for the elite round). Now, 36 teams start in the 3rd round of the 2020/22 Championship corresponding to the first qualification in the previous format and now taking place in autumn 2021 in the second season of the championship. This number is 1,44 times less and equals to 69% of participants in the previous competition format. 20 instead of 28 participating teams will compete in the 4th round that is 1,17 times less compared with the previous format and equals to 86% of participants in the traditional elite round of the UEFA U-19 Championship.

The high level of team competitiveness in U-19 Championship will get even higher. With every fourth team out of 28 participants of the closing stage of the tournament qualified for the final one (7 group winners of the elite round), in future there will be 1,4 or about 40% increase in the competitiveness ($28 \div 7 = 4$ and $20 \div 7 = 2,86$).

18 participating teams will have left the 2020/22 Tournament by June 2021 at the latest ($54 - 36 = 18$, 54 participants will compete in the 2020/21 Championship with Slovakia being the 55th as a host association team). 16 teams will have eliminated by November 2021 at the latest. Taking into account the fact that the FIFA window in June is not available in a year of the final tournament of the UEFA EURO and FIFA World Cup, it is likely for many 2021/23 European championship participating teams to prefer to play the second round in the FIFA date in March²³⁶. It means that many participating teams will eliminate already in March 2022 not to wait for dates at the end of May or beginning of June when practically all European national “A” teams play on the brink of the biggest tournaments and the majority of national/domestic championships are over in order to let “A” teams get ready for the UEFA EURO or FIFA World Cup. However, the FIFA window is not available officially, so formal limitations imposed by the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players shall enter into force.

Besides, often, the final tournaments of U-18 and U-19 domestic championships are held in late May or early June that naturally imposes restrictions on participation of national youth teams of the respective age categories in the tournaments.

As a result, for instance, players born in 2003 who will be selected for U-21 teams to take part in the 2023/25 UEFA European U-21 Championship with qualification starting in September 2023 (officially in March 2023), will play no official matches for much longer time in comparison with the previous U-19 Championship format.

U-21 and U-20 national teams

Now let's learn more about the influence the modified tournament format will have on the next editions of the U-21 Championship. Two data tables are presented below.

²³⁶ In principle, it is possible to use both definitions — “window” and “date”. Two FIFA documents regulating the release of players to association teams (national teams) use both to designate the same period of time. In the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players “*window*” or “*international window*” is used while The International Match Calendar says “*date*” or “*fixed date*”.

The first table shows a comparative analysis of potential dates when U-19 Championship participating teams may eliminate under previous and new format in relation to U-21 tournament and players' age at the U-21 team. Let's not forget that U-21 team is made of players of two age groups — even and odd — which, of course, before were a part of U-19 teams of two age groups too. Herewith, the tournament regulations specifies only one even age group of players born on or after January 1 of the relevant even year who are eligible to take part in the competition too and, as a rule, these players were born on the succeeding year (an odd year).

U-21		U-19					
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2017/19	1996/97	2014/15	1996	11.2014	03.2015	07.2015	
2017/19	1996/97	2015/16	1997	11.2015	03.2016	07.2016	
2019/21	1998/99	2016/17	1998	11.2016	03.2017	07.2017	
2019/21	1998/99	2017/18	1999	11.2017	03.2018	07.2018	
2021/23	2000/01	2018/19	2000	11.2018	03.2019	07.2019	
2021/23	2000/01	2019/20	2001	11.2019	03.2020	07.2020	
2023/25	2002/03	2020/21	2002	11.2020	03.2021	07.2021	
2023/25	2002/03	2020/22	2003	06.2021	11.2021	03.2022	07.2022
2025/27	2004/05	2021/23	2004	03.2022	11.2022	03.2023	07.2023
2025/27	2004/05	2022/24	2005	06.2023	11.2023	03.2024	07.2024

1 — the cycle of the UEFA European U-21 Championship;

2 — two age groups taking part in the given UEFA European U-21 Championship;

3 — the cycle of the UEFA European U-19 Championship;

4 — the age groups taking part in the relevant UEFA European U-19 Championship;

5 — the end date of the participation in the U-19 Championship following the results of the qualification or round No. 2;

6 — the end date of the participation in the U-19 Championship following the results of the elite round or round No. 3;

7 — the end date of the participation in the U-19 Championship following the results of the final round to the old format or round No. 4;

8 — the end date of the participation in the U-19 Championship following the results of the final round to the new format.

The second table presents how long a potential break between the last official U-19 match and the first official U-21 match could be. In other words, the table presents “downtime” of players of the appropriate age groups selected to U-21 teams.

U-21			U-19				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
2017/19	1996/97	03.2017	1996	28–34	24–30	20–26	
2017/19	1996/97	09.2017	1997	16–22	12–18	8–14	
2019/21	1998/99	03.2019	1998	28–34	24–30	20–26	
2019/21	1998/99	09.2019	1999	16–22	12–18	8–14	
2021/23	2000/01	03.2021	2000	28–34	24–30	20–26	
2021/23	2000/01	09.2021	2001	16–22	12–18	8–14	
2023/25	2002/03	03.2023	2002	28–34	24–30	20–26	

2023/25	2002/03	09.2023	2003	21–27	16–22	12–18	8–14
2025/27	2004/05	03.2025	2004	36–42	28–34	24–30	20–26
2025/27	2004/05	09.2025	2005	21–27	16–22	12–18	8–14

1 — the cycle of the UEFA European U-21 Championship;

2 — two age groups taking part in the given UEFA European U-21 Championship;

3 — possible start dates of the qualification of the given UEFA European U-21 Championship;

4 — the date of birth in even and odd age groups of participants of the given UEFA European U-21 Championship;

5 — potential duration (months) of a period between the players' last U-19 match and the first U-21 match in the U-21 Championship provided that the relevant age category eliminated from the U-19 tournament following the results of the qualification or round No. 2;

6 — potential duration of a period after the players' last match in U-19 Championship and the first match in U-21 Championship provided that relevant age category eliminated from the U-19 Tournament following the results of the elite round or round No. 3;

7 — potential duration of a period after the players' last match in U-19 Championship and the first match in U-21 Championship, provided that relevant age category eliminated from the U-19 tournament following the results of the final tournament played to the old format or round No. 4.

8 — potential duration of a period after the players' last match in U-19 Championship and the first match in U-21 Championship provided that the relevant age category eliminated from U-19 tournament following the results of the final round played to the new format.

I find it very interesting to compare a “downtime” period in age groups born in even and odd year taking the old and new Championship format (U-21 participants of the 2017/19 tournament and the U-21s to compete in the 2025/27 tournament were considered).

Even	5	6	7	8
1996	28–34	24–30	20–26	
2004	36–42	28–34	24–30	20–26

Odd	5	6	7	8
1997	16–22	12–18	8–14	
2005	21–27	16–22	12–18	8–14

As said before, it is very likely that many teams participating in the round No. 2 in 2021 and 2023 will play in the FIFA window in March, not in June. “Downtime” for losing teams will be increased by 3 months to make it two years or 24 months.

As a result, the new format extends the downtime for the even age group from 4 to 8 months and for the odd age group — from 4 to 5 months in comparison with the traditional tournament format. But maximum period without any official matches could be increased to 9 months for those who prefer to play the second qualification in March, not in June.

Our calculations are based on assumption that every mini-tournament is held in FIFA windows/dates set out by the FIFA Men's International Match Calendar. And let's not forget that formally qualification for the UEFA European U-21 Championship begins in March but, as a rule, the vast majority of teams start right in September.

The calculations speak loud of the necessity to keep U-20 team as a platform for future U-21 team because of the duration of “downtime” for even age group

in particular, being a basic one for the qualifying U-21 cycle, although it is just a formality.

Potential long break between the games on the level of representative teams of national football associations causes U-21 head coach a strong headache. Meanwhile, U-17 head coach in 2019/20 season is likely to start the U-19 Championship under new format in September 2020, so he will face certain difficulties caused by the modified competition format as well.

Impact on the Head Coach

Under previous format, a coach of the team taking part in the final tournament of the U-17 Championship, had one year and three, four or even five months to get his team ready for U-19 Championship depending on the date of qualification in September, October, or November and, consequently, to make a new team even though its key players, certainly, would be those who had played for U-17s. Now, a coach of the finalist team has one year less to prepare for a new competition. Having slightly more than a year at his disposal, even top teams could search for new names and reinforce team performance with players of junior age category etc.

Under the new format, the tournament starts in autumn of the year of the competition final for junior youth teams (U-17 Championship). As a result, at those national football associations where coaches work with junior youth players (U-15/16/17) and senior youth players (U-18/19/20) separately, a dilemma comes to the foreground — either to appoint a new coach for a limited period (for example if U-17 team eliminates before the elite round, there will be from six to eight months left for team preps for the first round of the U-19 tournament depending on the dates of the UEFA mini-tournaments that again, makes it one year less in comparison with the traditional U-19 competition format) or to stop the current practice by allowing U-17 coach to keep on working with senior age category. Only time can tell whether national football associations will ever change their approach/policy to adjust to new conditions. But one can tell for sure, that national team coaches will feel more pressure by having less time to get their teams ready for a new tournament. Let's add to this a higher number of official matches and stronger competition level at the earlier stages of the Championship, especially in League A. All that will make the life of NYT coach even more difficult. The time is just right to recall Carlo Ancelotti's old and good saying: "*Time is an old enemy for any manager.*" Of all challenges, U-19 head coach still has one more to face.

There could be no reserve

Time is an old and trivial factor. But the new tournament format deprives head coaches of their key option to strengthen team performance by calling junior players or, in other words, players who are one year younger. It turns out that over the last 11 sports seasons the number of European U-19 Championship winners

without players of junior age category on their Player List for the final round is just one. The remaining 10 winners involved juniors a lot with three champions even calling players who were two years younger than the basic age category at that time. Given statistics clearly shows that new format will not bring any reinforcement to the teams as it was the case for the traditional tournament. This is because while the qualification for U-19 Championship is well underway, players, who are one year younger, take part in the U-17 competition primarily for only later on to enter the next U-19 Championship. Thus, either an agreement is reached between “the old” and the “new” team on involving best players or there will be no options for any team reinforcement. In my opinion, we are facing an interesting dilemma. In the meantime, it turns out that even Spain, one of the leaders of youth football in Europe, has been involving players of junior age category in their U-19 winning teams.

1	2	3	4	5
2008/09	Ukraine	01.01.1990	4 (1991)	—
2009/10	France	01.01.1991	1 (1992)	—
2010/11	Spain	01.01.1992	5 (1993)	1 (1994)
2011/12	Spain ²³⁷	01.01.1993	7 (1994)	2 (1995)
2012/13	Serbia	01.01.1994	5 (1995)	—
2013/14	Germany	01.01.1995	2 (1996)	—
2014/15	Spain	01.01.1996	7 (1997)	—
2015/16	France	01.01.1997	2 (1998)	—
2016/17	England	01.01.1998	6 (1999)	1 (2000)
2017/18	Portugal	01.01.1999	—	—
2018/19	Spain	01.01.2000	7 (2001)	—

1 — season;

2 — the winner;

3 — basic date of birth or basic age category — “Players born on or after 01.01.1990” is the format to specify age category as per UEFA Competition Regulations;

4 — the number of players on the Player List of the winning team whose age is –1 of basic age category (DOB in brackets).

5 — the number of players on the Player list of the winning team whose age is –2 of the basic age category (DOB in brackets);

Under the new Championship format, the teams may have no effective reserve (pool of players), and probably many of them will have to play solely with the players of their basic age category. Apparently, the strongest teams can allow themselves to play without the best footballers during the first two stages, because the competition structure includes two rounds in every year of the Championship cycle. The tournament strategy can be based on so-called “*do or die or hell or high water*” principle or pursuing the main goal that is not to finish last in the group. But on the other hand, for national football associations with limited choice of

²³⁷ 20 players on the Player List because two injured players were substituted (European Under-19 Championship Final Round 2012 — Estonia. Technical Report. UEFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/sn5sscqj>).

skilled candidates such restrictions may have even more serious consequences. Only time will tell how important the factor of “juniors” in the senior team will be. To succeed after all.

It should be reminded that the UEFA European U-19 Championship for players born in the odd year is the qualifying tournament for the FIFA U-20 World Cup. As a rule, the final tournament of the FIFA World Cup is in June succeeding the year of the U-19 tournament. Bearing in mind that many teams involve their junior players, one can safely predict that teams taking part in the future editions of the major world youth tournament may suffer losses too, and the fact that U-19 national association's team potentially play in the final U-19 tournament in the year of the FIFA World Cup U-20 might not be the only reason for it.

For example, Ukraine national team, as 2019 U-20 World Cup winners, had two players in its squad — one year younger and two years younger than the basic age group for the tournament. In this case, it is neither a format nor structure of the U-19 competition that takes effect — since the final round of the tournament is in July — but the FIFA Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players does. The Article 6, Annex 1 of the Regulations, as amended as of October 2019, reads as follows: *“It is not compulsory to release the same player for more than one “A” representative team final competition per year. Exceptions to this rule can be established by the FIFA Council for the FIFA Confederations Cup only.”* It should be noted, that, in principle, all representative teams under national “A” team in the hierarchy of FIFA member associations fall within the scope of application of the Regulations, so clubs may simply refuse to release players for two final tournaments at once should national youth teams qualify. This is another interesting collision which, in principle, was in place before, because the same limitations had been imposed by the previous editions of the FIFA Regulations²³⁸.

²³⁸ This certainly is not always the case. There are exceptions. Pedro González López, known as Pedri (DOB: 25 November 2002), Barcelona player, in June-July 2021 played 629 minutes or all six matches of the UEFA EURO 2020 in the Spain “A” squad (Uefa.com/uefaeuro-2020.URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3y3x77p2>). The semi-final match vs. Italy was played on 6 July 2021. In the meantime he was taking part in the first match for Spain “A” at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic football tournament on 22 July 2021 (Fifa.com/tournaments. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wbyaz65t>). Football is not only getting younger but Barcelona still demonstrates an enviable loyalty to the Olympic team of Spain.

It would be that way if there weren't one more nuance. Spain “A” has more players like Pedri. Five more players at the UEFA EURO 2020 joined the Olympic team, namely:

Player	DOB	Club	Minutes & matches played at UEFA EURO 2020
Unai Simón	11.06.1997	Athletic Bilbao	630' (6)
Pau Torres	16.01.1997	Villarreal CF	372' (6)
Mikel Oyarzabal	21.04.1997	Real Sociedad	164'(6)
Eric García	09.01.2001	Barcelona	251'(3)
Dani Olmo	07.05.1998	RB Leipzig	379'(5)

All six (Pedri plus five) met the age limit for their eligibility at the football tournament in Tokyo, i.e. players born on and after 01.01.1997. Furthermore, two more young players from EURO 2020 did not go to the Olympic Games with one more goalkeeper Robert Sánchez (DOB: 18.11.1997) from Brighton & Hove Albion and Ferran Torres (DOB: 29.02.2000) from Manchester City among them.

New challenges and new opportunities and a little bit of irony too

The new format will entail the modification of preparation programs for U-18/19 teams. On the one hand, teams will have shorter period of time for their preps. But on the other hand, they say: with every crisis comes an opportunity. Now the Championship takes two years and, for the majority of the participating teams of League A and B, key matches will be played in the round No. 3 and No. 4, i.e. at the second year of the Championship cycle. Therefore, the first one can be safely spent on preparations through official UEFA mini-tournaments and international friendly matches. The new format will apparently invite U-18 teams to play international friendlies more often than before. Furthermore, I think that international friendly tournaments will play even more important role and, those national associations which are staging U-18 tournaments, today will see a growing demand for participation in their football events (for example, Václav Ježek tournament, Slovakia Cup, FA Israel Winter Tournament or Valentin Granatkin Memorial). Those NAs who, for one reason or the other, abandoned their tournaments or changed the format to fit another age categories (FA Serbia did so with Stevan “Čele” Vilotić or FA Latvia with Federation Cup) may, probably, review their decisions.

Thus, future “A” team players will receive considerably more international game experience on the level of national teams in the U-18/19 age category. As a bonus, League A and B participants will receive more skilled opponents as they say: *competitive environment breeds better quality*. As usual, there are two sides of the same coin. They say difficulties create new opportunities, and once they do so, the latter will be much more promising ones. After all, every cloud has a silver lining. And, referring to our epigraph, Block puts it so well: *“And an eternal fight, we only dream of rest.”*

To sum up, let me add a quotation from the official UEFA website: *“The decision to test out the new structure was decided by the UEFA Executive Committee on 29 May 2019 and, if successful, the system could be applied to the U17 EURO from 2023.”* Thus, UEFA has a plan to launch the same format for its junior tournament for NA representative teams— UEFA European U-17 Championship. That is why, there is no better time than now for being a little bit ironic and quote a slightly modified aphorism by Friedrich Nietzsche: *“What does not kill me make me stronger.”*²³⁹

At the same time, neither France nor Germany had EURO participants in their Olympic squads. France had four players of the specified age category on their Player List. Germany had three. Four Spanish and one German club released their players to the second tournament of the associations' teams in a row that was not listed in the FIFA Men's International Match Calendar. Perhaps, time alone will tell if we are facing a new trend or these are merits alone of the Royal Spanish Football Federation and/or just a goodwill gesture from clubs.

²³⁹ The aphorism by Friedrich Nietzsche from the Chapter “Maxims and Arrows” in his book “Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer” written in 1888 and published in 1889, the original reads as follows: «Was mich nicht umbringt macht mich stärker» De.wikiquote.org Friedrich Nietzsche URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1s01wd99>.

[Die Götzen-Dämmerung — Twilight of the Idols Friedrich Nietzsche [1895]

And... last but not the least

This chapter was written early December 2019. As a response to COVID-19 pandemic, on 17.06.2020²⁴⁰ the UEFA Executive Committee decided that the new format of the Championship would start in 2021. The direct quote says: *“...new format with teams split into three different leagues with promotion and relegation and a final tournament involving eight teams in the summer of 2022 has been postponed to the 2021/23 edition of the competition.”*

In the meantime UEFA has announced the new date of the start of a new tournament format in February 2021²⁴¹. Here goes another quote:

“What would have been the 2023/24 season will instead become the 2022–24 competition, ending, as in the previous format, with an eight-team final tournament. Players will begin in the competition while still in the U18 category so will be in the U19 category by the time of the final tournament (for 2022–24, players born after 1 January 2005).”

The decision to test out the new structure was taken by the UEFA Executive Committee on 29 May 2019 and if successful the system could be applied to the U17 EURO.

The original plan to introduce the new format for the edition finishing in the summer of 2022 was postponed. Consequently, there will be 2021/22 and 2022/23 UEFA European Under-19 Championships according to the current system.”

Text prepared from the original German and the translations by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. “Out of life’s school of war: What does not destroy me, makes me stronger.” <http://www.handprint.com/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/8qoyql>

²⁴⁰ UEFA competitions to resume in August Wednesday 17 June 2020 UEFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9u5nxch>

²⁴¹ The new format of the tournament begins in 2022/23 sports season. New Nations League format for U19 EURO: how it works // UEFA.com, Friday 5 February 2021. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1b5pen5i>

ON SINGLE FORMATION FOR NATIONAL TEAMS

“I know that traditionally a lot of national associations try to have the age-limit teams mirroring the style of the senior team. But our point of view is that it should be the other way round. The senior team’s play is based on what we do in the youth teams”.

— Fernando Hierro²⁴²

Ukrainian national “A” team head coach Andriy Shevchenko in one of his interviews put it this way: *“The main issue is that there have never been any national team structures. A youngster joins a team structured in a particular way. With every new coach, the structure changes too. It would be easier to change this vertical so once boys join a team — they will know how a national team should play.”*²⁴³

Before any unified approach, style and structure or rather philosophy of a national team game are found, I think it’s worth recalling one story which to a certain extent reflects the essence of the problem, especially in the post-Soviet football, though it happened in Russia. The story unfolds the conflict between the technical director of the Russian Football Union Bert van Lingen and the national youth team head coach Dmitri Alenichev (players born on and after 01.01.1993) in January 2011. To cut the story short — the coach made a public rejection to play to 4–3–3 scheme always and everywhere as was ordered by the superior officer.

Alenichev’s stance was as follows: *“Certainly, I respect Mr Bert van Lingen and, undoubtedly, reckon with his opinion, — so the coach of the national team of Russia (1993), a four-time champion of Russia, the holder of the UEFA Cup and the UEFA Champions League winner started a conversation — however, once it is me responsible for the performance of the team entrusted to me, it is me who must decide which scheme the team should play to. To choose the tactical formation, one should rely on the availability of players. Tell me, how can I play with three forwards when I simply do not have such number of forwards? It is the coach, who works with the team, who knows the abilities of his players and decides which tactical formation to use them in to generate the strongest team performance.”*²⁴⁴

²⁴² From Boys to Men, Spain Benefit from Brotherhood of Believers. The Guardian by Paul Hayward, Spain Sportblog. November 11, 2011. Theguardian.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb6tcucv>

²⁴³ Андрей Шевченко: «Главная задача — выйти на ЧМ-2018 и создать вертикаль в сборных Украины» (видео), 22:44. 14 августа 2016 г. Unian.net. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/uscny6wg9>

²⁴⁴ Дмитрий Аленичев: «Странно, почему мои слова так заделли ван Лингена». 25 января 2011, Sports.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y7t86e>

The position of Bert van Lingen is as follows:

— *You have mentioned some criteria for youth team coaches. Could you, please, give us some more details?*

— *First, they must have a coaching license. They must have some experience with young players. Alenichev, by the way, is the only one who has no experience of such a kind. They must be capable and willing to work within a single approach. And set not a final result but a target to hit the goal — that is to contribute to player development so they can reach the new level. This is how we work in the Netherlands. In youth football we almost win no medals but develop players then*²⁴⁵.

Mikhail Gershkovich, a Chairman of the Regional Public Organisation “Association of domestic football coaches” since 2006 voiced his position too: *“In this discussion between van Lingen and Alenichev, I can say the following of its essence. Of course, the National Team Institute should be represented by a single, clearly structured system, lined up with clear principles, and that is unquestionable. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that all this, first of all, refers to global issues, i.e. development strategies, philosophy, if you like. Moreover, tactics is an absolute prerogative of a coach working with the team, and there is nothing to argue about. The tactics cannot be a dogma, and its choice depends on many components. What goals and objectives does a match or tournament set? Who is your competitor? What is the match venue? Is it turf or pitch and what condition is it in? What are weather conditions? There are thousand of factors the coach should take into account. A coach is the only one who knows true capabilities of his team, he has the solo right to decide how to use a team potential available, who plays where and what roles and responsibilities for every player position are... I am convinced that one of the main tasks of the National Team Institute is player training and education to cultivate a winning spirit. The World Cups and European Championships are won by national teams from those countries which are successful enough at youth level. There are very rare exceptions”*²⁴⁶.

Here is what Gershkovich said in relation to be above back in 2016: *“When Dick Advocaat was coaching the national team of Russia, his assistant coach was Bert van Lingen who was sharing his assistant coaching duties with chairing Sports Department of the Russian Football Union. Bert van Lingen used to promote the following philosophy: no doubt, all youth and U-21 teams — that both are controlled by the Department — must sail in one boat, including the fact that they have to play according to the same tactical scheme, being custom-made for the senior team. In general, teams should replicate each other. This theory is not new at all, and it has been tested many times, and has some weak and strong points. For example, in the area of tactics. Many Russian experts opposed van Lingen, arguing that tactics is very subtle and flexible and depends on many circumstances, making it impossible for*

²⁴⁵ Рабинер И., Симонов Д. Берг ван Линген: «Аленичеву следует держать язык за зубами». 25 января 2011, Sport-express.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb5vt9yd>

²⁴⁶ Старов А. Чужая философия. 25 января 2011, Championat.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9wccsu8>

*the tactical theory to be digitised once and for all. The level and manner of the game an opponent plays, capabilities of own players, football pitch quality, match venue and kick-off time etc. are among many other factors influencing tactical choices to name just a few randomly*²⁴⁷.

There is yet another point of view by Leonid Slutsky: “... *the other innovation from the Netherlands was that all the academies in every age category used to play 4–3–3. I’ve always considered that to be unreal stupid action. I asked coaches: “Well, in your team you have two forwards as tall as lamp posts. These guys are superb! And, what should we do? Send one boy to the subs bench? Or, move him to the wing where he will be out of his usual playing position? Explain me, why you must play 4–3–3 instead of two forwards? And, why, instead of a strong forward a talentless midfielder should play?” Imagine a situation when you have three superb central defenders. Why should you play with two [central defenders]? Until now, nobody could explain anything. It’s always seemed to me that you need to develop personalities and adapt yourself to those who you have at your disposal. The coach must select and field the best players and never adapt them to the tactical model. I have watched a huge quantity of children matches in England. During one game, the team could have changed their tactical scheme three times, and that was absolutely “painless”. They said to me: “The scheme is not important for us. We have 37 players on loan — one went to 4–3–3, the other — to 4–4–2, the third — to 3–5–2, the fourth — to 4–2–3–1, the fifth — to the “diamond formation”... We must teach children the game basics. And, most importantly, that they master them*”²⁴⁸.

To conclude, let me say a few words about Bert van Lingen himself²⁴⁹. Back in the 1980s, van Lingen was in the TOP-4 innovators and revolutionaries of “orange” football, which jokingly The A-Team was called, apparently in honour of its chief ideologue Dick Advocaat. Besides current coach of the Russia “A” and his assistant, the Group embraced eminent Leo Beenhakker and Rinus Michels. The main A-Team objective was to carry out a revolutionary reform in Dutch football youth development. And they did succeed. Why reforms were needed in the country that gave the world Johan Crujff, Johan Neeskens and total football? Bert van Lingen explained his aspiration this way: “*All our star players learned football by trial-and-error method on the streets. It is a miracle they made it that far. At that time, we had no alternative to offer our kids. There was a need to change something*”.

Meanwhile, before getting on the European and world podiums, the Spaniards had the following approach: “*to chose unified game system which is the only system that allows to develop top players to play at top European/international level. All*

²⁴⁷ Михаил Гершкович. Чему Россия должна научиться у Германии. 14 августа 2016, Championat.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/trc7bvp>

²⁴⁸ Гончаров М., Симонов Д. Леонид Слуцкий: «Не знаю ответа на два вопроса: куда в России делится таланты и куда пропал зритель?» 10 июня 2016, Sport-express.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y75g4emv>

²⁴⁹ Рабинер И., Симонов Д. Берт ван Линген: «Аленичеву следует держать язык за зубами». 25 января 2011, Sport-express.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb5vt9yd>

national teams of Spain play 1-4-2-3-1 formation (for more details please see **Annex 2**).

It leaves no doubts that there is a single approach to tactical formation in the DFB's too. And the rise of Belgian football was also based on choosing a single approach to working with young players. In particular, Belgium has chosen 4-3-3 formation for all national teams with no exceptions made²⁵⁰.

Of course, sticking to one formation for all, without exception, teams of the NA National Team Institute is a rational and mostly natural step within clearly structured management and development system for national teams. At the same time, we should not forget the fact that the above-mentioned countries have well-developed systems for training young players within their professional football clubs. After all, only professional clubs train players. With football academies or so-called football training centres ("Centre of Excellence") that belong to professional football clubs and are available in every competitor's country we may probably expect the following:

- Firstly, availability of a high number of skilled and competitive young players in all age categories (a wider range of candidates to select from);
- Secondly, their ability to operate in accordance with unified standards like the Netherlands or Belgium do, or to meet tactical requirements of the National Team Institute like those in Spain, France, Germany or England (wider range of candidates to choose from, primarily based on their abilities to learn new skills or information, including tactics).

The system of game formation, apparently, should contribute to developing player abilities and skills for footballers to advance. Besides, game formation should not be considered exclusively as player positions only; one should consider it in the context of roles & responsibilities every player at specific position has. In this regard, apparently, the most important thing is player variability, his ability to play in different positions and in different playing formations. A player should be theoretically and practically prepared for his team to be able to produce the best team performance. Here, let me refer to very important words said by Matthias Sammer, former sports director of the DFB: "*The central element of German football philosophy is the promotion of personalities in football. The purpose of the sports director of DFB is to have a team of personalities*" (For more details see **Annex 1**). Therefore, no one else but clubs (!) must train all-round players. However, one should remember that it requires a subtle and psychologically careful approach to player's individuality and personality, especially when working with young players.

Furthermore, if the majority of domestic football clubs is not involved properly in education & training of quality players in feeder teams, has no finances, no appropriate facilities and, most importantly, no qualified coaching staff, there will be a clear deficiency in competitive players in national youth teams capable to play on international level. Thus, national team coaches must use a formation

²⁵⁰ Belgium's blueprint that gave birth to a golden generation, The Guardian by Stuart James Belgium Sportblog, Fri 6 Jun 2014 Theguardian.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wwcs25x3>

which meets national team player's tactical and technical potential for a specific age category. Unfortunately, we have to admit that conditions as such leave no other choice than mere "survival" rather than setting single standards of the game within a single structure of the NA National Team Institute.

In my opinion, an effective collaboration with professional football clubs in terms of training their own pool of players and a large number of "locally trained players" (UEFA definition) for all teams, without exception, taking part in the domestic championship, is what gives us fair reasons to talk about implementing a single formation for national teams. As long as Ukrainian participants of the UEFA club tournaments either do not enter their players in so-called List B at all, or enter a maximum of one or two names — while, for example, England, Spain or Germany enter 10–15 young players — and U-19 club teams are made of players who were not trained in their native clubs but are being selected from all over the country, it will still be difficult to count on implementing unified approaches and single formation for national teams. It is good though to recall what Vyacheslav Koloskov as a long-serving president of the Russian Football Union has said in this regard: "...*this is what you should think of. How we can increase efficiency of training of our football reserve. That's all. The rest is an irrelevant idea.*"²⁵¹

And to close this Chapter, let's open it again by recalling Fernando Hierro's words, ex-sports director of Real Federación Española De Fútbol, as an epigraph: "*Our philosophy is based on developing qualities in the youth teams while remaining faithful to a certain playing style based on wanting to dominate possession and a desire to carry the game to the opposition. The idea is to make the pathway to the top as smooth as possible. I know that traditionally a lot of national associations try to have the age-limit teams mirroring the style of the senior team. But our point of view is that it should be the other way round. The senior team's play is based on what we do in the youth teams.*"

To sum up, playing style of the national "A" team itself can be a foundation of the pyramid of the National Youth Team Institute where, apparently, so called national team "vertical" should go from bottom to top in order to build a truly sustainable and efficient system with an effective and competitive structure of the game. Although, undoubtedly, every national association, every leader of the National Team Institute, has a right to choose their own way and make their own decisions. No matter how you put it, but one thing is true here: team performance will still remain the only criterion of truth.

²⁵¹ Айрапетов В. Вячеслав Колосков: «По логике Лебедева нужно оставить в РФПЛ всего 5 команд...» 6 января 2017, Sport-express.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb4ksomm>

STRUCTURE AND STAFF OF THE NATIONAL TEAMS

The Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland always take a teacher as their national youth team delegation member.

Today, not only footballers, called up for their international duties, make a national team. Also a coaching staff, medical, technical and administrative staff does.

To reveal strengths and weaknesses of Ukrainian and a number of European national teams as well as to highlight some tendencies, such as involving psychologists, nutritionists, data analysts etc. in the national teams, I suggest making a comparative analysis or a benchmarking research.

The staff of the national youth team of Ukraine (“A” and U-21 have bigger “team”) is as follows (information from 2017):

- Head coach (FFU staff member);
- Assistant coach (employment contract);
- Goalkeeper coach (employment contract);
- Doctor (FFU staff member assigned to a specific national team);
- Masseur (employment contract);
- Psychologist (expert at the Sports Psychology Department of the National University of Physical Education and Sport of Ukraine who is engaged with U-21 NT and NYT (players born in 1998 and 2000);
- Video & data analyst as a member of the FFU Comprehensive Scientific Group (FFU staff member);
- Administrator (FFU staff member).

This is a team of specialists defined by the area of their activities. Thus, the staffing of Ukrainian national youth teams meets European standards. Some examples from the European experience is given below for comparison.

Germany U-17	Greece U-19	Lithuania U-19	Russia U-16
1. Head coach	Head coach	Head coach	Head coach
2. Assistant coach	Assistant coach	Assistant coach	Assistant coach
3. Goalkeeper coach	Goalkeeper coach	Doctor	Goalkeeper coach
4. Fitness coach	Doctor	Administrator	Doctor
5. Doctor	Physiotherapist	Team manager	Physiotherapist

6.	Physiotherapist
7.	Physiotherapist
8.	Psychologist
9.	Administrator
10.	Team manager
11.	Dietician and chef
12.	Video analyst
13.	Teacher
14.	Head of Delegation

Administrator
Team manager
Head of delegation

Video analyst

Administrator
Team manager
Cameraman
Head of delegation

Italy operates according to the following standard (Information from 2013):

1. Head of Delegation.
2. Head coach.
3. Assistant coach.
4. Goalkeeper coach.
5. Fitness coach or coach for physical training.
6. Doctor (cardiologist or internist).
7. Doctor (traumatologist).
8. Physiotherapist.
- 9/10. One or two administrators.
- 11/12. Team manager.
- 12/13. NYT coordinator or his deputy.
- 13/14. Press-officer (for the final round of the UEFA European Championship).

That said, Italy does not involve psychologists and nutritionists but the DFB do. Italy does not involve a video analyst either because of money saving. But for home matches, video analyst is always a delegation member (and he also travels with the U-21 NT for away matches).

As we can see, in the FFU/UAF, comparing to Italy or Germany, there is no physical training (fitness) coach, second doctor and nutritionist; two masseurs are involved only for the finals of the UEFA European U-17/19 Championships. However, FFU/UAF always involves a video analyst and, like Germans do, has started to involve sports psychologists too. For the first time a psychologist was called up in 2007 to the team composed of players born on or after 1992, which was led by Oleksandr Golovko as a response to the coach's own initiative; since then, a psychologist has had a frequent presence in the teams starting from 2015/16 season. France, one of the leading football nations and *d'arbitre des élégances* in world football, normally never includes a goalkeeper coach into its delegation, nor two doctors and two masseurs, a cameraman, a psychologist or a nutritionist. However, video analyst, goalkeeper coach and additional members of medical staff have a non-regular presence in the U-21 NT. Spanish national teams have also quite a modest number of team staff. However, a goalkeeper coach and a video analyst are always with the team but a fitness specialist joins only for the final tournaments. It should be added that the DFB has signed a contract with a

company dealing with football analytics. The company provides support in the area of analysis and video recording of German national team matches.

Now, let us give some more attention to a medical staff who were engaged with NYT of Ukraine from 2002 to 2017. Unlike many UEFA member associations, the FFU/UAF has had full-time qualified sports physicians with long-term experience with professional football clubs and even in other kinds of sports (biathlon, track and field athletics on the level of national teams). This team was created by Professor Vyacheslav Popov who began to make it back in 2002 when only one full-time doctor (!) was working for the FFU. In the light of this, practically every national youth team had their own doctor: six full-time doctors were with the teams. Of course, doctors of the professional football clubs have been permanently involved with “A” team. But national youth teams, especially their junior age categories, play mostly outside the FIFA windows and involvement of club doctors is complicated because they are busy during the season. For example, lowest football leagues continue to run within the FIFA windows, when national teams play their matches. That make it practically impossible to involve doctors who work in the first and the second leagues. Therefore “personal sports physicians”, to a large extent, are not a luxury but a necessity for the National Team Institute, at least in Ukraine.

Unfortunately, only two full-time doctors have remained in the FFU/UAF staffing in 2018/19 season, even though Vyacheslav Popov, after a short break, resumed his duties in the federation. Nevertheless, from 2002 to 2017, the National Team Institute had a quality medical staff being extremely important in modern football. Alas, the FFU /UAF has come a long way from minimalism to best practices and *vice versa*, having returned practically to its original position in 15 years. This instructive story probably requires a separate analysis.

The NAs of the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany are notable for the fact that teachers are included in the national youth delegations. This allows working with younger age categories (from 15 to 17 years) to ensure the continuity of school education being so important for a young football player.

To sum up, it became imperative to arrange video operators for all matches of youth teams in Ukraine starting from 2002. Goalkeeper coaches for youth teams appeared as a mandatory member of the coaching staff in 2003²⁵². The FFU National Team Committee began to enlist sports psychologists to cooperate with teams in 2007 and since 2015 it became mandatory (although it is the head coach who takes the final decision). Full-fledged Comprehensive Scientific Group of the FFU was established in 2015. In this regard, it should be recognized that the National Team Institute of the FFU/UAF has all the necessary expertise (setting aside medical personnel) for full and efficient operation and is likely to meet modern standards of quality of European football.

²⁵² To include a video operator and a goalkeeper coach as mandatory members of the coaching staff of national youth teams of Ukraine was the initiative of Anatolii Buznik, a Chairman of the FFU National Teams Committee.

COMMUNICATIONS

Communications represent the blood of business.
— Calvert Markham²⁵³

The National Youth Team Institute is quite a large and multifunctional structure. For its effective management some important and effective communication at all levels is required. In this regard, undoubtedly, one should speak about the **effective system of communications (feedback)** — external (national teams — clubs, club's coaches and players) and internal (between all national team coaches — from the junior NYT and up to “A”) among all structural units responsible for national team activities and national team coaches, etc.

Let's talk about experience and practice in Ukraine. In my opinion, development of communication systems — external (primarily) and internal — in many respects is a core element for successful operations of the entire National Team Institute. The external communication embraces football clubs and candidates to national youth teams, club players within the FFU/UAF National Teams Committee or National Youth Team Institute with **two keys tasks to pursue**:

- **Communication with candidates (players) to the national teams;**
- **Communication with club coaches working with candidates (players) to the national teams.**

To accomplish **the first task** by getting an effective feedback from players, all resources are good in our Information Age. The resource range spans from an **on-line logbook of a national team player**, similar to the programme design of the Danske Boldspil-Union (Integrated Talent Development) to ensure the delivery of direct-targeted information and its publication on various web-platforms with numerous modern messengers included. National team players are furnished with a wider range of information & data, i.e. on future opponents, video analysis of the matches played, video information for developing tactical formations etc. In my opinion, for these purposes the Wyscout²⁵⁴ software can be used as in 2015 FFU signed a deal with this well-known company in the football world.

To accomplish **the second task** by establishing an **effective feedback between national team and club coaches**, there are traditional communication channels, e.g. watching matches where candidates to the national team are fielded, maintaining regular contact with club coaches via different modes and channels; and tailored-

²⁵³ Calvert Markham, Independent Consultant, president of the Richmond Group UK (2008–2014). The Richmond Group is a society of management consultants based in the UK. (www.rgconsult.com).

²⁵⁴ <https://wyscout.com/> The Football Platform

made communicational channels the FFU has been quite effective in testing over the last years.

In particular, the FFU/UAF used to invite some club coaches to attend home matches and training camps of the junior NYT. FFU has organised joint meetings devoted to elaborating training programmes for the national youth teams within the framework of the FFU IMC. Club coaches were invited to attend the final rounds of the UEFA U-17 European Championships. The FFU representatives have visited the clubs in order to discuss the FFU IMC, as well as cooperation following “a coach of the NYT — association — football club” format. The outcome showed that organising annual workshops on setting out FFU IMC is the most effective and vital form of interaction between the FFU/UAF and football clubs, thus avoiding any potential controversies between football stakeholders (NA and clubs) and reaching a compromise on release of players to the national teams, as well as maintaining a dialogue with clubs to keep the balance of interest between the NA and the clubs.

The DFB is a good example of how **internal communication** should work. When Oliver Bierhoff was appointed as “A” manager, he proposed a 10-point Development Plan for “A” team (see **Annex 8, No. 10 “Internal Management”**): *“Every 2–3 months Joachim Löw (he will leave his position after the end of the final round of UEFA Euro 2020 in July 2021), his assistants Hans-Dieter Flick (left the team in July 2014) and Andreas Köpke (who is still the goalkeeper coach of the “A” Team), Oliver Bierhoff (manager of the Nationalmannschaft), Matthias Sammer (sporting director of the DFB until 2012 when he joined FC Bayern Munich), the coach of U-21s (Eits back then) and General Secretary of the DFB, had to get together to discuss the situation and produce near-term decisions.”*

In the course of 2015 & 2016, the FFU/UAF National Team Institute has established a practice to hold meetings, i.e. so-called **Coach Council meetings** chaired by Semen Altman, deputy chairman of the FFU National Teams Committee. The Council meetings were held almost on a regular monthly basis and attended by coaches of the NYTs and U-21 NT, representatives of the FFU/UAF Comprehensive Scientific Group and the FFU/UAF National Team Events unit. In an efficient working format, the Council proceeded with national team match analysis & monitoring, as well as evaluating quality standards for team management.

The above meetings were also used as **coaching workshops** to analyse not only national team matches but also to discuss some modern aspects of shaping the training process and team training programmes. Lectures and reports were delivered by the Head of the FFU/UAF Comprehensive Scientific Group, NYTs and U-21 head coaches and by Semen Altman too. In my opinion, such approach to work is both effective and fits best the format of the National Youth Team Institute, combining interests of every age category and, therefore, practically all national teams.

Of course, ideally, the FFU/UAF and the National Teams Committee should initiate meetings at the highest level with NAT head coach and the FFU/UAF.

However, it is very important for these events not to be coercive but share a format of professional discussions. However, the year-long practice of the National Team Institutes has revealed that “A” team head coach is not much interested in NYTI activities and, frankly, does not know how the National Youth Team Institute operates, what challenges the FFU/UAF and coaches of NYTs face and why the Institute is so important for the national “A” team. Mere declaration of the meetings at the highest level is a typical form of bureaucracy, which can only bring frustration and loss of motivation to all those involved into working with the junior national teams which is not an easy thing to do. At the same time, a real interest from the “A” team head coach and FFU/UAF top management, together with less bureaucracy, will only enhance standards and effectiveness of the National Youth Team Institute.

To conclude on importance of the communications within the NA National Team Institute, it’s noteworthy to recall one of the Murphy’s laws mentioned above in relation to the Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players: *“Anything that can go wrong will go wrong”*. The Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness in his interview to Sport Bild states as follows: *“We would never accept that [Ter Stegen replacing Neuer as No. 1]. [If Bayern are informed of the change] before it happens, we won’t send any players to the national team anymore.”*²⁵⁵ The emotional statement of the president was briefly commented by “Die Mannschaft” technical director Oliver Bierhoff: *“No. And according to FIFA rules, a club is obliged to send their players to the national team anyway.”* Back in 2011, Oliver Bierhoff told the British media²⁵⁶ in the context of the resistance from Arsenal and Liverpool to Jack Wilshere and Andy Carroll being selected for U-21 duty in June 2011: *“clubs such as Bayern Munich appreciate how international success goes hand-in-hand with the development of their players.”*

One more illustration of Murphy’s Law is the current situation with internal communication in the DFB National Team Institute. On the 24th of November 2020²⁵⁷ in his interview Stefan Kuntz, Germany U-21 team head coach recalled: *“Before going to the European Under-21 Championship in 2017, I had to coordinate with [Germany coach] “Jogi” Löw, and in the end 10 or 12 players who could have played for the U21s went to the Confederations Cup or were injured”*.

Kuntz added that this was only the case with two players at last year’s European Under-21 Championship: Lukas Klostermann and Jonathan Tah.

“And now it’s no longer the case at all. That’s why “Jogi” and I don’t talk to each other anymore. There is no longer a mass of top talent,” he continued. In the original

²⁵⁵ Westwood J. URL : Bayern President Fires Warning to Germany: Pick Ter Stegen over Neuer & we won’t Send You Our Players! Goal.com by James Westwood 25.09.19. Goal.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/utdhjrf>

²⁵⁶ Germany general manager Oliver Bierhoff warns England they must develop team spirit to be successful. The Telegraph by Mark Ogden. 31 Mar 2011. Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8jjlaj3>

²⁵⁷ Germany U21 coach Stefan Kuntz worried by shrinking talent pool By Rune Gjerulff Tuesday, 24 November 2020. Bulinews.com <https://tinyurl.com/y2fc2zrc>

publication²⁵⁸, Stefan Kuntz added as a real diplomat: *“but I think that around Jogi already are several persons with whom he seriously discusses and they, for example, are closer than I am”*.

That said, even prosperous German football, where Die Mannschaft prevails and clubs could allow themselves to arrange special training for players before their release even to national youth teams, calls for their national football association to be open to effective communication at all levels.

²⁵⁸ U21-Nationaltrainer Stefan Kuntz erklärt: "Aus diesem Grund unterhalten sich Jogi und ich nicht mehr" Redaktion Sportbuzzer, RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland, 23.11.2020. Sportbuzzer.de <https://tinyurl.com/yyv5z5xs>

THE COMPETITION SYSTEM IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH FOOTBALL

Is game the best training?

As said before, the effective system of competitions in children's and youth football is one of the key elements for national teams and, consequently, their national associations to succeed. The FFU/UAF is not an exception.

Speaking about the system of competitions in children's and youth football, as well as about the Youth Development Programmes within professional football clubs, first of all, let us consider realities and look at the current developments in youth football in Ukraine.

From the Soviet Union Ukraine has inherited a tradition of staging competitions for young players trained in the School of Physical Culture (hereinafter referred to as SPC), School of Olympic Reserve (hereinafter referred to as SOR), Special Children and Youth School of Olympic Reserve (hereinafter referred to as SCYSOR) and Child and Youth Sports School (hereinafter referred to as CYSC). In my opinion, the properly functioning system of youth football in Ukraine was established only in 1999/2000 season when for the first time ever the Regulations of the FFU and the Professional Football League (PFL; created in 1996) set out requirements for developing children's and youth sports schools as follows: *"clubs of the top and 1st leagues have an obligation to fund or find a source of funding and ensure participation of their youth schools in competitions among SPS, SOR, SCYSOR and CYSC"*.

As a step forward, in 2001 the **Children's and Youth Football League of Ukraine** (hereinafter referred to as CYFLU) was established. In better days, before war at Donbass region or Russo-Ukrainian war (since 2014), there were two leagues — the Top League and the First League — encompassing **over 300 teams and about 8000 players aged 14–17**. In 2020/21 season Elite league²⁵⁹ was established in the Children's and Youth Football League in Under-14/15/16/17 age categories.

In 2002/2003 season, the following provisions on training the reserve in football clubs were included into the Competition Regulations for Professional Football Clubs:

"The club is obliged to own or lease a youth club with training groups of at least 6 age categories in the top and first leagues and at least 4 age categories in the second league and ensure provision of year-round training";

²⁵⁹ Дитячо-юнацька футбольна ліга України, Еліт ліга <https://duflu.org.ua/elit-liga/>

“The clubs of top, first and second leagues must fund and ensure participation of their own CYSC in the Ukrainian championships among the teams of Child’s Youth and Youth Football Leagues of Ukraine. The clubs of top and first leagues — in four age categories, the clubs of the second league — in two age categories”.

Thus, children’s and youth football in Ukraine has got a clear development vector towards professional national football, because at that moment professional football clubs were leading players in Ukrainian football world. And so far they have been.

In the next 2003/04 season, the Competition Regulations were amended to specify the CYSS definition (hereinafter referred to as Children and Youth Sports School):

“The club is obliged to maintain CYSS or to fund it on a contractual basis with the provision of year-round training process:

- a) top league — not less than six age categories;*
- b) first league — not less than four age categories;*
- c) second league — not less than two age categories”.*

In 2003/04 season, U-20 tournaments were introduced under the auspices of CYFLU which lasted for four sports seasons but the participation was not compulsory for PFL teams. Meanwhile, in 2016/17 season, the CYFLU introduced U-19 tournament both for PFL and amateur football clubs. However, participation of PFL clubs is still at club’s own discretion as the Tournament is not compulsory (information from 2019/20 season).

In 2003/04 season, the FFU implemented Club Licensing System into national football as one more key factor in children’s and youth football development. In particular, clubs were obliged to implement youth development programme and maintain a corresponding number of youth teams (for example, participating clubs of the Ukrainian Prime League²⁶⁰ shall have one team of each age category: U-21/19/17/16/15/14 and U-10).

In 2008/09 season, the introduction of the U-21 Championship for youth teams of participating clubs of the Ukrainian Premier League marked a further progress in youth development programs.

The FFU/UAF came up with further initiatives to support youth football by implementing the FFU Rules governing the removal of the limit on foreign players and establishment of the effective system for preparing a quality and competitive pool of players within the structure of professional football clubs.

In particular, in 2010/11 season, the FFU Rule regarding the players trained within the structure of the club was introduced similar to the “club-trained player” from UEFA club competitions. So was the FFU Rule regarding the protection of players trained within the club structure by introducing Agreements on training of a Player in order to protect club investment into training a player within the club structure from competitors and develop a competitive environment within

²⁶⁰ UAF Regulations on the Ukrainian Premier League Football Club Licensing (2019 Edition) — Article 18. Youth teams of the club Uaf.ua/files/biblioteka URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4ngfdkzx>

the CYFLU. Despite the possibility to involve professional footballers in amateur competition, in its time FIFA provided the FFU with the appropriate clarification on this matter as follows: in relation to CYFLU competitions, professional football clubs may still sign with players a “contract on training a footballer”. Now the FFU rule of players trained within the club structure is no longer applicable. By season 2015/16, Ukrainian Premier League club entry must have included 8 club-trained players or home-grown players out of 25 players on List A. However, in 2014/15 season this provision was replaced with the rules applicable in the UEFA club tournament.

In 2012/13 season, U-19 Championship for the participating clubs of the Ukrainian Premier League was launched as one more factor within the effective system of training home-grown players. As a result, a six-stage competition system was introduced. It encompasses all-Ukrainian competitions — U-14, U-15, U-16, U-17, U-19 and U-21²⁶¹. Just for the reference, in 2007 Germany launched U-17 Tournament. In 2004, the format of the U-19 national championship was modified and three regional groups have been introduced. *“People don’t really talk about it that much, but I believe the introduction of the junior Bundesliga was a vital part of the reform process,”* says Ralph Rangnick, former youth coach of VfB Stuttgart

²⁶¹ 2020/21 sports season was the last for U-21 championship under the auspices of the Ukrainian Premier League. The six “speed transmission” had been replaced by five “speed transmission”, figuratively speaking. For the record: Out of 55 UEFA member associations, only 9 conduct national competitions for U-19s. This is 16% of the total number of member associations. Among them, two tournaments have no formal age limit (3,64%), one tournament is for U-20s (1,82%), four are for U-21s (7,27%) and two are for U-23s (3,64%). Meanwhile, out of 9 associations six are in the top 20 of FIFA Men’s Ranking dated 7 April 2021. (<https://www.fifa.com/fifa-world-ranking/>). There are Belgium #1, England #4, Portugal #5, Denmark #10, Netherlands #16, Sweden #18. Four are in Top-10 and three are in Top-5! The list of the tournaments including their names and national football associations is given below in alphabetical order (from April 2021) FYI. <https://int.soccerway.com/> The current country’s place in the FIFA Ranking is given next to the country name.

Belarus #89 — The full name of the tournament in Belarus is “2021 Football Championship of the Republic of Belarus among second-choice teams of the Top Division”

Reserve League (the players from the age of 16 and older)

Belgium #1

Reserve Pro League (U-21)

Reserve Pro League 2 (U-21)

Denmark #10

Reserve League (Group 1, 2 & 3 — the players from age 16 and up)

England #4

Premier League 2 Division One (U-23)

Premier League 2 Division Two (U-23)

Finland #54

A-Junior League (Group A & B — U-20)

Netherlands #16

U21 Divisie 1, 2, 3 & 4

Northern Ireland #48

Premiership Development League (U-21)

Portugal #5

Liga Revelação U23

Grupo Norte & Grupo Sul

Sweden #18

U21 League (Mellersta, Södra & Norra)

and one of the most eminent coaches in Germany. *“Pitting the best of the best nationwide against each other made it possible to compare players and increase the quality. It also, indirectly, forced clubs into spending more money on youth coaches.”*²⁶²

Unfortunately, the new CYFLU U-19 tournament, in my opinion, is not systemic from training perspective of country's own player pool. In 2016/17 season, only a quarter out of 18 participants was directly involved with the PFL clubs. For now, this competition is rather a passing fad than a growing foundation the country's own player pool training system within the structure of professional football clubs could be based on, since, unlike the Ukrainian Premier League tournament, the CYFL competition has nothing to do with the concept of professional football.

To establish regulatory framework for national football to contribute to the development of youth development programmes, new articles were incorporated in the FFU Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players (Article 11.2 “Contract on training of a player”²⁶³) and the FFU Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations for Premier League Clubs (Article 18 “Youth teams of the club”).

One more FFU's effort in developing youth football was setting-up new interregional local centres for youth football development in 2007 with the purpose to select the most talented players for national youth teams. There were five interregional centres in Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, Donetsk and the Crimea, as well as three regional centres — in Kyiv, Luhansk and Vinnytsia respectively. Unfortunately, in 2012–13 the centres were closed. I also think that an abolishment of regulatory provision obliging Premier League clubs to have a football school within club structures was one more step backwards. Such events are stipulated by the current situation in the country, war and occupation of several territories, “homeless” football clubs and accompanying economic problems, as well as by the provisions of the UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations, which allow contractual relations between the clubs and football schools. Article 18 — Youth teams of the Regulations, Edition 2015 reads as follows: *“... The licence applicant must at least have the following youth teams within its legal entity, another legal entity included in the reporting perimeter or a club affiliated to its legal entity...”*²⁶⁴ And no modifications were made to 2018 edition²⁶⁵.

²⁶² Honigstein R. How German Football Rose from the Ashes of 1998 to Become the Best in the World. The Guardian by Raphael Honigstein, the observer Germany. September 5, 2015. Theguardian.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yxcxfnymq>

²⁶³ First stated in the 2012 Regulations on the Status and Transfer of Players of the Football Federation of Ukraine / Регламент Федерації футболу України зі статусу і трансферу футболістів. К., 2012. Fask.com.ua URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yjарх8eh>. In the latest versions of the Regulations, the title of the Article was changed to Article 11. Certain provisions regarding the contract between a professional player and a club. Contract on training of player / Стаття 11. Окремі положення щодо укладання контракту між професіональним футболістом та клубом. Договір на спортивну підготовку футболіста. Referring to 2016 and 2018 editions. Uaf.ua/files/biblioteka URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4k9e9njh> и Uaf.ua/files/biblioteka URL : <https://tinyurl.com/43plelot>

²⁶⁴ 2015 UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations Uefa.com/MultimediaFiles URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1boo0k1q>

²⁶⁵ 2018 UEFA Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play Regulations Documents.uefa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/1xjnfvrv>

Despite these negative aspects, I feel certain that Ukraine has a comprehensive multi-stage competition system in youth football in place. At the same time, these competitions need high-quality content, and what I mean by that is high-quality football facilities (with training facilities included), high-quality team performance (based on high-quality training process) and a highly competitive environment. To achieve this, it is necessary to implement effective youth development programmes within professional football clubs that seem to be one of the key elements for shaping competitive national teams of the country.

THE BIGGEST ISSUE IS... MONEY

*“Your Majesty, to carry on war three things are necessary:
money, money and yet more money”*

— Gian Giacomo Trivulzio²⁶⁶ once said to the French Louis XII

The availability of well-developed system of the children’s and youth competitions may not be the key to happy present and glittering future at all. For example, it’s fair enough to acknowledge that the lack of senior’s youth competitions for U-18/19/20 for the participating clubs of the Professional Football League of Ukraine leads to the fact that many participants of CYFLU U-17s remain uncalled.

At the same time, let us not forget that not every professional football club school/academy graduate will necessarily become a professional footballer. In this regard, Vladimir Gomelskiy put it so well, so let me quote him²⁶⁷: *“Sport of high achievements is important, of course. But, for example, if we take the training attrition rate in basketball in the Soviet Union, there everything was calculated. Almost 2 750 000 were playing basketball, but no more than 15 players per year were promoted to second-choice teams. In the USA, only 1% of children getting into basketball later make it to the first division of NCAA. The NBA I even don’t consider at all. In athletics worldwide, this rate hardly reaches 1%.”*

What does football statistics, for example, of the English Premier-league say²⁶⁸? *“In Premier League academies alone there are around 3,500 boys; the youngest are nine years old although pre-academy training can start even younger. Under the Premier League Rules of Development, each club is allowed to register 250 youngsters in their academy. But of those entering academies at the age of nine, less than 0,5% will ever make a living from the game.”*

Therefore, when they say about more than 1500 seventeen-year-old players as CYFLU graduates who should have conditions for all of them to continue their football career, they, unfortunately, forget about the simple statistic and misinterpret

²⁶⁶ Gian Giacomo Trivulzio (Italian Gian Giacomo Trivulzio; 1440 or 1441 — December 5, 1518) — an Italian aristocrat and condottiero who held several military commands during the Italian Wars; Marshal of France. The quote published in the book: *“The Pinball Effect — How Renaissance Water Gardens Made the Carburetor Possible and Other Journeys Through Knowledge”* by James Burke. *The Pinball Effect: How Renaissance Water Gardens Made the Carburetor Possible, and Other Journeys Through Knowledge*. James Burke. Little, Brown and Company, 1996 — Technology & Engineering — 310 pages

²⁶⁷ Well-known sports journalist in post-Soviet countries, former basketball player and a coach, son of a prominent basketball coach Alexander Gomelskiy. Гомельский: спорт всегда был внутри политики. 29 июля 2016, Championat.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y7qkrpyp>

²⁶⁸ Youth football: What happens to those who don’t make it? By Martha Kelner, sport correspondent Wednesday 24 February 2021. news.sky.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/asx7wx7t>

the concepts of grassroots football vs. so-called elite youth football. The latter is aimed at training player pool for professional football. The CYFLU, *alas*, is not a grassroots tool at all, but a platform for elite youth football to select the best players who will continue their professional career. However, their number will be never estimated in hundreds.

That said, the main issue of the children's and youth football, and clearly, National Youth Team Institute is still to be voiced. In my opinion, the key problem or, if you like, really a sore spot with children's and youth football in general and junior national youth teams (U-15/16/17) in particular, is **lack of game and training experience compared to the leaders of the European football.**

The CYFLU Championship resumes in April (begins in September) and its autumn cycle finishes early November. In the meantime, the UEFA U-17 elite round always takes place at the end of March. As a consequence, Ukraine falls behind their main opponents in relation to game experience. National youth championships in Spain, England, Netherlands and Italy are resumed already at the end of January or early February. Even if Ukraine qualifies for the UEFA final round traditionally taking place in May, we will still have less game experience on the national level. As a result, our opponents have an advantage from the beginning and a handicap, which is simply impossible to catch up today.

Arithmetic is very simple. Our players fall behind European leaders (Germany, England, Spain, France, Italy and Netherlands) as far as the amount of game experience is concerned. For most of participating teams, except for the finalists, an average duration of domestic championship in Ukraine is 4 months (September, October, April and May) while in West European countries it lasts for 8 months. Lifetime of national youth teams equals the duration of the CYFLU's competitions for U-14/15/16/17s. It means that during 4 years of training, the total difference in game experience will be 16 months or 64 matches (4 matches per month). With a five-month winter break (November — March), most of the CYFLU participants have no suitable conditions for training. It means 16 months without game experience and 20 months without training sessions over a four-year period. As a result, at the age of 17 the game-and-training experience gap between Ukrainian and West-European players is 36 months. The worst thing is that this gap is increasing in the most productive period when the time is just right to gain technical and individual skills. It is a wreck!

The duration of the sports season in the Elite league of the CYFLU increased approximately by 1 month compared to the previous editions of the CYFLU tournaments. Thus, the total difference in the season duration is no longer 16 but 12 months, slightly lowering the difference in the volume of game experience from 64 to 48 matches, as well as slightly closing a huge gap (based upon a number of matches played over a four-year period) from 36 to 32 months. In percentage terms — this is a 25% improvement. Is it too much or not enough? The backlog is little less now.

To make a football picture complete, in 2015/16 season only 8 participants of the Ukrainian Professional Football League (PFL) had their own football schools. In addition, even participating clubs of the Ukrainian Premier League fail to arrange conditions of satisfactory standards for training sessions for their young players if one compares them against quality standards in the Western Europe. Thus, lack of football grounds of acceptable standards sharply narrows the range of options both for developing competitions and maintaining regular training process in clubs. This situation has an adverse effect not only on the age category of the CYFLU but on the UPL U-19/21 teams, as well as on the UPL clubs and the Ukrainian Professional Football League in general. It is not a secret that the overwhelming majority of clubs of the Ukrainian Professional Football League do not have training facilities even for their first teams. On top of that, the war in Donbas region made some UPL clubs “homeless” without training facilities of their own, and nowadays football schools of Zorya Luhansk and Olympic Donetsk are closed with only Shakhtar Donetsk keep developing the system of preparation of home-grown players.

Therefore, without speeding up development of training facilities in professional football clubs, it is at least difficult to talk about any positive outcome at the level of youth and senior national youth teams. That is why the success of U-20 team at the 2019 FIFA World Cup was more based on the contrary, although it is the result of the systematic work of both the NA and individual clubs, but not at all of national football as a whole. Therefore, I will allow myself to rephrase Trivulzio by saying: *in order to succeed, Ukrainian football needs three things: facilities, facilities and again... football grounds.*

However, let’s get back to the key reason why I chose Trivulzio’s words as an epigraph to this Chapter and talk about money... for war needs and... for football needs by taking an annual The Global Competitiveness Report at the World Economic Forum as an example. Let us consider 2018 Report and look at the indicators of Top-5 European football leagues in the context of The Global Competitiveness Index 4,0 2018 Rankings and GDP per capita in respective countries (the Report has no separate data for England, but there is UK data which we will refer to in the comparative tables). For more comparison, let’s consider the indicators of the Top-10 clubs from UEFA rankings in 2019/20 season (UEFA Country coefficients).

Top-5	1	2
England (GBR)	8	39,734.6
Spain	26	28,358.8
Germany	3	44,549.7
Italy	31	31,984.0
France	17	39,869.1

3	Countries	1	2
1.	Spain	26	28,358.8
2.	England (GBR)	8	39,734.6
3.	Germany	3	44,549.7
4.	Italy	31	31,984.0
5.	France	17	39,869.1
6.	Russia	43	10,608.2

7.	Portugal	34	21,161.3
8.	Belgium	21	43,582.2
9.	Netherlands	6	48,345.7
10.	Ukraine	83	2,582.8

- 1 — The Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 2018 Rankings;
 2 — GDP per capita US\$;
 3 — UEFA Country coefficients 2019/20²⁶⁹.

According to the Classification by each stage of development of The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018²⁷⁰ all clubs from UEFA club ranking, except for Ukraine and Russia, are at Stage 3: Innovation-driven. Russia is at Stage 2: Efficiency-driven, Ukraine is in transition from Stage 1 to Stage 2. In total, the Report on global competitiveness provides for 4 stages, based on threshold values of GDP per capita (GDP per capita (US \$) thresholds).

In principle, any additional comments are completely redundant. Leading football countries are globally competitive. Their level of economic development and their financial capabilities, most probably, play a key role for success and for success in football too. The performance of Ukraine eloquently suggests that victory in football, unfortunately, is being achieved more “in spite of”, rather than “thanks to”. To rush to this conclusion, one does not even need to refer to comprehensive The Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 but to quote marshal Trivulzio. And that would be enough. Although, they say that money does not play football. Apparently, it is impossible to create a competitive environment in Ukrainian professional football that cultivates players, including internationally competitive ones, without a certain level of economic development. Therefore, yes, it’s true — to carry on war and to carry on football one does need money.

²⁶⁹ 2019/20 UEFA Country coefficients. UEFA.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/up9jf2z>

²⁷⁰ Schwab K. The Global Competitiveness Report 2017–2018. <http://www3.weforum.org/> URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y7w9bxos>

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALL CLUBS

*Thinking about today is good.
But to think about tomorrow is yet more important²⁷¹!*

— Matthias Sammer

In 2010 the Football Federation of Ukraine addressed professional football clubs with a proposal to develop unified standards for youth development programmes. Bringing this topic in the spotlight was caused by legislative initiatives such as implementation of the FFU Rules regarding training of players in the clubs, protection of players through signing contracts on training of players aged 14–18 years, as well as introduction of the new provisions in the FFU Regulations On Status and Transfer of Players and the FFU Regulations on Club Licensing and Financial Fair Play. Furthermore, U-19 Championship was launched in the UPL structure.

Away from the emphasis on establishing a strong legislative framework, clubs, of course, need an appropriate infrastructure to train their own home-grown players. Just a few clubs have at their disposal a state-of-the-art and logistically convenient training facilities located within the vicinity of the football academy/school students' place of residence. In my opinion, under these circumstances one may suggest the following:

- To establish academic/specialised preparatory groups, at least for three or four age categories with the year-round training process — U-14, U-15, U-16 and U-17;
- To arrange a training process using the following training facilities in the clubs of UPL:
 - minimum three standard pitches for training sessions;
 - one indoor training pitch of a standard size — an indoor football arena (one per club);
 - minimum two dressing rooms minimum of 60 m² each;
 - fitness centre minimum of 60 m²;
 - medical care unit minimum of 15 m²;
- To appoint two coaches and one goalkeeper coach (UEFA A license holders) for each group of players aged U-14 — U-17;

²⁷¹ These lines are from the report by Mr Matthias Sammer, the DFB sporting director, at the XXIX Alliance of European Football Coaches' Associations Symposium in Frankfurt, 25–29 October 2008.

- To provide medical services for players of academic/specialised training groups by appointing a doctor and a physiotherapist, club full-time employees for each group. They should have appropriate qualification level and be duly registered with the FFU/UAF;
- To appoint an officer in clubs' academic/specialized groups responsible for secondary school education for young players as well as to involve a psychologist to work with them;
- To set a minimum salary for children's and youth coaches at professional football clubs, as well as to make a minimum budget for youth development programmes.

The implementation of the development programme for UPL clubs would significantly increase the quality standards of children's and youth football and the training system of home-grown players in professional football in Ukraine. As utterly banal as it may sound and, but it is still a feasible plan under relevant economic conditions, when not only the initiative of the NA, but also casual business interests of football clubs dictate the need to develop a quality home-grown players who will eventually make a profit out of transfer price. When business preconditions are missing and the monetary volume of the domestic transfer market remains unknown (in present-day Ukraine no official and unofficial data are published), such plans and projects still remain quite reasonable and logical recommendations. Obviously, they can only be implemented in a completely different economic environment. All the above, plus quite unfriendly business environment in Ukrainian football towards youth development programmes in professional football clubs, no way precludes us from thinking about tomorrow.

FOOTBALL EDUCATION

The method is more important than the discovery because of the proper method of research itself leading to new and more valuable discoveries.

— Lev Landau,
the Nobel Prize winner in Physics²⁷²

It is no secret that one of the key problems of national football is the lack of sufficiently high level of individual skills of our players. One says that all problems in our childhood affect our adulthood. That said, insufficient work of children's and youth coaches (coaching players aged 14–17) in the area of developing technical skills of young players and the “race” for successful result in all, without exceptions, competitions hell or high water is the fair reason for current deplorable situation.

Apparently, our clubs pay very little attention to the aspect of raising their own player pool since it could be detrimental to winning result. They, obviously, are well aware of this problem, but also produce an impression that clubs often deal with it just like the great Danish physicist Niels Bohr puts it²⁷³: “*The problems are more important than solutions; the solutions can become obsolete, and the problems remain*”²⁷⁴... Probably, clubs feel certain that the above principles are well-applied only in the scientific work, where the degree of success is determined primarily by the level of accomplishment. The experienced leaders in the football world tell us that “no winning result can be put before football education in youth football”. And it is worth recalling Jürgen Klopp's words: “*The quality of the game is more important than the result especially in the long term.*”

The number of Ukrainian players in the clubs of Top-5 European leagues speaks very eloquently of the quality of coaching at all levels. From the independence of Ukraine in 1991 and till 2018/19 season, there has never been more than 5 players in the Top-5 Leagues during one sports season. In 2019/20 season Oleksandr Zinchenko and Andriy Yarmolenko were making a regular appearance in the

²⁷² Бессараб М. Страницы жизни Ландау. М.: Московский рабочий, 1971. 136 с

²⁷³ Niels Henrik David Bohr (7 October 1885 — 18 November 1962) was a Danish physicist who made foundational contributions to understanding of atomic structure and quantum theory, for which he received the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1922.

²⁷⁴ Комаров В. Н., Пановкин Б. Н. Занимательная астрофизика. М.: Наука. Главная редакция физико-математической литературы, 1984. (Проблемы науки и технического прогресса). I should say I could not find a fairly common quote by Niels Bohr in English. In my opinion, a quote by another Nobel Prize winner in Physics, Albert Einstein and its English translation has the closest meaning and reads as follows: “*The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill. To raise new questions, new possibilities to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advances in science*” [https://tinyurl.com/t9xo4ko]. Although the reference to incomplete quote can be found here: Management 3rd edition, Michael H. Mescon, Michael Albert, Franklin Khedouri New York: Harper & Row 1988 “According to Shannon, “*Albert Einstein once stated that the proper formulation of a problem was even more essential than its solution.*”

Premier League, Ruslan Malinovskyi and Yevhen Shakhov — in Serie A, while Andriy Lunin and Vasyl Kravets still do not have regular game experience in La Liga. There are six players but only four of them are regularly fielded. In the meantime, in 2020/21 sports season in the Top-5 European Championships, the Player Lists formally have had these six players too. However, one of them namely Sergio Yakubiv (DOB 26.01.2002) is actually an Italian football graduate and was entered in Player List for one match only in the squad for FC Crotone, an outsider in Serie A, and the rest of the time was playing for U19 FC Crotone in Primavera 2b. He still did not play officially in the squad of the Ukrainian national teams. Five players, namely Oleksandr Zinchenko and Andriy Yarmolenko playing in the Premier League, Ruslan Malinovskyi and Victor Kovalenko — in Serie A and Andriy Lunin — in La Liga. Only two of them were regularly fielded — Oleksandr Zinchenko and Ruslan Malinovskyi. If we talk about coaches themselves, not a single Ukrainian coach who got his coaching education in Ukraine has ever had any experience of working with teams from Top-5 Leagues. Only Viktor Skrypnyk made an exception. However, he is a graduate of the German coaching school and had been working at 1 Bundesliga for almost two years with his native SV Werder Bremen²⁷⁵.

Apparently, number of players and coaches involved in Top Leagues of the European football is a sort of “reference points” or in other words, a scale of measuring success rate and efficiency of the system of education in national football which starts from children’s coach and ends with UEFA Pro-diploma manager. At the same time, one should remember a simple truth — it is NAs, through their structures established under their exclusive and sole management and leadership, who are responsible for educational process and, logically, for the quality of the product, which this time is determined by the level of performance and a number of employment graduates their educational entities will have.

I think it’s obvious that for a sufficiently large number of qualified coaches to appear, a kind of “demand” or social order from the consumer is required — primarily from professional football clubs. One of the most prominent Soviet geneticists Vladimir Efroimson has once written²⁷⁶: “...for a genius to open up his potential a demand and social mandate are required.” Does such demand exist today in Ukraine? It’s more a rhetorical question. If demand is missing it can be initiated by a national football association itself, especially given the fact that it is the NA that manages the entire coaching education in accordance with the current UEFA Coaching Convention (2020 Edition²⁷⁷). Thus, despite the lack of friendly business environment for developing key players for national football, professional football clubs and professional football as business, it is the NA that has in its hands all levers of influence to improve quality of coaching education in all categories, notwithstanding the lack of demand for well-educated and simply talented coaches. One should not forget about the quality criteria, i.e. “reference points” that are very

²⁷⁵ Viktor Skrypnyk. Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/rlgdd2q>

²⁷⁶ Эфроимсон В. П. Гениальность и генетика. М.: Русский мир, 1998. 544 с. E-reading.club. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/hc7yf9sy>

²⁷⁷ 2020 Coaching Convention. Uefa.com/MultimediaFiles URL : editorial.uefa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/h39rjcnu>

desirable to be set high. The higher the standards are, the more likely it is to get a truly competitive product. In this regard, it is worth recalling that, for example, in 2019/20 season, only one Ukrainian coach Sergiy Rebrov²⁷⁸ managed to make it “further out than Chop”²⁷⁹ and led his Hungarian “Ferencvaros” into the group stage of the 2019/20 UEFA Europe League”²⁸⁰. Another Ukrainian coach who was coaching the participant of the 2019/20 UEFA Europa League “Astana” (Kazakhstan) is Roman Grigorchuk²⁸¹ (he left the club in January 2020). Well, it’s in the opposite direction from Chop and much farther from the Top 5 Championships...

P. S. The Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences or The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2019 was awarded to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Michael Kremer for Research to help the world’s poor. In particular, the Gates Professor of Developing Societies at Harvard University Michael Kremer has reached the conclusion that: “...*new experiment-based research on education in low-income countries shows that additional resources are, in general, of limited value. However, educational reforms that adapt teaching to pupils’ needs are of great value. Improving school governance and demanding responsibility from teachers who are not doing their job are also cost-effective measures.*”²⁸²”

P. P. S. It remains to add that one more 1992 Nobel laureate, American economist Gary Becker²⁸³ has provided clear evidence in his works “Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis,” and “Human Capital” he won Nobel Prize for, and has put it this way: “*spending on education, medical service, social programmes etc. are equivalent to the investment in new technologies, machines and equipment. They will provide subsequently even better returns all society and private business.*”

²⁷⁸ Sergiy Rebrov // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/xbxb88ww>

²⁷⁹ Chop is the westernmost city of Ukraine. En.wikipedia.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/a7earka>

²⁸⁰ The Hungarian “Ferencvaros” managed by Sergey Rebrov took part in the group tournament of 2020/21.Uefa Champions League

²⁸¹ Roman Grigorchuk // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/bxwc72ju>

²⁸² Research to Help the World’s Poor. Nobelprize.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y4qjp29w>
The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2019 // Nobelprize.org. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y4qjp29w> THE ECONOMIC WAY OF LOOKING AT LIFE
Nobel Lecture, December 9, 1992

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URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yxwgc6om>
Becker, Gary S., (1962) “Investment in Human Capital: A Theoretical Analysis,” Journal of Political Economy LXX: 9–49.

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²⁸³ Research to Help the World’s Poor. Nobelprize.org URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y4qjp29w>
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CLOSING REMARKS

A journey of a thousand miles starts under one's feet

— Laozi also Lao-Tzu
Ancient Chinese philosopher (VI-V B.C.)

The formula for future victories, on the one hand, is very simple. It is a well-developed infrastructure at football schools and quality coaches. On the other hand — it requires clubs to invest time, funds and patience, because clubs are non-alternative locomotives of national football development, but, they often suffer too from teething problems — when desire to achieve quick results dominates over the tasks that take a good amount of time and a hard work to accomplish. After all, **it takes years to raise a footballer** and there must be quality coaches who also do not emerge all of a sudden, as well as availability of effective methods & techniques with appropriate infrastructure on top of it. Naturally, to buy trained players and educated coaches is much easier. However, such policy leads to a deficit of quality and competitive home-grown players and, as a consequence, to national team poor performance.

That said, the above-mentioned issues determine **four vectors of development:**

- 1. The National Youth Team Institute, as it is obvious that the number of youth teams is higher than national “A” team and even national “A” + «<1» team in the NA’s National Team Institute;**
- 2. The System of Competitions in Children’s and Youth, and U-21 football;**
- 3. Youth Development Programmes in Professional Football Clubs;**
- 4. Coaching Education.**

The foregoing directions should comprise the **national system of training and developing quality and competitive home-grown players (pool of players)**. Without these elements, in my opinion, football is doomed to live a constant crisis. And we do not need to create the mentioned structures from scratch — actually they already exist! But what we need to do is to make them fully operational (especially since the level of development of the FFU/UAF National Team Institute, as already noted, is not inferior to the vast majority of European NAs) in order to pursue a path of further development and honing to perfection. The path is long and difficult, and only the walking one will master it. After all, a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

P. S. The path could be more comfortable and shorter if national economy grew better, in particular, with a higher stage of development and increase of GDP per

capita threshold to at least US \$ 9000–17 000 in Ukraine. Indeed, in the Top-10, based on 2019/20 UEFA Country coefficients, in eight countries GDP per capita threshold is significantly higher than US \$ 17,000. Unfortunately, in this case any national association remains completely dependent on objective factors in the development of national and global economy. Unlike its responsibilities for coaching education, a national association is not responsible for state's financial, fiscal and overall economic policies.

P. P. S. Last but not least. In my point of view, inertia is a distinct feature of processes taking place in the NA's National Team Institute. It would be probably useful and fair to compare The Institute, as a system, to the phenomenon of economic inertia²⁸⁴. The Institute as an object strives to maintain its previous state and is incapable of managing fast growth which may be explained with its big size but also with inertia of mindset of relevant stakeholders. That is why within The Institute, accomplishments and previous long-term effort are inextricably linked. That said, its current state might be the beginning of the crisis to escalate later, and any new successful accomplishment will require long and painstaking work again. In other words, it is always necessary to remember that the most striking expression of inertia²⁸⁵ of The Institute is time lag between decision-making and decision impact, which can be either positive (plus sign) or negative (minus sign).

²⁸⁴ Райзберг Б. А., Лозовский Л. Ш., Стародубцева Е. Б. Инерция экономическая // Современный экономический словарь. — 5-е изд., перераб. и доп. — М.: ИНФРА-М, 2007. — 495 с. — (Б-ка словарей «ИНФРА-М»).

²⁸⁵ Ecanet.ru/word/Инерция URL :<https://tinyurl.com/4ab3mrk4>

ANNEX 1. GERMAN MIRACLE

would like to start a story about German football with a famous phrase by Gary Lineker²⁸⁶: *“Football is a simple game; 22 men chase a ball for 90 minutes and at the end, the Germans always win”*.

HISTORICAL OUTLOOK

Following their triumph at the 2014 FIFA World Cup in Brazil²⁸⁷, Germany National Team has unconditionally become the most titled European national team matching Italy in number of world titles. Germany is a four-time world champion (1954, 1974, 1990, 2014), four-time vice-champion (1966, 1982, 1986, 2002) and four-time bronze medallist of the FIFA World Cup (1934, 1970, 2006, 2010). At the same time, Germany is a three-time European champion (1972, 1980, 1996), three-time European vice-champion (1976, 1992 and 2008) and two-time bronze medallist of the UEFA EURO (1988 and 2012)²⁸⁸. Here one should probably add medals yielded for the football tournaments of the Olympic Games by GDR team: “the gold” in 1976, “the silver” in 1980 and two “bronze” in 1964 and 1972. However, the West Germany national team and then the united Germany’s team have not reached any success at the Olympic Games²⁸⁹. To compare with Spain, a three-time UEFA EURO champion, and France²⁹⁰, a two-time UEFA EURO champion, both countries became FIFA World Cup winners with one title each. England lifted the trophy of the FIFA World cup only once. National team of Italy won UEFA EURO 1968, Netherlands — in 1988, Czechoslovakia — in 1976, Denmark — in 1992 and the Soviet Union yielded gold medals in 1960.

That said, Germany teams have never achieved top winning results in the senior youth and U-21 competition level. For the last 22 years, Germany became two-time champions in the U-17 and U-19 tournaments with one title in U-21 competitions. The success of other UEFA member associations during that time is as follows:

²⁸⁶ Gary Winston Lineker, English footballer, 1986 FIFA WC top goal scorer with 6 goals, current sports TV presenter// Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4d23mk2y>

²⁸⁷ This Annex presents analysis of DFB’s operations over 2000–2014. The statistic is dated 02.07.2015

²⁸⁸ Germany yielded bronze medals in summer 2016

²⁸⁹ Germany became vice-champion at the Olympics Football Tournament in Rio in 2016

²⁹⁰ France won 2018 FIFA World Cup

	U-17	U-19	U-21	Total
Spain	5	7	3	14
France	1	6	0	7
Italy	0	1	5	6
Portugal	4	2	0	6
Germany	2	2	1	5
Netherlands	2	0	2	4
Turkey	2	1	0	3
England	2	1	0	3
Russia	2	0	0	2
Republic of Ireland	1	1	0	2
Czech Republic	0	0	1	1
Poland	0	1	0	1
Ukraine	0	1	0	1
Serbia	0	1	0	1
Sweden	0	0	1	1

The statistic reveals that German youth football is not on top and runs behind dominating Spain, France and Italy. But I believe it's high time we talk about the phenomenon of the German football by calling it "a miracle made in Germany" and studying their experience.

GERMAN CRISIS AND THE WAYS OUT OF IT

In 1998 and 2000 the Bundesteam failed the World Cups and EURO Championships by having reached a quarterfinal only in 1998 but failed to qualify for the play-off of the UEFA EURO 2000. Added to this is the fact that Germany won the race for hosting the 2006 FIFA World Cup. For this country and the German football in general it meant a start to make a new Bundesteam capable of achieving success in 6 years (by the way, they yielded bronze medals and so they did four years later).

Consequently, people in the DFB and DFL reflected seriously on how to deal with problems. First, the Germans openly admitted that there was a serious crisis. Secondly, they started talking about the gap in the level of technical skills and the lack of creative, non-standard players. Thirdly, they acknowledged the absence of player pool to make "A" team as German football really lacked young players.

This is how German journalist described the situation: *"At the end of the 1990s, the Bundesliga was populated with cheap and not too qualified foreigners. In search of a job, players from Slovakia and former Yugoslavia and other small European countries used to come to Germany, although they had not even played in their national teams. Regardless their low level of qualification they were cheap. The clubs of Bundesliga had given them the place on the field, closing, in such a way, the road for the young players"* [1].

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

What has been done? Germany selected several parallel vectors to solve problems or rather directions of German football development with the main emphasis made on youth development programmes and home-grown player education & training within their professional football clubs. At the same time, these measures were reinforced by implementing multi-vector approach to reach the main goal — and that is raising competitive players to meet world and European standards.

First step: youth club academies become an integral element of the club licensing system.

Second step: talent support programme («TALENTFORDERUNG») by setting up more than 300 regional centres, a wide network of scouts and DFB full-time coaches to work in the regions with players aged 11–14.

Third step: development of educational concept “The long road to success: the educational concept of DFB” (in original: DFB-Ausbildungskonzept „Der weite Weg zum Erfolg“) and the development of the National Youth Team Institute of Germany.

It should be noted that the multi-vector approach is intrinsic to entire German professional football. After all, in accordance with the German legislation, single person shall not be the sole owner of the club. More than 50 % of shares shall belong to so-called “sports community”; that is, in fact, to the team fans. Only FC Bayer 04 Leverkusen and VfL Wolfsburg are owned by big companies. The rest of the clubs operate strictly in line with these rules. For example, 80% of shares of FC Bayern Munich belong to its supporters, and only two big sponsors each have 10 % of its shares respectively.

36 CLUBS OF BUNDESLIGA AND 36 YOUTH ACADEMIES

In my opinion, February 28, 2001 is a key date for modern German football. This is the date when the key decision to introduce **youth academies as licensing requirement** in professional football clubs of the DFL was taken. The German league opted for setting up home-grown player training system within each club that would meet specific infrastructure & sporting criteria etc. Both Bundesliga 1 (from 2001/2002 season) and Bundesliga 2 (from 2002/2003 season) were involved into this process step by step.

However, Raphael Honigstein²⁹¹ has a slightly different vision: “*Looking back, 1998 was the pivotal turning point, not 2000. The changes were formalised in October 2000, when the DFL, a body of the 36 Bundesliga clubs in divisions one and two with a large (but not total) degree of financial and regulatory independence from the German FA, was formed. The Bundesliga 2 clubs at first resisted the academy system, due to its high cost, but they, too, were eventually persuaded.*”

²⁹¹ Raphael Honigstein (born 1973), a native of Bavaria, is a German journalist and author. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Raphael_Honigstein

Running an academy became a condition of obtaining a licence to play professional football in both divisions from 2002–03 onwards. In the first two years of the new regimes, the 36 clubs invested a combined €114m (£77,5m) into their elite schooling” [2].

«TALENTFORDERUNG»

Simultaneously, the DFB has created “Talent Support Programme” («TALENTFORDERUNG»). This is how one of the program’s “parents” Ulf Schott²⁹², current DFB Director for Youth Development Programs describes it: *“After the 1998 FIFA World Cup and EURO 2000 we, with disgrace, lost to the second squad of Portugal and did not even qualify for the next round. That was a failure indeed. We have understood how far behind of the other European countries we were. In EURO 2000 in Germany “A”, there was only one player, Sebastian Deisler, who was under 21, but the average age of the team was about 31. And, here is the squad of our team at the tournament in South Africa. There were then six players who were under 21 — Thomas Mueller, Holger Badstuber, Jerome Boateng, Mesut Özil, Toni Kroos and Marko Marin and the average age was about 25. Such changes took place because ten years ago²⁹³ we, finally, did go from words to deeds. Our experts developed a “TALENTFORDERUNG” program. We expected to have benefits after eight to ten years — so, that did happen in such a way.” [3]*

1000 DFB PROFESSIONAL SCOUTS

One of the basic ideas of “TALENTFORDERUNG” was a perfect scouting. Now, in Germany, there are about 26 000 clubs. **1000 professional scouts** watch after their players. Every scout covers 20–30 clubs and is responsible for player detailed information.

366 REGIONAL TRAINING CENTRES

The next important step was the creation of **regional training centres** in every German region. Today there are **366 (!)**. The best players selected by scouts get into the regional football centres. Every centre has two or three qualified coaches working with a group of players aged 11–14. As a result, in each of these age categories, Germany has several thousand of promising players as a minimum.

The regional academies look after ordinary football schools while clubs watch after players who get in there. Therefore, professional football gets support from national association by means of selection work in the regions. Essentially, today in Germany, the attention is turned to all children who do football with the purpose

²⁹² Ulf Schott, director of the DFB 2012–2018, till now — Head of High Performance Programmes in FIFA. [Linkedin.com/in/ulf-schott](https://www.linkedin.com/in/ulf-schott). URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ydzfvrj5>

²⁹³ The interview from 2010.

to reveal young and promising footballers along with starting their technical and tactical training at an early age.

In accordance with UEFA data, in Germany 28 400 coaches work with UEFA B diploma, 5500 — with UEFA A diploma and 1070 — with UEFA Pro diploma. This is the highest number in Europe! To compare, in England alone this number of UEFA B, A, and Pro diploma holders is 1759, 895 and 115 respectively.

**ANNUALLY € M 8–10 FOR DFB YOUTH
DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

There are 29 coaches working in 29 so-called elite schools of Germany and who have contracts with the DFB. Annually, sponsors of the DFB allocate **€ M 8–10 for the Programme** [3].

“THE LONG ROAD TO SUCCESS: THE EDUCATIONAL CONCEPT OF THE DFB”

A lot has changed with the implementation of one more direction of development outlined in the document “The Long Road to Success: The Educational Concept of the DFB” [4]. In fact, the author of this 40-page brochure released in 2007 is Matthias Sammer²⁹⁴. He introduced conceptual directions of development of training methods for young players — a kind of modern philosophy of the German football. At the same time, he had a strong influence on the development of the DFB National Youth Team Institute [4]. In particular, his effort has resulted in including the following positions in the national team staff:

- goalkeeper coach;
- fitness coach;
- two physiotherapists;
- psychologist;
- nutritionist;
- teacher to work according to school curriculum.

The DFB has hired a company to do video analysis of matches and training process in accordance with DFB’s standard methods of the Association. Medical examination and educational testing for national team players is scheduled twice a year (as a minimum) [5].

WHAT HAS THE GERMAN LEAGUE DONE?

A special attention should be paid to the steps the DFL took towards youth programme development [6], because it is clubs who work every day to improve their players, transform them, in accordance with German terminology, into steady

²⁹⁴ Matthias Sammer, former sports director of FC Bayern resigned in July 2016. He had been occupying similar position in the DFB from February 2006 until July 2012. He is 1996 “Ballon d’Or” winner; as head coach of Borussia Dortmund is 2002 German Championship winner; 2002 UEFA Cup winner and 2003 DFL Cup finalist.

Matthias Sammer // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3n3h2yvr>

and stable players of the “A” team (in the original [German] Hochleistungstraining-Stabilisierung; spitzen-spieler; A-Nationalmannschaft).

In this regard, I would like to mention below only the most important results, in my opinion:

Thirty six (36) under-21 players took part in 2000/01 DFL sports season which is just 8% of the total number of registered players. In 2009/10 sports season there were seventy six (76) under-21 players or 16% [3].

At the UEFA EURO 2000 in the squad of Bundesteam there was only one (1) under 21 player, but ten years later, at 2010 FIFA World Cup there were six (6) U-21s [3]! Over 2 years (2008–2009) Germany national youth and U-21 teams won consecutively all the UEFA European U-17, U-19 and U-21 Championships.

The average player age in the Bundesliga has decreased from 27,12 in 2002/03 season down to 25 in 2012/13 season [7].

The dynamics of increased percentage of German nationals in the 1st and 2nd Bundesliga is as follows: in 1995/96 season (at the time of the decision on Bosman’s case dated December 15, 1995) this number was 81% and 82% respectively and went down to 50% and 57% in 2002/03 sports season. But in 2012/13 season it was 58% and 74% respectively [6].

Just to compare, the percentage of English players, who played in the starting eleven in their own clubs in the 1st tour of Premier League (in 2013/14), became the lowest in the Tournament history [7]. The proportion of English and foreign players in the opening tour of the Premier League was 33,6 % vs. 66,4% when only 74 home-grown players were fielded. For reference, in 1992 the starting line-up of their own clubs in the opening tour featured 177 English players or 73,1 % of the total number of players registered by their clubs. In the transfer window in 2013/14 season, the Premier League clubs made 61 transfers and only 12 of them enlisted English players. Among the teams making TOP-8 in the 2012/13 Premier League Table & Standings, none has purchased an English player!

In 2006/07 season, Germany cancelled the limit on foreign players. On the Player List of the Bundesliga clubs, 12 out of 25 footballers with German passports shall be included. [1]

Total investments in football academies during 2002/03–2012/13 amounts to € 820 million. In 2012/13 season alone, the DFL clubs had a target figure of €105 million to invest in the youth development programmes [6]!

THE GERMAN FOOTBALL MACHINE

Undoubtedly, the roots of success of German football go into economical advances in Germany. The leading EEA countries, according to current statistical indicators, cannot compete with the German one being ahead of them on all key indicators except inflation [8]. At the same time, we should say that German professional football is, first of all, a successful business, and indeed it is. It is enough to note the following.

Starting from 2004/05 season, the Bundesliga (founded on August 24, 1963) has constantly been ranked the first based upon attendance criteria among elite European football with indicators of audience's interest constantly growing [9]:

2004/05	35 200
2005/06	38 200
2006/07	37 500
2007/08	39 500
2008/09	41 900
2009/10	41 800
2010/11	42 100
2011/12	45 200

Having said that, DFBnet has:

- 6 700 000 registered players;
- 26 state and regional associations and their operating divisions;
- 210 employees of the DFB;
- 26 000 clubs;
- 78 000 referees;
- 70 000 coaches;
- 180 000 teams of 18 000 football divisions and leagues;
- about 5 000 authorized division managers;
- 70 000 matches during the weekend;
- 1 500 000 matches per season;
- More than 100 000 authorized users of DFBnet working full-time in football (in associations and clubs);
- more than 50 000 email addresses for clubs and officials;
- in 80% of matches among amateurs the electronic version of the match sheet (mandatory for DFL matches) is used [10].

As we can see, German football is a machine with very quality management and technical solutions, where senior officials are able to acknowledge their mistakes, talk openly about problems and feel comfortable to learn through foreign experience.

Ulf Schott put it this way: *“We understood that we had a football crisis. We addressed to the countries where they successfully managed with preparing young players. In that time, France was the leader — the French took the gold in 1998 & 2000. We have been cooperating with them for a long time, attentively learned their ideas and projects”* [3]. Probably, the most important thing is that officials at the helm of German football are capable of effective task management, setting priorities and successful programme development.

German football has been an excellent example of upgrading national teams to a new level in cooperation with clubs by using professional club licensing system. At the same time, it can also assist to clubs whose payrolls are being cut down due to a growing number of their own homegrown players. That said, the German

model, as far as development of club licensing system through football academies is concerned, fits well every European national football association, because club licensing system is a mandatory UEFA requirement for all, without exception, members of professional football. The rest of German innovations, undoubtedly, are effective but, at the same time, a huge budget is needed for regional centres, scouts, coaches of elite schools etc. that most UEFA's member associations, *alas*, do not have.

Despite all our woes and problems, German experience in the area of youth football development programmes at professional football clubs can be very useful for Ukrainian football. But it leaves no doubts that German experience highlighted here is helpful not only for European football but world football in general.

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APPENDIX to ANNEXE 1:

- 1.1 and 1.2 — The List of Winners and Finalists of the UEFA U-17, U-19 & U-21 European Championships;
2. Excerpts from DFL «Youth Academies» Presentation;
3. The excerpt from the Article “The Long Road to Success: What makes German football so great?” by D. Trubetskoi [original in Russian — Трубецкой Д. "Долгий путь к успеху": что делает немецкий футбол настолько сильным?];
4. The principles of the DFB work.

**1.1. THE LIST OF WINNERS AND FINALISTS
OF THE UEFA EUROPEAN U-17, U-19 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

	U-17 Winners	Finalists	U-19 Winners	Finalists
2014/15	France	Germany	Spain	Russia
2013/14	England	Netherlands	Germany	Portugal
2012/13	Russia	Italy	Serbia	France
2011/12	Netherlands	Germany	Spain	Greece
2010/11	Netherlands	Germany	Spain	Czech Republic
2009/10	England	Spain	France	Spain
2008/09	Germany	Netherlands	Ukraine	England
2007/08	Spain	France	Germany	Italy
2006/07	Spain	England	Spain	Greece
2005/06	Russia	Czech Republic	Spain	Scotland
2004/05	Turkey	Netherlands	France	England
2003/04	France	Spain	Spain	Turkey
2002/03	Portugal	Spain	Italy	Portugal
2001/02	Switzerland	France	Spain	Germany
2000/01	Spain	France	Poland	Czech Republic
1999/00	Portugal	Czech Republic	France	Ukraine
1998/99	Spain	Poland	Portugal	Italy
1997/98	Republic of Ireland	Portugal	Republic of Ireland	Germany
1996/97	Spain	Austria	France	Portugal
1995/96	Portugal	France	France	Spain
1994/95	Portugal	Spain	Spain	Italy
1993/94	Turkey	Denmark	Portugal	Germany
1992/93	Poland	Italy	England	Spain
1991/92	Germany	Spain	Turkey	England

Before 2001/02 season U-16 & U-18 Championships were held.

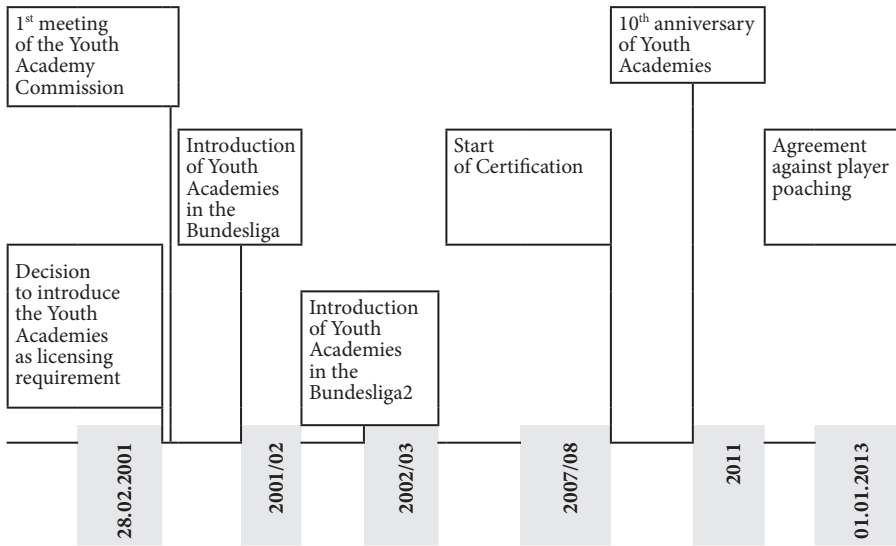
**1.2. THE LIST OF WINNERS AND FINALISTS
OF THE UEFA EUROPEAN U-21 CHAMPIONSHIPS**

	Winners	Finalists
2015	Sweden	Portugal
2013	Spain	Italy
2011	Spain	Switzerland
2009	Germany	England
2007	Netherlands	Serbia
2006	Netherlands	Ukraine
2004	Italy	Serbia & Montenegro
2002	Czech Republic	France
2000	Italy	Czech Republic
1998	Spain	Greece
1996	Italy	Spain
1994	Italy	Portugal
1992	Italy	Sweden
1990	USSR	Yugoslavia
1988	France	Greece
1986	Spain	Italy
1984	England	Spain
1982	England	FRG
1980	USSR	GDR
1978	Yugoslavia	GDR



2. THE DFL “YOUTH ACADEMIES” PRESENTATION

DEVELOPMENT OVER THE YEARS



28th of February 2001 is the date when the decision to introduce youth academies as a licensing requirement in professional football clubs was taken.

2001/2002 Season

1st Meeting of the Youth Academy Commission
Introduction of the Youth Academies in the Bundesliga

2002/2003 Season

Introduction of Youth Academies in the Bundesliga 2

2007/2008 Season

Start of Certification

2011

10th anniversary of the Youth Academies

1st of January 2013

The Agreement against player poaching was signed.



YOUTH ACADEMIES LICENSING RULES

§ 3 Licensing Rules

The club applying for a licence has qualified in sporting terms if it is able to show the sporting performance required as set out in the Regulations.

For the purposes of promoting grassroots and youth football, the clubs are required to set up and operate a youth academy.

Adjusting and orientation of the national regulations to the requirements of the UEFA Club Licensing Regulations (Clause 17321)

There are two categories of academies:

- the academies in the Bundesliga must comply with Category I requirements,
- the academies in the Bundesliga 2 must comply with Category II requirements.

THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
 § 3 LICENSING RULES — ANNEX V

§ 3 Licensing Rules :

Guidelines for setting up and operating youth academies of the licensed league members.

1. Objective:

Improvement and optimisation of young player training and development at professional and upper amateur level.



THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
BASIC STRUCTURE

2. General infrastructure requirements for all academies

a) Structure of youth academies

Skill Level

Juniors U8 — U11

1. Fundamental Training

- Multifunctional Basic Training
- Kinetics
- Just play soccer!

Juniors U12 — U15

2. Development Training

- Soccer Specific Training
- Specialisation
- Develop Tactical Understanding

Juniors/Seniors U16 — U23

3. Performance Training

- Competitive Sports Training
- Stabilisation on the top level
- Refine Soccer
- Specific Skills and Understanding

THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
BASIC STRUCTURE

2. General infrastructure requirements for all academies

b) Number of young teams at the academies

- Evidence of a minimum of 7 and a maximum of 9 teams at the enhanced skills and high-performance skills stage.



- Number of players is limited as follows:

Basic level (Juniors U8 — U11):	no limit
Enhanced level (Juniors U12 — U15):	up to 20 players (incl. goalkeepers) per team
High performance level (Juniors U16 — U19):	up to 22 players (incl. goalkeepers) per team
If there is only one team U16/U17 or U18/U19	up to 24 players (incl. goalkeepers) per team
High-performance level (amateurs):	up to 22 players (incl. goalkeepers) per team

- **At all times a minimum of 12 German players must be entitled to play at the high-performance level (Juniors U16 — U19).**

THE EDUCATION CONCEPT STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Training (turf pitches, etc.)	Sporting supervision (coach incl. license, etc.)	Medical and physiotherapy area (treatment rooms, etc.)
Medical and physiotherapy staff (Physician, medical support)	Educational and psychological staff (Teachers, Tutor...)	Written Youth Development Programme (Philosophy, etc.)
Off-pitch support and accommodation (Boarding school, etc.)	Cooperation between school and club	



THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Coaches

Category I = Bundesliga

- One coach for each team
- Minimum five full-time coaches (2 UEFA-Pro Level & 1 DFB-A-Level)
- One goalkeeper coach
- DFB-B-Level

Category II = Bundesliga 2

- One coach for each team
- Minimum three full-time coaches (1 UEFA-Pro Level & 1 DFB-A-Level)
- One goalkeeper coach
- DFB-B-Level

Facilities for medical & physical care

- One consulting room
- Two massage rooms
- Sauna
- Relaxation bath
- One consulting room
- One massage room

THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Medical & physical staff

Category I = Bundesliga

- One doctor (part-time)
- One full-time physical therapist
- One full-time sports coach

→ **annual medical examination for all players (for build-up & high-performance)**

Category II = Bundesliga 2

- One doctor (part-time)
- One physical therapist (part-time)
- One sports coach (part-time)

Non-sport supervision (e.g. nutrition, accommodation)

- Foreign players
- Boarding schools
- Guest parents



THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

Academic & educational support

- The cooperation agreement between the youth academy and school
- Extra training sessions
- Extra homework under supervision
- Additional tuition etc.

Youth development plan

- Ambition
- Finance
- Training program
- The organisation, etc.

THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

- All documents must be presented by March 15th (respectively September 1st) at the latest.
- First results are transmitted to the clubs in May.
- There are two forms of consequences if licensing guidelines are not fulfilled:
 - Conditions
 - The club gets the license but must fulfill or respect certain conditions during a given period of time.
 - If the conditions are not fulfilled the club can be punished by inflicting a penalty fee, by deduction of points or the cancellation of the license.
 - Obligations
 - The club does not get the license until it fulfills certain obligations during a given period of time.



THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
STRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS

4. Contracts binding players to clubs

“Development contracts” can be signed for players:

- From age 16;
- Minimum wage €250 per month;
- For a maximum of 3 years + 2 years option (mutual);
- Comparable with normal apprenticeships for other jobs.

THE INTERNATIONAL QUALITY
BASIS: THE EDUCATION CONCEPT

- Installation of commission for the continuous improvement and control of standards
- Certificate with one, two or three stars
- Regular coaching courses

Cooperation:



DEUTSCHER FUSSBALL-BUND (DFB)
Double PASS Quality in Sport
Foot PASS Deutschland
DEUTSCHE FUSSBALL LIGA e.V. (DFL)



Objectives: Certification for optimum support/promotion of young talents in youth academies

- Certification secures quality standards and supports the development of ideas;
- Quality analysis with the help of uniform parameters (software package);
- Support for the head of youth academies;
- Certification as the basis for distribution of funds (UEFA-CL Funds).

THE INTERNATIONAL QUALITY
BASIS: THE EDUCATION CONCEPT

EXAMINATION OF OVER 200 CRITERIA IN INDIVIDUAL SECTIONS

EIGHT KEY QUALITY PARAMETERS

- Basic product: football coaching
- Organisation
- Effectiveness
- Administrative policies and strategies
- Infrastructure and equipment
- Medical, mental and academic assessment
- Internal marketing and personnel administration
- External relations and scouting

CERTIFICATION RESULTS

Based on the results of licensing in the area of youth academies the clubs get stars (one, two, or three) and UEFA solidarity payments are distributed.



U-17/U-19 YOUTH COMPETITIONS

Youth Bundesliga



DFB Youth Cup

UEFA Youth League



U-19	North/ north-east	West	South/ south-west	21 state associations (one specific Cup each)	U-19 Champion and/ or U-19 teams of the participating clubs of the UCL group stage
	14 teams	14 teams	14 teams		
	Each champion and the best 2nd ranked qualify for the Championship Finals			Each Cup Champion qualifies for the DFB Youth Cup	
U-17	North/ north-east	West	South/ south-west		
	14 teams	14 teams	14 teams		
	Each champion and the best 2nd ranked qualify for the Championship Finals				



U-17/U-19 YOUTH COMPETITIONS



32 teams (4 teams in 8 groups)	A	B	C	D	32 teams	96 matches	2 legs	Maximum of 10 matches	
	E	F	G	H					
2 best teams from each group qualify for the next round									
1/16	16 teams: winners and runner-up teams of the group — home team is winner of the group				16 teams	8 matches	1 leg		
1/4	Open draw Home team determined by the draw				8 teams	4 matches			
1/2	Open draw Neutral venue				4 teams	2 matches			
Final	Final Neutral venue				2 teams	1 match			

Total: 111 matches



INVESTMENT IN THE STARS OF TOMORROW
THE EDUCATION CONCEPT

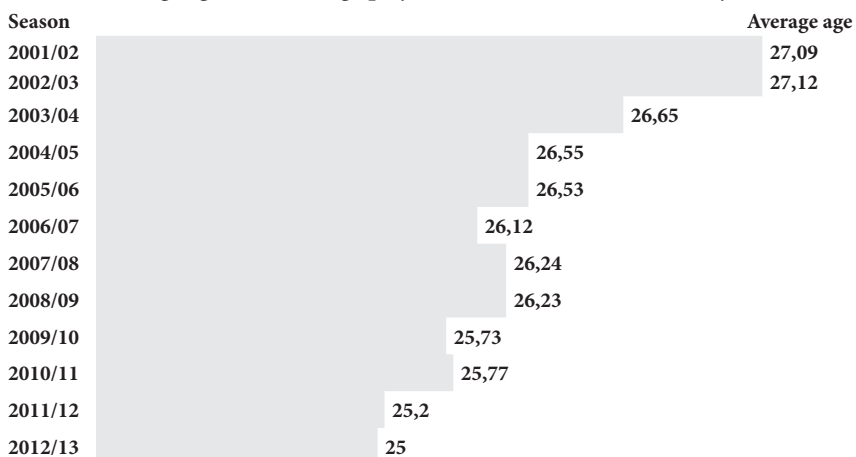
The total investment in football academies
in the period from 2002/03 to 2012/13 amounts to € 820 million

Investments in youth academies in millions € per seasons



THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
RESULTS

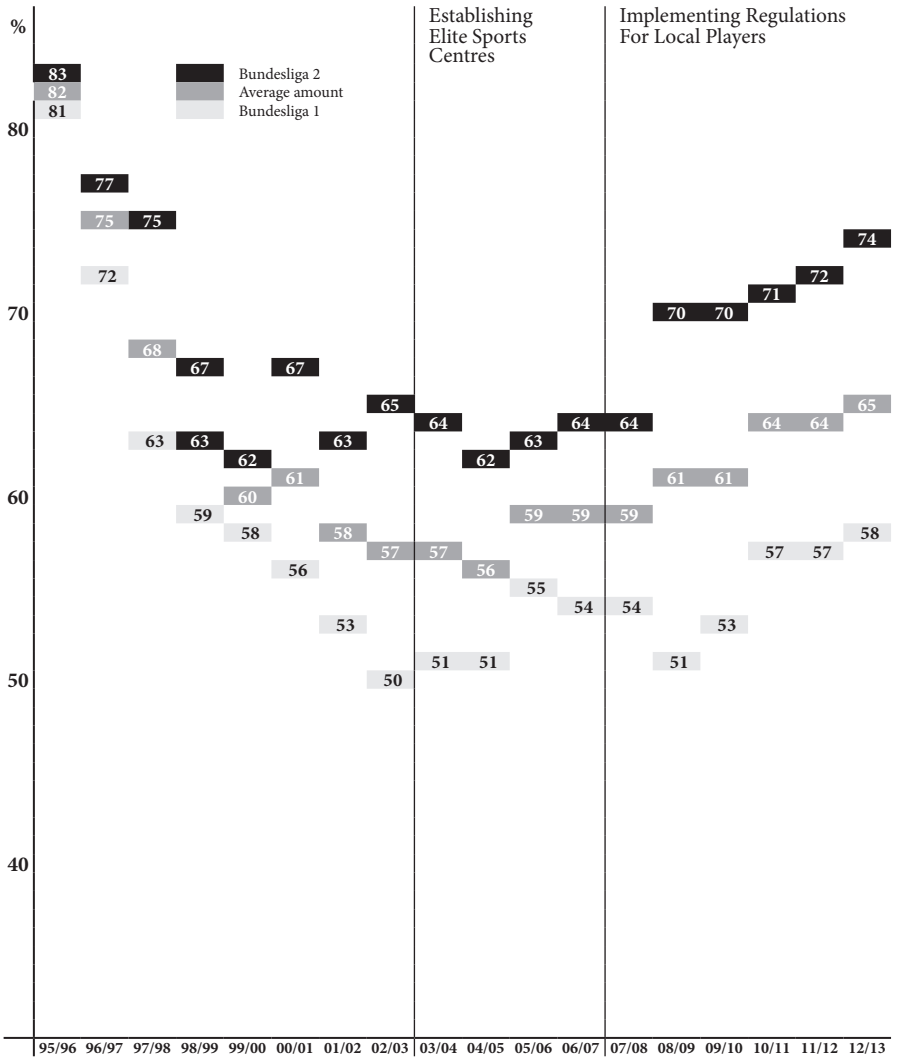
Average age of Bundesliga players (Information from February 2013)





THE EDUCATION CONCEPT
RESULTS

German players in Bundesliga & Bundesliga 2 (percentage of the total number)



**3. “THE LONG ROAD TO SUCCESS”:
WHAT MAKES GERMAN FOOTBALL SO GREAT?
An excerpt from the Article by Denys Trubetskoi²⁹⁵**

To achieve the result, correct setting of goals means a lot. In 2007, the DFB set three goals:

1. Leadership in the world football. Being on top and winning titles in the world and European championships and the Olympic Games.
2. Attractiveness of football. Having fun on the football pitch for everybody — from beginners to top players.
3. Motivation for evolving. Life-long love to sports and taking care of your health.

Once the goals had been set, the DFB identified three key directions to follow to achieve them:

1. Development of Personality. To prepare players not only for the sport but for life. To develop psychological self-confidence, respect and tolerance towards opponents, coaches, referees and all people.
2. Individual Development. The intensive motivation and interest of a coach in every player. To give players intensive support both on and off the football field. An extensive training program. Individual distribution of physical and psychological workload.
3. The key role of a coach. To give players motivation and joy of playing football. To plan challenging training process for players. To be a role model with an authority over players on and off the football field.

To achieve success together, all children’s and youth coaches in German football must adhere to similar approaches to the development of the game as a whole. The game philosophy of the DFB is based on reasonable forecasts for the future, [current] trends in international football and the basic principles of German football. Team football, according to Sammer and the company, is made of two components: a comprehensive game philosophy and a team with personalities in its squad. Together they encapsulate four principles at once, according to which the game of the German team should be built.

1. Technique under pressure
 - we concentrate on ideal basic technique of all the players (ball control, dribbling, ball passing game);

²⁹⁵ Трубецкой Д. «Долгий путь к успеху»: что делает немецкий футбол настолько сильным? UA-Футбол, 30 мая 2013. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ycshwrhu>

- even in the smallest space we, having skills to perform well under pressure, can create dangerous attacks;
 - perfect basic technique improves skills of all team players.
2. Readiness
 - only by being fully prepared physically we can improve our performance [game];
 - we have physical abilities to play high tempo football in all positions during the entire match;
 - we meet high-level conditional requirements in all positions.
 3. Tactical formation
 - we follow clear philosophy of the game;
 - we have the scheme with clear tasks set for each position, group and for the entire team;
 - we control the game both in defence and attack;
 - we are focused on attacking football;
 - we want to play attractively, but primarily we are focused on the result.
 4. Desire to win
 - we never give up and fight until the final whistle is blown;
 - we radiate passion;
 - we let the opponents see our strong points;
 - even in extremely difficult situations we do not lose control and stay focused and disciplined to achieve success.

However, as loud and eloquent as words about our own football concept and football philosophy may sound, the success itself is impossible without a clear organisation of the process. And such organisation is the case in the German children's and youth football. To understand how the system of children's and youth football in Germany is set up, we have to admit that the DFB defined seven steps of player development:

1. Fundamental kinetics training (3–6 years, Bambini [und Jünger] — U7). Kinetics and multifunctional development games in a club, kindergarten or school.
2. Develop technical and tactical understanding (7–10 years, F–Junioren U8/U9 and E–Junioren U10/U11). Doing different kinds of sports and playing football in a club or at school.
3. Basic football specific training (11–14 years, D–Junioren U12/U13 and C–Junioren U14/U15). Training centers, the DFB “Talent Support Programme” («TALENTFORDERUNG»), youth club football.
4. Beginning of specialisation (15–18 years, B–Junioren U16/U17 and A–Junioren U18/U19). Training centres, elite football schools, national youth teams (U15, U16, U17, U18), talent development in licensed clubs.

5. Transitional training sessions with proper workload (17–20 years, promising players). Licensed clubs, national teams (U19, U20, U21), the high-performance amateur level.
6. Refining (21–29 years, first-choice players). Bundesliga, 2 & 3 leagues, international club tournaments.
7. Stabilisation (first-choice players). National “A” team (A-Nationalmannschaft).

4. THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DFB WORK IN THE NATIONAL TEAM INSTITUTE

Presented by the DFB sports director Matthias Sammer
at XXIX Alliance of European Football Coaches’ Associations Symposium
in Frankfurt, October 25–29, 2008

*Thinking about today is good.
But to think about tomorrow is more important!*

— Matthias Sammer

Three main goals of the DFB:

1. WE WANT TO BE THE FIRST.
2. THINKING ABOUT TRAINING CONCEPTS FOR THE YOUTH AND GIRLS’ FOOTBALL.
3. WE START WORKING FOR FUTURE VICTORIES AT A VERY EARLY AGE.

The central element of modern German football philosophy is PROMOTION OF PERSONALITIES IN FOOTBALL

Matthias Sammer says: “*Today, we have no great individuals. The development of individuals is being blocked. Personal promotion or individual development is a development of the leadership qualities. We need leaders on the football pitch and on the coach bench.*” He underlines: “*That’s wonderful if a player wants to become a coach.*”

The role of a coach is of paramount importance! So his education and personal qualities are.

A set of individual qualities is what makes a coach a leader who will lead his players. And the objective of the DFB sports director is **to make a team of personalities.**

According to Matthias Sammer, Elements of Success are:

1. MAINTAINING THE HUNGER TO WIN
2. FUNCTIONAL READINESS

3. TECHNIQUE OF BALL POSSESSION UNDER PRESSURE

4. TACTICAL FORMATION

Or let us put it this way: **SPEED — TACTICS — PERSONALITY.**

Below are more critical “success” factors:

1. **Planning**
2. **Analysis**
3. **Communications**
4. **Events**
5. **Control** (central element as to Sammer)

TALENT PROMOTION PROGRAMME AS A PART OF THE DFB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

29 staff coaches of the DFB work full-time under Talent Promotion Programme.

The key elements of the Programme are:

- additional training sessions with talents in the clubs twice per week;
- trainings in club academic groups for players over 15 y.o.

The DFB sports director says that the success in football is based on developing personalities as individuals. Therefore, one should learn to recognise and cultivate their personalities & develop their individual qualities.

Football is a complex game being a combination of:

- tactic;
- technique;
- game discipline.

Training and developing football personalities should start at an early age. The work should be carried out comprehensively, so that a player is prepared not only to deal with physical stress but psychological pressure, including social pressure.

After all, according to Matthias Sammer, a player is affected by many factors:

- agent (*“I hate the agents”*, says Matthias Sammer);
- friends;
- colleagues;
- media;
- family;
- spectators/fans;
- club management.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE DFB NATIONAL TEAMS INSTITUTE STRUCTURE

Each Germany national youth team may afford the following:

- goalkeeper coach;
- fitness coach;
- two physiotherapists;
- medical examination twice a year (as a minimum);
- physical test twice a year (as a minimum);
- video analysis of:
 - international matches;
 - training sessions;
- database;
- analysis and review of each national team match in accordance with the DFB standard methods.

Every head coach has an opportunity to involve a psychologist. But, as Matthias Sammer said, psychology services called for additional difficulties. Some coaches stand for “yes” and some do for “no”. However, the DFB sports director can see a big future in this work.

One more element of the DFB’s philosophy is **open information sharing from team to team.**

ANNEX 2. GERMAN MIRACLE. POSTSCRIPTUM, or Why Does Germany Do The Best?

Die Mannschaft was not at their best in 2020. The results and quality of the game in 2020/21 UEFA Nations League left a great deal to be desired and made hearts of “German machine” fans tremble with uncertainty on the eve of the UEFA EURO 2020. The failure and exit out of the 2018 FIFA World Cup only made the sense of crisis even stronger. Recalling the first edition of the 2018/19 UEFA Nations League when Germany was not perfect too only gives more alarming tones to the general picture. German football is at a crossroads again, like at the beginning of the 2000s. Do Germans have problems? The answer is obvious: Die Mannschaft is not at their best.

Let us take a look at how local experts respond to the issues and why their reactions testify to the strength and capability to find a way out of the difficult situation.

Stefan Kuntz²⁹⁶ puts it this way: *“We have fallen too far behind the trends of the top teams. We have focused on ball possession and played with a striker who can use his feet a lot, a false nine. But we have forgotten the basics: engaging in duels, crossing and successfully going into one-on-one situations. Playing with both feet, tempo dribbling and alertness is something that anyone can learn. Before trying to imitate Ronaldo’s shots, you should do basic training.*

The commitment to arrange the European Championship in 2024 must be the starting signal. Because now, we can influence players who will then play successfully.

We used to have seven exceptional talents in each age class — now there are two. And the Bundesliga teams increasingly attract players from abroad (RB Leipzig involved 19 players in six matches of the group stage of 2020/21 UEFA Champions League with 17 out of them were foreigners²⁹⁷) — even if they prefer to engage

²⁹⁶ Stefan Kuntz, head coach of the 2015/17 and 2019/21 UEFA European U-21 Championship winners and runners-up of the 2017/19 UEFA European U-21 Championship, UEFA EURO 1996 winner as Die Mannschaft national player.

Saturday, October 13, 2018 Bulinews.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y96xzp06>

This article, in principle, is the translation of the following publication from German into English: Redaktion Sportbuzzer U21-Nationaltrainer Stefan Kuntz warnt deutschen Fußball: “Sollten nicht Ronaldo nachmachen” 11.10.2018 Sportbuzzer.de URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y6uzs7fg>

²⁹⁷ Александр Дорский “Лимит и календарь повлияли на провал в ЛЧ и ЛЕ: игроки РПЛ в лидерах по минутам в Европе, у конкурентов намного больше легионеров”, 11 декабря 2020 Sports.ru URL : <https://tinyurl.com/4o4bf37t>

*talents from the neighbouring countries. The fact is: in two or three years, we can fall off the track.”*²⁹⁸

He is followed by another football expert Peter Hyballa²⁹⁹ who used to work as a chief instructor for the DFB:

*“There’s a lot of focus on fostering the collective at the expense of individual quality. Individualists and big personalities, courageous, creative players or even players who think out of the box are not in demand.”*³⁰⁰

“Today every 16 year-old player knows about fundamental tactical formations, talks about binding, disengagement and isolation as well as can speak about spaces on the field. With this set of knowledge, he could pass exams and get a coaching B license. But such a trained young player can not do ten tricks which will allow him to prove his worth at ball control. And more importantly, nobody encourages him to go for it and challenge himself with this kind of duels. For this, he needs to be given a lot of encouragement, because this does require courage and taking risks.

Why this does not happen? Because working with youth in the Bundesliga is more result-oriented rather than education-focused. This is professional mini-football (“Mini-Profifußball”) and not the youth football. Young coaches experience a lot of pressure and stress.

*And my advice for young talents is to stay, mostly, with their small home clubs as long as they can rather than immediately going into professional club where they may find themselves to be No. 20 or even No. 25 in the squad.”*³⁰¹

When a journalist asked about his suggestion for coaching education, Peter Hyballa explained: *“The training session philosophy, again, should be focused more on individual support and not on abundantly accented game with ball possession, passes and combinations. This has been happening lately at the expense of players’ freedom.”*

— What was the biggest mistake at the 2018 World Cup?

— We tried a copy: the Netherlands and Spain squared. Always forward, hard attacking play, sometimes so extreme, with only two defenders left. Poor choice of football, oriented towards ball possession without a real centre forward.”

In my opinion, such public critical view on problems testifies to the ability to acknowledge mistakes, find solutions and, very likely, will allow Germany “A” to get out of crisis even quicker and get stronger. One can’t help but acknowledge that Bayern Munich victories in 2020 and successful work of bright coaching talents in Germany at the highest international football level shows how highly competitive

²⁹⁸ Rune Gjerulff «Should the German approach to youth development be changed?» // Bulinews.com: <https://tinyurl.com/y96xzp06> This article, in principle, is the translation from German to English of this publication: Redaktion Sportbuzzer U21-Nationaltrainer Stefan Kuntz warnt deutschen Fußball: “Sollten nicht Ronaldo nachmachen” 11.10.2018 Sportbuzzer.de URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y6uzs7fg>

²⁹⁹ Peter Hyballa // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3ze6zm83>

³⁰⁰ Rune Gjerulff “Should the German approach to youth development be changed?” // Bulinews.com, Saturday, October 13, 2018. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y96xzp06>

³⁰¹ Ex-DFB-Trainerausbilder Peter Hyballa: Das läuft bei der Förderung deutscher Talente schief. Sportbuzzer.de by Hans-Günter Klemm, 11.10.2018 URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ya4oabgd>

German professional football is in Europe. Two coaches from Germany took part in the final match of the 2019/20 UEFA Champions League namely Hans-Dieter Flick and Thomas Tuchel. And the German club won. Thomas Tuchel has become the first manager to reach the UEFA Champions League final in two successive seasons with different clubs — with Paris Saint-Germain in 2019/20 and FC Chelsea in 2020/21 season³⁰². And Thomas Tuchel's team secured one more Champion's title in 2020/21.

The modern coaching school in Germany has fair reasons to be proud of success achieved by Jürgen Klopp. Julian Nagelsmann and Marco Rose have already good reputation in the UEFA Champions League. Hans-Dieter Flick³⁰³ had been a years-long assistant coach to Joachim Löw in Die Mannschaft (from 01.09.2006 till 31.12.2014) and working as DFB sporting director (from 01.09.2014 till 16.01.2017). On the 25th of May 2021 he was appointed as Joachim Löw's successor in Nationalmannschaft.

Most probably, good potential of coaching schools in Germany in tandem with the ability of German football community to critical thinking and systematic analysis of their successes and failures being ordinary companions of the elite sport is truly what makes German football so successful. I believe that once more German football will be able to teach good lessons to their steady opponents and everyone who wishes to compete with it.

³⁰² Seth Vertelney Tuchel makes managerial history as Chelsea reach Champions League final. // Goal.com, May 06, 2021. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/3zh9vk89>

³⁰³ Hans-Dieter Flick Transfermarkt.com <https://tinyurl.com/yyegmzds>

ANNEX 3. THE SPANISH PRINCIPLES³⁰⁴

What does it mean to build up the team?

- Building up the team of players;
- Building up coaching team.

The choice of the single system allows developing players of European/international level.

All national teams of Spain play the following tactical formation:

1-4-2-3-1

What reasons are behind it?

1. The tradition of the Spanish football: to win flanks — not just to play but to win!
2. The target is to unify the work of all schools at professional football clubs.

The proposed scheme is based on an efficient time-and-performance tested modern model of football that encapsulates defense in the line, additional midfielders (creative and defensive), wingers moving across all front of the game and forwards suggesting a mobile and non-standard football and offering surprising solutions.

National football alphabet or a script for building up team work consists of the following “letters”:

1. Search
2. Structure
3. Scheme of the game
4. Requirements
5. Management
6. Database

The Spaniards are looking for talents, at that keep repeating Arsène Wenger’s words: *“Talent is not enough. There also must be intelligence”*. That said, we can continue with another Arsène Wenger’s quote³⁰⁵: *“Nobody has enough talent to live on with one’s talent. Even when you have talent, a life without work goes nowhere.”*

The success requires development of players who are capable to be in the Spain national team starting XI! This means:

³⁰⁴ As presented by Ginés Meléndez at XXIX Alliance of European Football Coaches’ Associations Symposium in Frankfurt, 25–29 October 2008

³⁰⁵ Nobody has enough talent to live on talent alone. Even when you have talent, a life without work goes nowhere. December 15, 2011. Bleacherreport.com. by Justin Pedersen URL : <https://tinyurl.com/wpoqr44>

- To search very carefully and properly for those candidates out of player pool who are able to learn and be competitive;
- To monitor their progress.

When to select and when to monitor?

- During youth competitions by watching matches.
- During the matches of regional teams.
- During the matches of the national championship.

The principles of team work:

- Always together and never alone;
- Cooperation;
- Ability to work with others.

The players are expected to show an ability to play for the team, to work within the team and to interact with team partners.

Who selects candidates?

- 7 coaches of national youth teams including U-21 national team.
- 47 regional coaches.

To carry out selection work, annual meetings/seminars for coach education are usually held in December where analytical, theoretical and practical classes take place.

How is the team made?

- Regional coaches send their reports to RFEF by December.
- “Weekend” matches are watched.
- At December meeting of regional coaches, accumulative information is assembled.

By December, the Player List of the future team of 55 candidates shall be compiled (5 players for every playing position). The team gets together for a 3-day training camp and plays two training matches.

Starting from January:

- Team training camps;
- Tournaments;
- “Weekend” matches.

After January’s team activities, 33 candidates are to be selected — 3 players for each playing position — followed by short-term 3-day training camp before the team starts their participation in international matches and tournaments.

What requirements are set for candidates to national teams?

1. Technical skills
2. Character (temperament)
3. Competitiveness
4. Speed (both physical and mental)
5. Thirst for victory, the desire to win
6. Psychological stability

One more important Spanish principle is as follows: **a player is a personality! However, he must be able to integrate into the team and share responsibility.**

Principles of team management:

1. Group solidarity/unity
2. Cooperation/collaboration
3. Work-as-one-team

To close our flashback to “The Spanish Principles”, let us refer to how well-known representatives of the Spanish football reflected on the above matter³⁰⁶.

At the UEFA seminar after the 2010 World Cup victory in South Africa, Fernando Hierro, a former sporting director of the Spain’s football federation, said: *“Our philosophy is based on developing qualities in the youth teams while remaining faithful to a certain playing style based on our want to dominate possession and a desire to carry the game to the opposition. The idea is to make our pathway to the top as smooth as possible. I know that traditionally a lot of national associations try to have the age-limit teams mirroring the style of the senior team. **But our point of view is that it should be the other way around. The senior team’s play is based on what we do in the youth teams.**”*

On his personal website³⁰⁷, Rafa Benítez³⁰⁸, wrote: *“For a long time, youth development in Spanish football has had a structure which people like Iñaki Saez, Juan Sanisteban, Ginés Meléndez, Fernando Hierro (now at Malaga FC) and others knew how to adapt to suit the Spanish nature. Local competitions, regional teams and then national squads produced boys who are constantly competing, and it is widely known that youth coaches in Spain are very good at their job. These are key factors in the continuity and success at all levels.”*

Meléndez, one of the above-mentioned sages, states: *“The key is the work that is put in by the [RFEF] in every region of the country. These players join us when they are 15 and are taught to play within a specific framework which doesn’t change throughout the age groups; it lasts right up until they enter the senior set-up. The philosophy of Spanish football is to develop our players from grassroots with our own personality, our own way of understanding and style of football. In hindsight, it’s easy to say after winning the Euro and the World Cup, but our great philosophy is to build upon the successes of youth football.”*

³⁰⁶ From Boys to Men, Spain Benefit from Brotherhood of Believers. The Guardian by Paul Hayward, Spain Sportblog. November 11, 2011. Theguardian.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb6tcucv>

³⁰⁷ The European and World Champions at Wembley. Rafa Benítez Blog // Rafabenitez.com. 11. November 2011. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/jspnzu83>

³⁰⁸ Rafa Benítez // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y6xsdcnt>

ANNEX 4. TRAINING AGENDA FOR UKRAINE NATIONAL YOUTH TEAMS

EXCL. TRAINING CAMPS AND MATCHES
FOR OFFICIAL FIFA AND UEFA MATCHES

		2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
U-14/15	TC									4	4(0)*				
	IT									0	0				
	IM									0	0				
U-15/16	TC	4	2	2	3	4	4	2	6	6	5	2	3	3	5
	IT	3	2	1	2	0	1	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	0
	IM	9	9	5	9	3	5	6	9	8	10	7	8	8	8
U-16/17	TC	8	6	6	6	8	6	5	7	8	6	5	6	5	7
	IT	3	3	2	3	6	4	4	6	4	4	4	4	4	4
	IM	23	16	15	13	23	15	15	20	16	15	15	14	15	15
U-17/18	TC	6	4	4	5	5	4	3	5	5	5	6	4	5	7
	IT	1	1	1	0	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2
	IM	11	7	9	8	14	8	9	8	9	9	11	12	13	12
U-18/19	TC	5	5	7	5	6	5	6	6	6	4	5	6	4	6
	IT	1	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	2	3
	IM	11	16	17	16	16	14	14	15	14	15	12	18	10	16
U-19	TC		3	3	3	2	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2
	IT		1	2	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	IM		14	7	4	5	8	5	5	4	4	3	4	4	1
U-20	TC			3					7	5	5	2	2	2	4
	IT			2					1	0	1	0	1	1	1
	IM			7					6	5	9	0	3	3	4
Total	TC	23	20	25	22	25	23	20	35	38	32 (28)	23	24	21	31
	IT	8	10	10	8	12	12	10	14	10	11	10	13	11	10
	IM	54	62	60	50	61	50	49	63	56	62	48	59	53	56

TC — training camp;

IT — international tournament;

IM — international [friendly] match (at national team level)

* Planned events were cancelled following the election of the new FFU president.

ANNEX 5. THE MARK UKRAINE LEFT IN THE HISTORY OF MODIFYING THE FIFA RULE — “Eligibility to Play for Association Teams”

*We cannot know further ways
Of our word — how it'll be drifted, —
Compassion from above is gifted
As we are given sacred grace.
— Fedor Tutchev³⁰⁹*

Before getting directly into the narrative, let us say a few words about the FIFA rule. The eligibility to play for association teams or national teams of FIFA member associations is governed by the FIFA Statutes or rather Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes. Since 2004, the aforementioned Rules to be discussed below have undergone significant modifications more than once. Coincidentally, Ukrainian players were granted the right to represent the Ukrainian Football Association either at the moment when the following modifications entered into force or, probably, when their pending cases at relevant UEFA or FIFA bodies have in a way triggered a need for the implementation of new FIFA rules. Now, let us proceed directly with the Ukrainian mark and amendments made to these Rules in this regard.

Case No. 1 — Artem Milevskiy

Artem Milevskiy (DOB: 12.01.1985) was born in Minsk (Belarus) and in September 2000 played for U-16 national team of Belarus in the qualifying round of the 2000/01 UEFA European U-16 Championship (for players born on and after 01.01.1984). Artem played two matches. In autumn 2000, thanks to scouting by the head coach Pavlo Iakovenko (a head coach of the team of players born in 1985), he was signed to FC Dynamo Kyiv. It was followed by pretty time-consuming and long-lasting fight for eligibility to play for the representative teams of the Ukrainian Football Association (Football Federation of Ukraine back then). The process was completed neither on the 18th of March 2004 — when the chairman of the FIFA Players' Status Committee took a decision on satisfying the request submitted by the Football Federation of Ukraine with respect to the player Artem Milevskiy by allowing the footballer to play for the national team of Ukraine with

³⁰⁹ Translation by Viacheslav Chistiakov (Вячеслав Чистяков) Proza.ru URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ухрс37mv>

decision coming into force from the date of notification of the judgement³¹⁰ — nor the next day, 19th of March 2004, when the FIFA Circular No. 901 “Eligibility to play for national teams”³¹¹ was published. For the first time, the reference to the player’s family appeared in it (farther, mother, grandfather, grandmother) who were born on the territory of the respective football association. Milevskiy was born in 1985 on the territory of the USSR with both Belarus and Ukraine included before December 1991. After the 19th of March 2004, Belarus Football Association appealed to the FIFA Appeal Committee.

On 26 April 2004, the FIFA Appeal Committee rendered a decision that the player Artem Milevskiy was not eligible to play for the Football Federation of Ukraine. On 11 May 2004, the decision was communicated to the parties.

In the meantime, due to the fact that the decision was officially announced only on the 11th of May, Artem Milevskiy made his first appearance in the squad of the Ukraine national youth team in the second qualifying round of the 2003/04 UEFA European U-19 Championship in Group 4 in the match Denmark vs Ukraine on the 28th of April 2004 in Slovenia. He assisted the Ukrainian team to qualify for the final round of the European championship. Then Artem Milevskiy helped the Ukrainian team to reach the semifinal of the tournament in question in Switzerland. It was preceded by the second trial of Milevskiy’s case by the FIFA Appeal Committee. On the 20th of May 2004, FFU requested the FIFA Appeal Committee to re-open the Milevskiy case. On the 25th of June 2004, the FIFA Appeal Committee rendered their decision that the player Artem Milevskiy was eligible to play for the FFU (Decision 040054 UKR ZH).

Now, let us refer to the wording of the FIFA Circular No. 901:

- a) the player was born on the territory of the relevant Association;*
- b) his biological mother or biological father was born on the territory of the relevant Association;*
- c) his grandmother or grandfather was born on the territory of the relevant Association;*
- d) he has lived continuously on the territory of the relevant Association for at least two years.”*

Notwithstanding the fact that preamble to the Circular No. 901 states that “FIFA has learnt from various sources that a number of Brazilian players currently playing in the German Bundesliga apparently intended to assume a new nationality — in particular that of Qatar — in order to be eligible to play for the representative Association”, not a single word was said about the above-mentioned Belarus-Ukraine case, however, it is hard not to notice obvious parallels. But the fact remains as that. The day after the decision was taken by the chairman of the FIFA

³¹⁰ Збірна України U-19: капітан приносить перемогу, 29.04.2004 12:23 FFU.org.ua URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9pgu5fx>

³¹¹ Circular No. 901 Zurich, 19 March 2004, Gs/htā-hus Eligibility to play for national teams. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ycz9tw8o>

Players' Status Committee, FIFA Circular was published with direct relevance to the Artem Milevsky's case.

However, in the FIFA Statutes, new rules appeared only four years after — in the edition dated May 2008³¹². Although by the Circular No. 901, the decision shall enter into force with immediate effect. At the same time, the FIFA Emergency Committee considered the case on the 16th of March 2004 in accordance with the Article 33, paragraph 3 of the above Statutes.

History repeats itself. The case above is similar to the one with the release of players to the representative teams of the national football association to some extent, and more specifically, to the story with the CAS decision in favour of Barcelona and two German clubs regarding the participation of their players in the football tournament of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. In this case, the appropriate amendments to the FIFA Statutes were made only six years later. But then it was “instigated” by the CAS decision and wasn't duplicated immediately by the relevant FIFA bodies. In this case, it took two years less³¹³.

Let us highlight some more details. We are considering five articles that now are included into the Chapter of the current edition of the FIFA Statutes “Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes”. The FIFA Statutes, editions of 2004 and 2006, had only one Article — Article 15 Principle. In the edition of 2008 four articles were included into the Rule “Eligibility to play for association teams”, i.e.

VII. ELIGIBILITY TO PLAY FOR ASSOCIATION TEAMS

Article 15 Principle

Article 16 Nationality entitling players to represent more than one Association

Article 17 Acquisition of a new nationality

Article 18 Change of Association

The full text of all the amendments, its extended version compared to the edition of 2004 (Circular No. 901), was included after the appropriate decision was taken by the 58th FIFA Congress in Sydney, Australia on the 30th of May 2008 and was published in the Circular No. 1147 dated 18th of June 2008. And we will speak about it in our next case. By the way, the new edition of the FIFA Statutes came into force on the 1st of August 2008.

To bring the first story to an end, let me remind of some key dates when the amendments to the FIFA Rule were made, i.e. March 16 and 19, 2004; May 30,

³¹² FIFA STATUTES Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes Standing Orders of the Congress. Edition May 2008. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y73ps77n>

³¹³ FIFA STATUTES Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes Standing Orders of the Congress. Edition 2004 // Resources.fifa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ydh5c59w>; FIFA STATUTES Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes Standing Orders of the Congress Doha, 19 October 2003 / Marrakech, 12 September 2005 / Munich, 8 June 2006 // Resources.fifa.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y865cnqd>

June 18 and August 1, 2006. It is high time to move to the second case. As more amendments are to be made.

Case No. 2 — Júnior Moraes

Before we proceed with the case in relation to acquiring Ukrainian nationality by the Brazilian player, let us refer again to the aforementioned FIFA Circular No. 901 dated 19th of March 2004 where for the first time ever the reference was made to the clause stating the requirement for continuous living on the territory of the relevant association for a specified time — for at least two years to be precise.

“d) he has lived continuously for at least two years on the territory of the relevant Association.”

Four years later, FIFA extended this period. Following the release of the FIFA Circular No. 1147 dated 18th of June 2008³¹⁴, on the 1st of August 2008, in contrast to the case described above, the new edition of the FIFA Statutes was amended as follows:

“According to the said provision, any player who refers to art. 15 par. 1 of the Regulations to assume a new nationality and who has not played international football in accordance with art. 15 par. 2 of the Regulations shall be eligible to play for the new representative team, inter alia, only if he has lived continuously for at least five years after reaching the age of 18 on the territory of the relevant Association (previous wording: “for at least two years on the territory of the relevant Association”).

It is noteworthy that the modification affected not only the extension of the period for continuous living but the age limit too — *“after reaching the age of 18”*. This amendment is not relevant to the Júnior Moraes’s case though, but we have to highlight it as an established fact speaking of modifications to the rule.

The next change followed 12 years later, in September 2020 to be more precise. The FIFA Statutes and its Chapter “Eligibility to play for association teams” was extended³¹⁵, so was the Article “Change of association” in particular. But in Júnior Moraes’s case, we are more interested in the amendments to the Article 5 Principle, paragraph 5 which states as follows:

“Notwithstanding Art. 5 par. 4 a), unless exceptional circumstances exist, a player must be physically present on the territory of an association for at least 183 days during a 12-month period to be considered to have “lived on the territory” of that association for that year.”

We will discuss paragraph 4 of this Article below.

³¹⁴ Circular No. 1147 Zurich, 18 June 2008 SG/mav/nif Eligibility to play for representative teams; Articles 15–18 of the Regulations Governing the Application of the FIFA Statutes. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yb3nlc2s>

³¹⁵ FIFA STATUTES Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes Standing Orders of the Congress. September 2020 edition. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y5fomkp9>

But now, let me make the last reference to the official document — the Law of Ukraine “On Citizenship”³¹⁶ stating as follows:

“— continuous [uninterrupted] residence in Ukraine: residence in Ukraine of a person that has made a private trip abroad lasting not longer than 90 days, and if the number of such trips during the year does not exceed 180 days. Business trips abroad, for study, on a leave of absence, for medical treatment as recommended by a medical Institute, or changing address in Ukraine shall not be regarded as breaches of the continuous residence clause;”

Although indicating such terms in the government documents, probably, falls within general international practice. For example, similar requirements can be found in Great Britain — in the Guide AN Naturalisation Booklet³¹⁷: *“Only in the most exceptional circumstances would total absences exceeding 180 days in the final 12 months of the qualifying period be disregarded if all other requirements were not met.”* Maybe it served as a basis for the aforementioned amendments to the FIFA rule.

Now, the case itself as it is.

Brazilian player Júnior Moraes (Aluísio Chaves Ribeiro Moraes Júnior), born on the 4th of April 1987, obtained Ukrainian nationality before FIFA international window in March 2019, when Ukraine “A” team started UEFA EURO 2020 qualifying round in group B. Moraes made his first international appearance for Ukraine on March 22, 2019 in Portugal. The second match took place on March 25, 2019 in Luxemburg. At the end of those matches, football associations of Portugal and Luxemburg launched an appeal against the participation of Júnior Moraes in the above matches before UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body. Why? On what grounds? He has not lived continuously for five years on the territory of the Ukrainian FA. This fact was confirmed, for example, in the player’s profile³¹⁸ on <https://www.transfermarkt.com>. Four months lacked as the player was on loan at Chinese FC TJ Quanjian.

Fortunately for Ukraine, at the beginning of May 2019, UEFA Control, Ethics and Disciplinary Body confirmed that Moraes was eligible to play for Ukraine. Thus, the Ukrainian national team has avoided forfeiting twice.

One year and four months later, the above-mentioned modifications were made to the respective chapter of the FIFA Statutes — Regulations Governing the Application of the Statutes — which now provides for cases as such. Article 5 Principle paragraph 4 states:

“4. For the purposes of arts 6 to 9 below, the phrase “lived on the territory of the relevant association” shall mean a period of physical presence on the territory of that

³¹⁶ Закон України «Про громадянство України» // Zakon.rada.gov.ua URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y2su3o58>

³¹⁷ Home Office Guide AN Naturalisation Booklet — The Requirements July 2020 Assets.publishing.service.gov.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y84kbqt2>

³¹⁸ Júnior Moraes profile. Transfermarkt.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y86rha5r>

association. The period shall be for a defined period of time (in years) in accordance with the relevant provision.

- a) The period of physical presence is not interrupted by:
- i) short absences abroad for personal reasons;
 - ii) holidays abroad during the football off-season;
 - iii) medical treatment or rehabilitation abroad following injury or illness; or
 - iv) travel abroad as a result of football employment.”

In this regard, the inclusion of the reference to “183 days during a 12-month period” to the Article 5 Principle correlates with “180 days” stated in the Law of Ukraine “On Citizenship” and established international legal practice.

P. S. We have already discussed significant modifications made to FIFA Rule since 2004, as well as its extension in 2020. Even though latest modifications made to the Article “Change of Association” were not relevant to Ukraine, in my opinion, we cannot ignore the effort made by the Royal Moroccan Football Association³¹⁹ in the overall context of the history of amendments made to FIFA rule. For several years, Royal Moroccan FA has been fighting for their player Munir El Haddadi (DOB: 01.01.1995). He played (“cap-tied”) for Spain national “A” team in the qualifying match of the UEFA EURO 2016 vs. FYR Macedonia (at that time) on 8 September 2014. Munir entered the field of play as a substitute on the 77th match minute³²⁰. Those formal 13 minutes were the only time played in the squad of the first national team of Spain. In 2017 the player addressed FIFA with a request to represent Morocco. In May 2018 his request was rejected first by FIFA and then by CAS. And recently, in September 2020, the struggle of the Moroccan FA and the player himself culminated in success. Thus, five full sections, one of which is directly related to the Munir El Haddadi’s case, were included into the Article “Change of Association” paragraph 2. In particular, it states the following:

- “c) the Player:
- i) was fielded in a match in an official competition at “A” international level in any kind of football for his current association;
 - ii) at the time of being fielded for his first match in an official competition (at any level) in any kind of football for his current association, he held the nationality of the association which he wishes to represent;
 - iii) at the time of being fielded for his last match in an official competition in any kind of football for his current association, he had not turned 21 years old;

³¹⁹ Munir El Haddadi and Morocco take advantage of Fifa rule change By Jalal Bounouar Football Writer, Morocco. 1 October 2020 | October 2020 www.bbc.com/sport/africa URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9qt6vww>

³²⁰ Spain vs. Macedonia, Sep 8, 2014 KO: 21:45 Estadio Ciudad de Valencia Valencia. UEFA Euro 2016 Qualifying match in Group C // Footballcritic.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yaj6aot2>

iv) was fielded in no more than three matches at “A” international level in any kind of football for his current association, whether in an official competition or non-official competition;

v) at least three years have passed since being fielded for his last match at “A” international level in any kind of football for his current association, whether in an official competition or non-official competition; and

vi) has never participated in any kind of football at “A” international level in the final tournament of the FIFA World Cup or a final tournament of a confederation competition.”

To be fair, it should be noted that there is some connection with the Ukrainian case too. Spain played in the same qualifying group C as Ukraine did³²¹. On 12 October 2015, Aleksandr Zinchenko (DOB 15.12.1996), who represented Russian FC Ufa³²² back then, made his first appearance in the Ukraine squad in the match Ukraine vs Spain. He entered the field as a substitute on the 87th match minute. Well, that’s it. No more parallels between two cases were drawn.

P. P. S. At the end of January 2021, FIFA published Circular No. 1747³²³ — “Commentary on the Rules Governing Eligibility to Play for Representative Teams” which was followed by publishing an explainer on Eligibility to play for representative teams on FIFA’s official website on January 28, 2021”³²⁴:

“In line with its commitment to promote greater transparency in its regulatory operations, FIFA has published its first Commentary on the Rules Governing Eligibility to Play for Representative Teams. The Commentary is accompanied by the publication of the first-ever Guide to Submitting a Request for Eligibility or Change of Association, presenting a complete overview of the legal procedure and documents required for any eligibility or change of association request submitted to the FIFA Players’ Status Committee.”

Thus, this is the first time FIFA has ever provided a more detailed explanation of the aforementioned matter by having published two documents, i.e.:

- Commentary on the Rules Governing Eligibility to Play for Representative Teams³²⁵ and
- Guide to Submitting a Request for Eligibility or Change of Association³²⁶.

³²¹ Ukraine vs Spain. European Championship Qualifying Group C. 7:45pm, Monday 12th October 2015. Kiev Olympic Stadium. Skysports.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ycxg8516> & Uafootball.net.ua URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y9glb8jg>

³²² Oleksandr Zinchenko profile // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y5oy9sgu>

³²³ Circular No. 1747 Zurich, 28 January 2021 SG/kja/jud Commentary on the Rules Governing Eligibility to Play for Representative Teams. Resources.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/ywpx52yu>

³²⁴ FIFA publishes explainer on eligibility to play for representative teams 28 Jan 2021 fifa.com/who-we-are/news URL : <https://tinyurl.com/33yvss34> & FIFATV — YouTube URL : <https://tinyurl.com/v87c4fvh>

³²⁵ Commentary on the Rules Governing Eligibility to Play for Representative Teams JANUARY 2021 EDITION img.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/k2kkewwp>

³²⁶ Guide to Submitting a Request for Eligibility or Change of Association JANUARY 2021 EDITION img.fifa.com URL : <https://tinyurl.com/53hax9wn>

And last but not the least. This section is entitled “Eligibility to play for *association teams*”. However, we may see other definitions for “*association teams*” in this Annex or excerpts from FIFA official documents. For example, “*national teams*” and “*representative teams*”. In this regard, the author considers it necessary to specify that he has opted for “*association teams*” for the title of the Annex 5 with reference to the FIFA Statutes which entered into force on January 1, 2004.

ANNEX 6. THE LIST OF EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL YOUTH TOURNAMENTS

*UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE UEFA MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS
AND OTHER ENTITIES & ORGANISATIONS*

	U-16	U-17	U-18	U-19	U-20	U-21
January	Aegean Cup FA Turkey & 8 NYT	Tournament Minsk, FA Belarus & 12 NYT	Valentin Granatkin Memorial Russian FA & ≤16 NYT			Antalya Cup U-21 Turkey & ≤6 U-21 NT
February		La Manga International Youth Tournament FA Norway ³²⁷ & 4 NYT		La Manga International Youth Tournament FA Norway & 4 NYT La Copa del Atlántico FA Spain & 4 NYT		
March			Federation Cup FA Latvia & 4 NYT			
April	Mondial Football Montaigu France & 8 NYT		Slovakia Cup FA Slovakia & 8 NYT			
May	Memorial Victor Bannikov FA Ukraine & 8 NYT					
June					Tournoi de Toulon France & 10 NYT	Memorial Valeriy Lobanovskiy FA Ukraine & 4 U-21 NT
July						

³²⁷ FA Norway rotates age limit for the tournaments — U-17 tournament is followed by U-19 tournament the year after.

August		Telki Cup FA Hungary & 8 NYT	Václav Ježek tournament FA Czech Republic & 8 NYT		Torneo Internacional de Fútbol Sub-20 de L'Alcúdia Spain & 10 NYT	
		Toto Cup FA Austria & 4 NYT				
		Nordic U-17 Champion- ship ³²⁸ & 8 NYT				
September		Syrenka Cup FA Poland & 8 NYT		Stevan "Čele" Vilotić FA Serbia & 8 NYT		
October			Lafarge Foot Avenir/ Limoges France & 4 NYT			
November						
December			Winter tournament FA Israel & 4 NYT			

The terms/dates of some tournaments may vary. Just to give you an example, Victor Bannikov was held in August in the last years; Valentin Granatkin Memorial³²⁹ was held in September 2018 and June 2019;

U-21 Antalya Cup took place in the FIFA window in March 2019 after a short break. The FA Latvia Federation Cup has changed the dates and age category and in autumn 2019 was held for U-17 teams. Other tournaments may cease to exist, like it was the case with Stevan "Čele" Vilotić starting from autumn 2018 despite its long-lasting history. Thus, all tournaments are a sort of "living creatures" which tend not only to evolve and change but even disappear from NA calendars.

³²⁸ Nordic Under-17 Championship is the competition currently hosted annually by six NAs by principle of rotation: Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The list of participating teams is completed with two more NYTs invited from other UEFA NAs.

³²⁹ Мемориал Валентина Гранаткина / Memorial Valentin Granatkin <http://granatkin.com/>

ANNEX 7. INTERVIEW WITH ARRIGO SACCHI

Here, dear readers, let me share some key points of the conversation with Arrigo Sacchi, a coordinator of Italy national youth teams that took place before U-18 international friendly (players born on and after 01.01.1996) in Kyiv on September 25, 2013.

Arrigo Sacchi's greatest coaching achievements:

- Champion of Serie C1 (1985/86);
- Champion of Serie A (1987/88);
- Winner of Supercoppa Italiana (1987/88);
- Winner of the UEFA Cup of the European Champions (1988/89 and 1989/90);
- Winner of the UEFA Supercup (1988/89 and 1989/90);
- Winner of Intercontinental Cup (1989 and 1990);
- 1989 World Soccer Awards Manager of the Year;
- 1994 FIFA World Cup Runner-Up;
- UEFA EURO 1996 final round participant.

In 2010 Arrigo Sacchi joined the Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio³³⁰.

Probably, Italy "A" team has won more titles than any other national team in Europe. All major tournaments in the world ended in triumph what makes Italy **four-time FIFA World Cup champions** (1934, 1938, 1982 and 2006), 1968 UEFA Euro³³¹ and 1936 Olympic Football Tournament winners. Just to compare, Germany was three-time World Cup champions at the time of interviewing Arrigo Sacchi back in 2013 with three EURO triumphs in their track record.

The Italy U-21 team, like Spain is, is the leader of The Old World being **five-time UEFA European U-21 Championship winners** (with three consecutive winning titles in 1992, 1994 and 1996), while Spain "equalised" in 2019 in Italy and became a five-time European champion too.

Before Sacchi's involvement, Italy national youth teams were "poor relatives" in relation to "A" and U-21 teams. They experienced huge problems with the release of players with clubs looking for every excuse possible to say "no" to the Federation; clubs used to become "allies" to the FIGC only when it came to U-20 national and senior team, when the participation in the national team matches directly affected the player transfer price. But Sacchi's work drove fundamental changes.

³³⁰ Arrigo Sacchi collaborated with Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio, 2010–2014. Arrigo Sacchi // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/9e64mvmw>

³³¹ Italy is EURO 2021 winner which means the second Champions' title won in July 2021.

What has Sacchi done?

First, the Federation has introduced new job titles of a National Youth Team Coordinator (Arrigo Sacchi) and National Youth Team Vice-Coordinator (Maurizio Viscidi³³²). According to Sacchi, one of the main objectives of their work is game analysis and setting-up training process, searching for weak points and ways to improve team performance. Sacchi points out: *“We set a direction for the game, deliver concept and set direction for training process, monitor training progress and make analysis. Our aim is to select players capable to operate both in attack and defence. We share a single philosophy for all teams, it is the total football”*.

Second, football delegation membership has undergone significant changes. The number of officials has increased from standard 5–6 to 12–14 members and speaks for itself:

1. Head of delegation
2. Head coach
3. Assistant coach
4. Goalkeeper coach
5. Fitness coach
6. Doctor (cardiologist and therapist).
7. Doctor (traumatologist).
8. Physiotherapist.
- 9/10. One or two administrator(s)

11/12. Team manager
12/13. National Youth Team coordinator (Arrigo Sacchi) or his deputy Maurizio Viscidi

13/14. Press officer (for the final round of the UEFA European Championship)

However, Italians do not involve psychologists and nutritionists, like German Football Union (DFB) does, nor a video-analyst. The reason is cost saving, as Maurizio Viscidi put it. But a video analyst is always a delegation member for home matches (and he is with U-21 team on a permanent basis, including away matches too).

Third, the number of teams in the Italian National Youth Team Institute has increased with now U-15 on board too. Today, **seven national youth teams** i.e. U-21, U-20, U-19, U-18, U-17, U-16 and U-15 **operate under Sacchi’s supervision**.

³³² Maurizio Viscidi became the coordinator in 2014 when Arrigo Sacchi had left this position. Today he continues to manage all national youth teams of Italy. Maurizio Viscidi // Transfermarkt.com. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/338vmz2v>

Юрий Шевченко. «Италия провалила ЧМ-2010 и отстала от времени. Революция Маурицио Вишиди закинула ее обратно в современность» 11 июля 2021, Sports.ru. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/46j35tub>

U-15 team (players born on and after 01.01.1999) was made in October 2013 and has been playing since then. This is how U-15 team agenda looked like back in 2013, early 2014. For October, November and December 2013, 5 short-term training camps (no longer than 4–6 days) were scheduled and 30 players were called to. Right before Christmas, a four-day tournament was held where, out of **150** candidates, only **80** players were selected to take part in. Early January 2014, one more training camp was scheduled with **32** players to join in. Already in February 2014, U-15s played their first international match.

And fourth, the number of full-time coaches has increased, and the Institute of Scouts has been established. Fully employed FIGC's staff assigned to the national youth teams includes:

- 10 coaches;
- 4 goalkeeper coaches; and
- 4 fitness coaches.

At the same time, there are **12 coaching scouts** at Sacchi's disposal (two of them "belong" to U-21 team only).

The work program envisages that all full-time (staff) coaches and scouts **to watch about 50 matches per week**. Scouts are to submit **weekly reports**. Coaches attend **monthly meetings** where current problems and issues are discussed.

The current number of national team coaching staff (including goalkeeper coaches and fitness coaches) is as follows:

- U-21 — 3
- U-20 — 3
- U-19 — 3
- U-18 — 3
- U-17 — 3
- U-16 — 2
- U-15 — 1

Furthermore, **U-17** and **U-16** coaches as well as **U-19** and **U-18** ones work in a crisscross manner, i.e., for example, U-16 head coach assists the U-17 one and vice versa.

Fifth, a database of candidates for national teams has been developed.

And sixth, Sacchi has radically increased the number of national youth team events by letting them play more than 100 international friendlies per year (105 international matches in 2012/13 season alone with 15 matches played at local club level).

However, the key changes were introduced to the Training Camp & Match Calendar for teams either participating in or preparing for UEFA and FIFA

competitions. U-21, U-19 and U-17 teams have their training camps and play matches almost every month except for the first two summer months.

Sacchi managed to reach an agreement with clubs now releasing their players even outside of FIFA dates. It should be noted that the FFU undertook similar steps in 2009–2012, when Ukraine U-21 NT have had regular extra training camps (from Monday to Wednesday) right before their qualifying matches plus two-three selection training camps per year.

For example, U-19 Training Camp Schedule for Italy U-19s (players born on and after 01.01.1994) was as follows:

- 2012, August 19–22, training camp and match Italy vs. Croatia on 22.08.12;
- 2012, September 9–13, training camp and two matches Italy vs. Portugal on 11 and 13.09.2012;
- 2012, October 5–12, training camp before the qualifying round;
- 2012, November 18–21, training camp and match Italy vs Czech Republic on 21.11.12;
- 2012, December 9–12, matches against the team made of players from 3 & 4 leagues or amateur league (two matches with a duration of 45 minutes each);
- 2013, January 13–16, training camp and a match against a local team;
- 2013, February 3–6, training camp and match Italy vs. Germany on 06.02.13;
- 2013, March 22–27, training camp and match Slovakia vs. Italy on 27.03.13;
- 2013, April 21–24, training camp and match Italy vs. Kazakhstan on 24.04.13;
- 2013, May 6–7, physical examination;
- 2013, May 13–22 training camp right before the elite round.

Sacchi points out that **their target is to play friendly matches against the best teams in the world** and not against opponents comfortable from the perspective of match organisation etc. **In order to produce a competitive national team, playing against the strongest is a must.**

Miscellaneous

Traditionally, U-20 NT takes part in the U-20 Tournament of Four (Italy, Germany, Switzerland and Poland) played in two rounds and taking a larger part of the period of national team preps for the next U-21 qualifying cycle³³³. Thus, Italy makes their “new” U-21 team through competition experience.

Right before a national youth team embarks on UEFA tournament (qualifying or elite round), a 10-day training camp is scheduled. In case a player called up by the Federation plays for the first team of the Club, he will arrive at his national youth team’s disposal after having played all matches for the Club. Thus, Sacchi

³³³ Since 2017/18 season by the initiative of Germany, this tournament was extended up to 8 participating teams.

cooperates with professional football clubs in a flexible manner taking into account national teams and clubs interests.

Interestingly, **coaches sign contracts only for a year**; and depending on their efficiency **Sacchi takes a decision whether their contracts to be extended or terminated**.

Conclusion

So, after this conversation with Arrigo Sacchi, we can conclude the following:

The leading European national football associations are much focused on their effort towards effective and qualified training of player pool for “A” team by developing national youth teams and implementing youth development programmes in professional football clubs. With that in mind, some tailored-made programmes are being developed (by the way, at the beginning of 2000s Germany started to implement their own projects in the area of youth football such as developing academies in every professional club, local selection of talents, development of the National Team Institute etc.); some tools are being introduced and Institutes are being established (for example, a new job title of National Youth Football Coordinators in Italy has been introduced); training centres for national teams are being built. In England in 2013 St George’s Park Training Centre was inaugurated — home for 24 national teams of England on the territory of more than 133 hectares valued at over £105 million; speaking of Top-5 European leagues, there are national training centers in France — Centre technique national Fernand-Sastre Clairefontaine, in Italy — Centro Tecnico Federale di Coverciano, in Spain — training center together with headquarters of Real Federación Española de Fútbol in Las Rozas in a suburb of Madrid, and so far Germany is the one to refuse to build their own training center for national teams; list of national team activities in NATs agenda is being expanded (more training camps to add to a higher number and quality of international friendly matches are being scheduled); qualified scouts are called; specialised analysis-oriented entities are involved (including video analysis) and scouting (Germany) too acting in the best interests of national youth teams.

National football associations involve more and more coaches to work with national youth teams on a full-time basis. Apart from coaches and goalkeeper coaches, fitness coaches and more than one doctor take care of players too; in some national associations (e.g. in Germany) a sports psychologist, a nutritionist and a chef, the latter works even on the youth level, are team delegation members too. Consequently, the quality standards of working with national youth teams are very close to meet national “A” team standards.

Today, the mere fact that **Italy national teams preps are taking place on a regular and systematic basis — they get together almost every month**³³⁴ — is very revealing as youth football in Europe is professionalising:

³³⁴ The number of association team events has slightly decreased lately.

- players with professional contracts are entitled to play on the youth level (in 2000s formally it was prohibited by FIFA);
- youth competitions among teams of professional football clubs are very common (U-15/16/17/18/19/21);
- National Youth Team Institutes are being rapidly developed.

ANNEX 8. THE MANAGER'S PLAN³³⁵

1. **A single game philosophy.** This applies not only to “A” team but also to U-21s and every national youth team.
2. **Professionalisation.** Players are encouraged to become even more involved in their work; now, everyone has his own book with assignments and results.
3. **Potential diagnostics.** Test scores and medical examinations of all players, including the youngest ones, are collected into one database. Based exclusively on these data, training exercises are worked out.
4. **Scouting.** A specialised firm, “Master Coach”, was set-up to make video analysis of matches of teams of all ages, as well as to gather information about opponents. Now, in the half-time, when national “A” team is playing one can watch video scenes of the first half and analyse mistakes.
5. **A team of experts.** In the national team there are not only doctors and masseurs, but also an orthopaedist, a therapist, a physical therapist, fitness coaches and a sports psychologist.
6. **Reform of coaching education.** The courses, which used to last six months, will take a year now.
7. **Sponsorship.** Thanks to Bierhoff’s effort, sponsors of “A” team now bring €30 million a year. As per Kicker data, this is the second largest amount after England.
8. **The training centre.** The implementation of this item has been postponed to an uncertain period. The construction of a centre is rather expensive, and there are some doubts if it is necessary to have such a centre due to the fact that national team usually plays in different cities.
9. **Fan culture.** “*We want to have “a wall” of fans behind the national team, like the Netherlands do*” — said Bierhoff a couple of years ago. Moreover, it is taking a real shape. Before the start of the 2006 FIFA World Cup, in the official fan club there were 14 000 members but now, there are already 52 000.
10. **Internal management.** Every two to three months Joachim Löw, his assistants Hans-Dieter Flick and Andreas Köpke, Bierhoff, Sammer, U-21 coach Eilts and DFB General Secretary Wolfgang Niersbach get together to discuss the current situation and make plans for the future.

An article by Mark Ogden dated March 31, 2011 “*German general manager Oliver Bierhoff warns England they need to develop their team spirit to be successful*”

³³⁵ Алексеев К. Даже обыграв Португалию, немцы останутся в минусе. 19.06.2008, Sportexpress.ru, URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yambd8y2>

describes a slightly upgraded plan by general manager of the Germany team (for England now)³³⁶.

The Bierhoff's plan

Oliver Bierhoff, general manager of the Germany team, claims England must follow the path to football rehabilitation before thinking of winning the World Cup. Here is the former Germany striker's blueprint for success:

1. End club versus country stand-off: Resistance from Arsenal and Liverpool to Jack Wilshere and Andy Carroll being selected for U-21 duty this summer would not happen in Germany, where Bierhoff claims clubs such as Bayern Munich appreciate how international success goes hand-in-hand with the development of their players.
2. Instil respect at a young age: Working in tandem with coach Jurgen Klinsmann in 2004, Bierhoff banned players from throwing dirty kit on the dressing-room floor for kit-men to collect. The move was done to prevent players becoming 'spoilt'.
3. Flood domestic football with domestic talent: Fifty-three percent of players in the Bundesliga are home-grown due to the investment in youth football in Germany. There is no limit on foreigners in Germany, but Bierhoff believes strong youth systems produce talented players, avoiding the need for foreign imports.
4. Build for the future and stick with the plan: Bierhoff and Klinsmann cleared Germany's old guard in 2004 and promoted youth, with last year's World Cup³³⁷ semi-final finish a reward. The Germans also highlight Spain's success in forging a young team and allowing them to grow together.
5. Put glory before money: German footballers are told that, while they can earn big money and fame by starring in club football, they must achieve success at a World Cup to become legends and earn their place in the history of the game.

³³⁶ Germany general manager Oliver Bierhoff warns England they must develop team spirit to be successful. The Telegraph by Mark Ogden. 31 Mar 2011. Telegraph.co.uk URL : <https://tinyurl.com/y8jjlaj3>

³³⁷ Here 2006 FIFA WC is meant.

ANNEX 9. OVERALL STATISTICS: U-21 PLAYERS ON PLAYER LISTS OF THE TEAMS PARTICIPATING IN 2000–2018 FIFA WORLD CUPS AND UEFA EUROS

The number of players, age and DOB at the time of player appearance in the specified edition of the UEFA U-21 Championship clashing with FIFA or UEFA tournament is given in brackets.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP JAPAN & SOUTH KOREA (01.01.1979)

Denmark (3)		France (1)	
Christian Poulsen	28 February 1980	Djibril Cissé	12 August 1981
Peter Løvenkrands	29 January 1980		
Kasper Bøgelund	8 October 1980		
Senegal (6)		Uruguay (4)	
Alassane N'Dour	12 December 1981	Fabián Carini	26 December 1979
Souleymane Camara	22 December 1982	Gonzalo Sorondo	9 October 1979
El Hadji Diouf	15 January 1981	Joe Bizera	17 May 1980
Moussa N'Diaye	20 February 1979	Diego Forlán	19 May 1979
Pape Thiaw	5 February 1981		
Makhtar N'Diaye	31 December 1981		
Paraguay (4)		Slovenia (1)	
Roque Santa Cruz	16 August 1981	Goran Sankovič	18 June 1979
Diego Gavilán	1 March 1980		
Julio César Cáceres	5 October 1979		
Nelson Cuevas	10 January 1980		
South Africa (4)		Spain (3)	
Aaron Mokoena	25 November 1980	Iker Casillas	20 May 1981
Jabu Pule	11 July 1980	Xavi	25 January 1980
Steven Pienaar	17 March 1982	Joaquín	21 July 1981
Thabang Molefe	11 April 1979		

Brazil (4)

Ronaldinho	21 March 1980
Ânderson Polga	9 February 1979
Kléberson	19 June 1979
Kaká	22 April 1982

Costa Rica (3)

Gilberto Martínez	1 October 1979
Winston Parks	12 October 1981
Daniel Vallejos	27 May 1981

Poland (1)

Arkadiusz Głowacki	13 March 1979
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South Korea (7)

Hyun Young-min	25 December 1979
Choi Tae-uk	13 March 1981
Seol Ki-hyeon	8 January 1979
Lee Chun-soo	9 July 1981
Cha Du-ri	25 July 1980
Park Ji-sung	25 February 1981
Song Chong-gug	20 February 1979

Cameroon (7)

Pierre Womé	26 March 1979
Samuel Eto'o	10 March 1981
Nicolas Alnoudji	9 December 1979
Eric Djemba-Djemba	4 May 1981
Salomon Olembé	8 December 1980
Carlos Kameni	18 February 1984
Dani Kome	19 May 1980

Republic of Ireland (6)

Damien Duff	2 March 1979
Robbie Keane	8 July 1980
Richard Dunne	21 September 1979

China PR (6)

An Qi	21 June 1981
Shao Jiayi	10 April 1980
Zhao Junzhe	18 April 1979
Qu Bo	15 July 1981
Du Wei	9 February 1982
Xu Yunlong	17 February 1979

Turkey (2)

Nihat Kahveci	23 November 1979
Emre Belözoğlu	7 September 1980

Portugal (2)

Marco Caneira	9 February 1979
Hugo Viana	15 January 1983

USA (3)

Steve Cherundolo	19 February 1979
DaMarcus Beasley	24 May 1982
Landon Donovan	4 March 1982

Germany (2)

Sebastian Kehl	13 February 1980
Christoph Metzelder	5 November 1980

Saudi Arabia (5)

Fouzi Al-Shehri	15 May 1980
Mohammad Al-Shalhoub	8 December 1980
Omar Al-Ghamdi	11 April 1979

Clinton Morrison	14 May 1979	Mabrouk Zaid	11 February 1979
Andrew O'Brien	29 June 1979	Mansour Al-Thagafi	14 January 1979
Steven Reid	10 March 1981		

Argentina (1)

Pablo Aimar 3 November 1979

England (6)

Michael Owen 14 December 1979
 Wes Brown 13 October 1979
 Wayne Bridge 5 August 1980
 Owen Hargreaves 20 January 1981
 Joe Cole 8 November 1981
 Darius Vassell 13 June 1980

Nigeria (12)

Joseph Yobo 6 September 1980
 Pius Ikedia 11 July 1980
 Bartholomew Ogbeche 1 October 1984
 Austin Ejide 8 April 1984
 Rabiu Afolabi 18 April 1980
 Ifeanyi Udeze 21 July 1980
 Justice Christopher 24 December 1981
 Julius Aghahowa 12 February 1982
 Eric Ejiofor 21 July 1979
 John Utaka 8 January 1982
 Vincent Enyeama 29 August 1982
 Femi Opubunmi 3 March 1985

Sweden (4)

Tobias Linderoth 21 April 1979
 Pontus Farnerud 4 June 1980
 Zlatan Ibrahimović 3 October 1981
 Andreas Isaksson 3 October 1981

Croatia (4)

Stipe Pletikosa 8 January 1979
 Anthony Šerić 15 January 1979
 Jurica Vranješ 31 January 1980
 Ivica Olić 14 September 1979

Ecuador (4)

Carlos Tenorio 14 May 1979
 Edison Méndez 16 March 1979
 Daniel Viteri 12 December 1981
 Walter Ayoví 11 August 1979

Italy (0)

—

Mexico (3)

Rafael Márquez 13 February 1979
 Gerardo Torrado 30 April 1979
 Melvin Brown 28 January 1979

Belgium (0)

—

Japan (6)

Junichi Inamoto 18 September 1979
 Kōji Nakata 9 July 1979

Shinji Ono	27 September 1979
Mitsuo Ogasawara	5 April 1979
Daisuke Ichikawa	14 May 1980
Hitoshi Sogahata	2 August 1979

Russia (4)

Aleksandr Kerzhakov	27 November 1982
Ruslan Pimenov	25 November 1981
Marat Izmailov	21 September 1982
Dmitri Sychev	26 October 1983

Tunisia (2)

Selim Benachour	8 September 1981
Ali Zitouni	11 January 1981

2006 FIFA WORLD CUP GERMANY (01.01.1983)**Costa Rica (3)**

Christian Bolaños	17 May 1984
Randall Azofeifa	30 December 1984
Gabriel Badilla	30 June 1984

Ecuador (4)

Félix Borja	2 April 1983
Antonio Valencia	4 August 1985
Luis Saritama	20 October 1983
Christian Benítez	1 May 1986

Germany (8)

Marcell Jansen	4 November 1985
Robert Huth	18 August 1984
Bastian Schweinsteiger	1 August 1984
Mike Hanke	5 November 1983
Philipp Lahm	11 November 1983
Per Mertesacker	29 September 1984
Lukas Podolski	4 June 1985
David Odonkor	21 February 1984

Poland (3)

Dariusz Dudka	9 December 1983
Łukasz Fabiański	18 April 1985
Paweł Brożek	21 April 1983

England (6)

Wayne Rooney	24 October 1985
Jermaine Jenas	18 February 1983
Aaron Lennon	16 April 1987
Stewart Downing	22 July 1984
Scott Carson	3 September 1985
Theo Walcott	16 March 1989

Paraguay (5)

Édgar Barreto	15 July 1984
José Montiel	19 March 1988
Nelson Valdez	28 November 1983
Julio dos Santos	7 May 1983
Dante López	16 August 1983

Sweden (2)

Fredrik Stenman	2 June 1983
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Trinidad and Tobago (3)

Chris Birchall	5 May 1984
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Karl Svensson	21 March 1984	Kenwyne Jones	5 October 1984
		Anthony Wolfe	23 December 1983

Argentina (4)

Javier Mascherano	8 June 1984
Carlos Tevez	5 February 1984
Lionel Messi	24 June 1987
Oscar Ustari	3 July 1986

Ivory Coast (7)

Arthur Boka	2 April 1983
Emerse Faé	24 January 1984
Arouna Koné	11 November 1983
Marco Zoro	27 December 1983
Yaya Touré	13 March 1983
Emmanuel Eboué	4 June 1983
Romaric	4 June 1983

Netherlands (7)

Rafaël van der Vaart	11 February 1983
Arjen Robben	23 January 1984
John Heitinga	15 November 1983
Hedwiges Maduro	13 February 1985
Robin van Persie	6 August 1983
Wesley Sneijder	9 June 1984
Ryan Babel	19 December 1986

Serbia and Montenegro (2)

Dušan Basta	18 August 1984
Vladimir Stojković	28 July 1983

Angola (5)

Marco Airoso	6 August 1984
Mateus	19 June 1984
Zé Kalanga	12 October 1983
Locó	25 December 1984
Mário Hipólito	1 June 1985

Iran (5)

Hossein Kaebi	23 September 1985
Andranik Teymourian	6 March 1983
Arash Borhani	14 September 1983
Mehrzad Madanchi	10 January 1985
Masoud Shojaei	9 June 1984

Mexico (2)

Guillermo Ochoa	13 July 1985
Andrés Guardado	28 September 1986

Portugal (2)

Hugo Viana	15 January 1983
Cristiano Ronaldo	5 February 1985

Czech Republic (0)

—

Gana (5)

Asamoah Gyan	22 November 1985
Derek Boateng	2 May 1983
Sulley Muntari	27 August 1984
Habib Mohamed	10 December 1983
Haminu Draman	1 April 1986

Italy (1)

Daniele De Rossi	24 July 1983
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USA (3)

Clint Dempsey	9 March 1983
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		Eddie Johnson	31 March 1984
		Bobby Convey	27 May 1983
Australia (1)		Brazil (2)	
Mark Milligan	4 August 1985	Fred	3 October 1983
		Robinho	25 January 1984
Croatia (2)		Japan (0)	
Luka Modrić	9 September 1985	—	
Niko Kranjčar	13 August 1984		
France (1)		South Korea (6)	
Franck Ribéry	7 April 1983	Kim Jin-kyu	16 February 1985
		Park Chu-young	10 July 1985
		Baek Ji-hoon	28 February 1985
		Lee Ho	22 October 1984
		Kim Young-kwang	28 June 1983
		Cho Won-hee	17 April 1983
Switzerland (9)		Togo (7)	
Johan Djourou	18 January 1987	Emmanuel Adebayor	26 February 1984
Philippe Senderos	14 February 1985	Moustapha Salifou	1 June 1983
Xavier Margairaz	17 January 1984	Alaixys Romao	18 January 1984
Diego Benaglio	8 September 1983	Yao Junior Sènaya	19 April 1984
David Degen	15 February 1983	Affo Erassa	19 February 1983
Blerim Džemaili	12 April 1986	Kodjovi Obilale	8 October 1984
Tranquillo Barnetta	22 May 1985	Assimiou Touré	1 January 1988
Valon Behrami	19 April 1985		
Philipp Degen	15 February 1983		
Saudi Arabia (2)		Spain (5)	
Saad Al-Harathi	3 February 1984	Fernando Torres	20 March 1984
Mohammad Massad	17 February 1983	José Antonio Reyes	1 September 1983
		Andrés Iniesta	11 May 1984
		Sergio Ramos	30 March 1986
		Cesc Fàbregas	4 May 1987
Tunisia (6)		Ukraine (7)	
Karim Haggui	21 January 1984	Oleksandr Yatsenko	24 February 1985

Yassine Chikhaoui	2 September 1986	Andriy Rusol	16 January 1983
Chaouki Ben Saada	1 July 1984	Oleh Husyev	25 April 1983
Hamed Namouchi	12 January 1984	Andriy Pyatov	28 June 1984
Karim Saidi	24 March 1983	Dmytro Chygrynskiy	7 November 1986
Hamdi Kasraoui	18 January 1983	Artem Milevskiy	12 January 1985
		Bohdan Shust	4 March 1986

2010 FIFA WORLD CUP SOUTH AFRICA (01.01.1988)

USA (1)

Jozy Altidore 6 November 1989

Switzerland (2)

Eren Derdiyok 12 June 1988
 Xherdan Shaqiri 10 October 1991

South Africa (0)

—

Slovakia (2)

Vladimir Weiss 30 November 1989
 Miroslav Stoch 19 October 1989

Portugal (1)

Fabio Coentrao 11 March 1988

Nigeria (4)

Brown Ideye 10 October 1988
 Dele Adeleye 25 December 1988
 Lukman Haruna 4 December 1990
 Uwa Echiejile 20 January 1988

Netherlands (1)

Gregory van der Wiel 3 February 1988

Uruguay (1)

Nicolas Lodeiro 21 March 1989

Spain (3)

Juan Mata 28 April 1988
 Sergio Busquets 16 July 1988
 Javi Martinez 2 September 1988

Slovenia (2)

Tim Matavz 13 January 1989
 Rene Krhin 21 May 1990

Serbia (3)

Ivan Obradovic 25 July 1988
 Radosav Petrovic 8 March 1989
 Neven Subotic 10 December 1988

Paraguay (1)

Rodolfo Gamarra 10 December 1988

New Zealand (3)

Winston Reid 3 July 1988
 Tommy Smith 31 March 1990
 Chris Wood 7 December 1991

Mexico (6)

Efrain Juarez 22 February 1988
 Carlos Vela 1 March 1989

Javier Hernandez	1 June 1988
Giovani Dos Santos	11 May 1989
Jorge Torres	16 January 1988
Hector Moreno	17 January 1988

Korea Republic (3)

KI Sungyueng	24 January 1989
Lee Seung-Yeoul	6 March 1989
Lee Chungyong	2 July 1988

Japan (2)

Takayuki Morimoto	7 May 1988
Atsuto Uchida	27 March 1988

Italy (0)

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Greece (2)

Sokratis Papastathopoulos	9 June 1988
Sotiris Ninis	3 April 1990

Germany (6)

Thomas Mueller	13 September 1989
Mesut Oezil	15 October 1988
Holger Badstuber	13 March 1989
Jerome Boateng	3 September 1988
Toni Kroos	4 January 1990
Marko Marin	13 March 1989

England (0)

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Korea DPR (3)

RI Chol Myong	18 February 1988
Kim Kyong Il	11 December 1988
Pak Nam Chol	3 October 1988

Ivory Coast (0)

—

Honduras (0)

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Ghana (10)

Daniel Agyei	10 November 1989
Samuel Inkoom	1 June 1989
André Ayew	17 December 1989
Stephen Ahorlu	5 September 1988
Lee Addy	7 July 1990
Jonathan Mensah	13 July 1990
Ibrahim Ayew	16 April 1988
Isaac Vorsah	21 June 1988
Dominic Adiyiah	29 November 1989
Kwadwo Asamoah	9 December 1988

France (0)

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Denmark (3)

Nicklas Bendtner	16 January 1988
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Simon Kjaer	26 March 1989
Christian Eriksen	14 February 1992

Chile (2)

Mauricio Isla	12 June 1988
Alexis Sanchez	19 December 1988

Cameroon (6)

Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting	23 March 1989
Georges Mandjeck	9 December 1988
Vincent Aboubakar	22 January 1992
Nicolas N'koulou	27 March 1990
Gaetan Bong	25 April 1988
Joel Matip	8 August 1991

Brazil (0)

—

Australia (0)

—

Argentina (4)

Angel Di Maria	14 February 1988
Sergio Aguero	2 June 1988
Javier Pastore	20 June 1989
Nicolas Otamendi	12 February 1988

Algeria (1)

Ryad Boudebouz	19 February 1990
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2014 FIFA WORLD CUP BRAZIL (01.01.1992)**Brazil (2)**

Neymar	5 February 1992
Bernard	8 September 1992

Cameroon (5)

Loïc Feudjou	14 April 1992
Cédric Djeugoué	28 August 1992
Vincent Aboubakar	22 January 1992
Fabrice Olinga	12 May 1996
Edgar Salli	17 August 1992

Croatia (5)

Šime Vrsaljko	10 January 1992
Oliver Zelenika	14 May 1993
Marcelo Brozović	16 November 1992
Ante Rebić	21 September 1993
Mateo Kovačić	6 May 1994

Mexico (1)

Diego Reyes	19 September 1992
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Australia (5)

Mathew Ryan	8 April 1992
Bailey Wright	28 July 1992

Chile (0)

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Adam Taggart	2 June 1993
Ben Halloran	14 June 1992
Massimo Luongo	25 September 1992

Netherlands (5)

Stefan de Vrij	5 February 1992
Bruno Martins Indi	8 February 1992
Joël Veltman	15 January 1992
Terence Kongolo	14 February 1994
Memphis Depay	13 February 1994

Colombia (3)

Santiago Arias	13 January 1992
Éder Álvarez Balanta	28 February 1993
Juan Fernando Quintero	18 January 1993

Ivory Coast (4)

Jean-Daniel Akpa-Akpro	11 October 1992
Ismaël Diomandé	28 August 1992
Serge Aurier	24 December 1992
Sayouba Mandé	15 June 1993

Costa Rica (2)

Joel Campbell	26 June 1992
Yeltsin Tejeda	17 March 1992

Italy (3)

Mattia De Sciglio	20 October 1992
Mattia Perin	10 November 1992
Marco Verratti	5 November 1992

Ecuador (1)

Carlos Gruezo	19 April 1995
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Spain (1)

Koke	8 January 1992
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Greece (1)

Stefanos Kapino	18 March 1994
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Japan (0)

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England (6)

Jack Wilshere	1 January 1992
Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain	15 August 1993
Phil Jones	21 February 1992
Raheem Sterling	8 December 1994
Ross Barkley	5 December 1993
Luke Shaw	12 July 1995

Uruguay (1)

José Giménez	20 January 1995
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France (3)

Raphaël Varane	25 April 1993
Lucas Digne	20 July 1993
Paul Pogba	15 March 1993

Honduras (2)

Luis López 13 September 1993
 Andy Najar 16 March 1993

Argentina (0)

—

Iran (1)

Alireza Jahanbakhsh 11 August 1993

Germany (5)

Matthias Ginter 19 January 1994
 Julian Draxler 20 September 1993
 Erik Durm 12 May 1992
 Mario Götze 3 June 1992
 Shkodran Mustafi 17 April 1992

Portugal (2)

William Carvalho 7 April 1992
 Rafa Silva 17 May 1993

Algeria (2)

Nabil Bentaleb 24 November 1994
 Saphir Taïder 29 February 1992

Russia (1)

Pavel Mogilevets 25 January 1993

Switzerland (4)

Haris Seferović 22 February 1992
 Granit Xhaka 27 September 1992
 Ricardo Rodríguez 25 August 1992
 Josip Drmić 8 August 1992

Bosnia and Herzegovina (3)

Sead Kolašinac 20 June 1993
 Muhamed Bešić 10 September 1992
 Tino-Sven Sušić 13 February 1992

Nigeria (5)

Ahmed Musa 14 October 1992
 Ramon Azeez 12 December 1992
 Ogenyi Onazi 25 December 1992
 Michael Babatunde 24 December 1992
 Kenneth Omeruo 17 October 1993

Ghana (3)

Afriyie Acquah 5 January 1992
 Christian Atsu 10 January 1992
 Rashid Sumaila 18 December 1992

USA (3)

DeAndre Yedlin 9 July 1993
 John Brooks 28 January 1993
 Julian Green 6 June 1995

Belgium (4)

Thibaut Courtois 11 May 1992
 Romelu Lukaku 13 May 1993
 Divock Origi 18 April 1995
 Adnan Januzaj 5 February 1995

South Korea (1)

Son Heung-min 8 July 1992

2018 FIFA WORLD CUP RUSSIA (01.01.1996)

Egypt (1)		Russia (1)	
Ramadan Sobhi	23 January 1997	Aleksandr Golovin	30 May 1996
Saudi Arabia (1)		Uruguay (3)	
Abdullah Al-Khaibari	16 August 1996	Rodrigo Bentancur	25 June 1997
		Lucas Torreira	11 February 1996
		Maxi Gómez	14 August 1996
Iran (2)		Morocco (7)	
Saeid Ezatolahi	1 October 1996	Achraf Hakimi	4 November 1998
Majid Hosseini	20 June 1996	Hamza Mendyl	21 October 1997
		Youssef Aït Bennasser	7 July 1996
		Amine Harit	18 June 1997
		Youssef En-Nesyri	1 June 1997
		Sofyan Amrabat	21 August 1996
		Ahmed Reda Tagnaouti	5 April 1996
Portugal (2)		Spain (1)	
Rúben Dias	14 May 1997	Marco Asensio	21 January 1996
Gonçalo Guedes	29 November 1996		
Australia (1)		Denmark (2)	
Daniel Arzani	4 January 1999	Andreas Christensen	10 April 1996
		Kasper Dolberg	6 October 1997
France (4)		Peru (0)	
Benjamin Pavard	28 March 1996	—	
Kylian Mbappé	20 December 1998		
Ousmane Dembélé	15 May 1997		
Lucas Hernández	14 February 1996		
Argentina (2)		Croatia (1)	
Giovani Lo Celso	9 April 1996	Duje Ćaleta-Car	17 September 1996
Cristian Pavón	21 January 1996		

Iceland (2)

Samúel Friðjónsson	22 February 1996
Albert Guðmundsson	15 June 1997

Nigeria (5)

Wilfred Ndidi	16 December 1996
Kelechi Iheanacho	10 March 1996
Alex Iwobi	3 May 1996
Chidozie Awaziem	1 January 1997
Francis Uzoho	28 October 1998

Brazil (1)

Gabriel Jesus	3 April 1997
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Costa Rica (1)

Ian Smith	6 March 1998
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Serbia (5)

Andrija Živković	11 July 1996
Nikola Milenković	12 October 1997
Marko Grujić	13 April 1996
Nemanja Radonjić	15 February 1996
Luka Jović	23 December 1997

Switzerland (3)

Nico Elvedi	30 September 1996
Breel Embolo	14 February 1997
Denis Zakaria	20 November 1996

Germany (2)

Timo Werner	6 March 1996
Julian Brandt	2 May 1996

Mexico (1)

Edson Álvarez	24 October 1997
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South Korea (2)

Lee Seung-woo	6 January 1998
Hwang Hee-chan	26 January 1996

Sweden (0)

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Belgium (1)

Youri Tielemans	7 May 1997
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England (4)

Marcus Rashford	31 October 1997
Dele Alli	11 April 1996
Ruben Loftus-Cheek	23 January 1996
Trent Alexander-Arnold	7 October 1998

Panama (4)

Michael Amir Murillo	11 February 1996
Ismael Díaz	12 May 1997
Ricardo Ávila	4 February 1997
José Luis Rodríguez	19 June 1998

Tunisia (1)

Bassem Srarfi	25 June 1997
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Colombia (1)

Dávinson Sánchez 12 June 1996

Japan (0)

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Poland (2)Jan Bednarek 12 April 1996
Dawid Kownacki 14 March 1997**Senegal (2)**Ismaila Sarr 25 February 1998
Moussa Wagué 4 October 1998

The average age of the 736 players is almost 28 years old and this Tournament is considered to be “the eldest” in the entire Tournament history.³³⁸

UEFA EURO 2000 (01.01.1977)**England (6)**Phil Neville 21 January 1977
Michael Owen 14 December 1979
Gareth Barry 23 February 1981
Steven Gerrard 30 May 1980
Emile Heskey 11 January 1978
Richard Wright 5 November 1977**Germany (1)**

Sebastian Deisler 5 January 1980

Portugal (0)

—

Romania (3)Bogdan Lobonț 18 January 1978
Adrian Mutu 8 January 1979
Cristian Chivu 26 October 1980**Belgium (1)**

Émile Mpenza 4 July 1978

Italy (3)Christian Abbiati 8 July 1977
Massimo Ambrosini 29 May 1977
Gianluca Zambrotta 19 February 1977**Sweden (4)**Fredrik Ljungberg 16 April 1977
Olof Mellberg 3 September 1977
Daniel Andersson 28 August 1977
Yksel Osmanovski 24 February 1977**Turkey (3)**Fatih Akyel 26 December 1977
Ayhan Akman 23 February 1977
Fevzi Tuncay 14 July 1977**FR Yugoslavia (3)**

Ivan Dudić 13 February 1977

Norway (3)

John Arne Riise 24 September 1980

³³⁸ The Squads in Stats. FIFA.com 05 June 2018. URL : <https://tinyurl.com/yx3vabyt>

Dejan Stanković	11 September 1978	John Carew	5 September 1979
Mateja Kežman	12 April 1979	Eirik Bakke	13 September 1977

Slovenia (4)

Anton Žlogar	24 January 1977
Milenko Ačimovič	15 February 1977
Amir Karič	31 December 1977
Dejan Nemec	1 March 1977

Spain (5)

Raúl	27 June 1977
Iker Casillas	20 May 1981
Gerard	12 March 1979
Joseba Etxeberria	5 September 1977
Juan Velasco	17 May 1977

Czech Republic (2)

Tomáš Rosický	4 October 1980
Marek Jankulovski	9 May 1977

Denmark (2)

Jesper Grønkjær	12 August 1977
Martin Laursen	26 July 1977

France (3)

Nicolas Anelka	14 March 1979
Thierry Henry	17 August 1977
David Trezeguet	15 October 1977

Netherlands (0)

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UEFA EURO 2004 (01.01.1981)**Greece (2)**

Giourkas Seitaridis	4 June 1981
Dimitrios Papadopoulos	20 September 1981

Portugal (4)

Cristiano Ronaldo	5 February 1985
Tiago	2 May 1981
José Moreira	20 March 1982
Hélder Postiga	2 August 1982

Russia (6)

Marat Izmailov	21 September 1982
Aleksandr Kerzhakov	27 November 1982
Aleksandr Anyukov	28 September 1982
Vladimir Bystrov	31 January 1984
Aleksei Bugayev	25 August 1981
Igor Akinfeev	8 April 1986

Spain (6)

Fernando Torres	20 March 1984
Vicente	16 July 1981
Raúl Bravo	14 April 1981
Xabi Alonso	25 November 1981
Joaquín	21 July 1981
Iker Casillas	20 May 1981

Croatia (2)

Darijo Srna	1 May 1982
Marko Babić	28 January 1981

England (3)

Wayne Rooney	24 October 1985
Owen Hargreaves	20 January 1981
Joe Cole	8 November 1981

France (0)

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Switzerland (3)

Daniel Gygax	28 August 1981
Tranquillo Barnetta	22 May 1985
Johan Vonlanthen	1 February 1986

Bulgaria (3)

Kiril Kotev	8 April 1982
Dimitar Berbatov	30 January 1981
Valeri Bojinov	15 February 1986

Denmark (2)

Thomas Kahlenberg	20 March 1983
Stephan Andersen	26 November 1981

Italy (1)

Antonio Cassano	12 July 1982
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Sweden (3)

Andreas Isaksson	3 October 1981
Zlatan Ibrahimović	3 October 1981
Kim Källström	24 August 1982

Czech Republic (4)

Petr Čech	20 May 1982
Milan Baroš	28 October 1981
Tomáš Hübschman	4 September 1981
Jaroslav Plašil	5 January 1982

Germany (5)

Andreas Hinkel	26 March 1982
Bastian Schweinsteiger	1 August 1984
Kevin Kurányi	2 March 1982
Lukas Podolski	4 June 1985
Philipp Lahm	11 November 1983

Latvia (0)

—

Netherlands (4)

Rafael van der Vaart	11 February 1983
Wesley Sneijder	9 June 1984
John Heitinga	15 November 1983
Arjen Robben	23 January 1984

UEFA EURO 2008 (01.01.1986)**Austria (5)**

Christian Fuchs	7 April 1986
Martin Harnik	10 June 1987
Erwin Hoffer	14 April 1987
Ronald Gërçaliu	12 February 1986
Sebastian Prödl	21 June 1987

Germany (0)

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Spain (3)

Cesc Fàbregas	4 May 1987
Sergio Ramos	30 March 1986

Czech Republic (1)

Martin Fenin	16 April 1987
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David Silva 8 January 1986

Portugal (4)

João Moutinho 9 September 1986
 Miguel Veloso 11 May 1986
 Nani 17 November 1986
 Rui Patrício 15 February 1988

Turkey (4)

Mehmet Topal 3 March 1986
 Arda Turan 30 January 1987
 Colin Kazim-Richards 26 August 1986
 Mevlüt Erdinç 25 February 1987

Poland (2)

Michał Pazdan 21 September 1987
 Adam Kokoszka 6 October 1986

Italy (0)

—

Romania (1)

Ștefan Radu 22 October 1986

Russia (2)

Igor Akinfeev 8 April 1986
 Oleg Ivanov 4 August 1986

Switzerland (4)

Johan Djourou 21 January 1987
 Eren Derdiyok 12 June 1988
 Gélson Fernandes 2 September 1986
 Johan Vonlanthen 1 February 1986

Croatia (3)

Vedran Ćorluka 5 February 1986
 Ivan Rakitić 10 March 1988
 Nikola Kalinić 5 January 1988

France (2)

Karim Benzema 19 December 1987
 Samir Nasri 20 June 1987

Netherlands (1)

Ibrahim Afellay 2 April 1986

Greece (0)

—

Sweden (0)

—

UEFA EURO 2012 (01.01.1990)

Poland (4)

Wojciech Szczęsny 18 April 1990
 Marcin Kamiński 15 January 1992
 Artur Sobiech 12 June 1990
 Rafał Wolski 10 November 1992

Russia (2)

Alan Dzagoev 17 June 1990
 Aleksandr Kokorin 19 March 1991

Greece (4)

Kyriakos Papadopoulos 23 February 1992
 Sotiris Ninis 3 April 1990
 Kostas Fortounis 16 October 1992
 Giannis Fetfatzidis 21 December 1990

Czech Republic (1)

Vladimír Darida 8 August 1990

Netherlands (4)

Jetro Willems	30 March 1994
Kevin Strootman	13 February 1990
Luuk de Jong	27 August 1990
Luciano Narsingh	13 September 1990

Germany (4)

İlkay Gündoğan	24 October 1990
André Schürrle	6 November 1990
Toni Kroos	4 January 1990
Mario Götze	3 June 1992

Spain (0)

—

Republic of Ireland (0)

—

Ukraine (3)

Maksym Koval	9 December 1992
Denys Harmash	19 April 1990
Bohdan Butko	13 January 1991

England (6)

Martin Kelly	27 April 1990
Jordan Henderson	17 June 1990
Phil Jones	21 February 1992
Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain	15 August 1993
Danny Welbeck	26 November 1990
Jack Butland	10 March 1993

Denmark (2)

Christian Eriksen	14 February 1992
Jores Okore	11 August 1992

Portugal (1)

Nélson Oliveira	8 August 1991
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Italy (2)

Mario Balotelli	12 August 1990
Fabio Borini	29 March 1991

Croatia (1)

Šime Vrsaljko	10 January 1992
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Sweden (0)

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France (1)

Yann M'Vila	29 June 1990
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UEFA EURO 2016 (01.01.1994)**France (2)**

Anthony Martial	5 December 1995
Kingsley Coman	13 June 1996

Romania (1)

Steliano Filip	15 May 1994
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Albania (1)		Switzerland (4)	
Elseid Hysaj	20 February 1994	Nico Elvedi	30 September 1996
		Breel Embolo	14 February 1997
		Denis Zakaria	20 November 1996
		Shani Tarashaj	7 February 1995
England (5)		Russia (1)	
Raheem Sterling	8 December 1994	Aleksandr Golovin	30 May 1996
John Stones	28 May 1994		
Eric Dier	15 January 1994		
Dele Alli	11 April 1996		
Marcus Rashford	31 October 1997		
Wales (1)		Slovakia (2)	
George Williams	7 September 1995	Ondrej Duda	5 December 1994
		Milan Škriniar	11 February 1995
Germany (5)		Ukraine (2)	
Emre Can	12 January 1994	Viktor Kovalenko	14 February 1996
Julian Weigl	8 September 1995	Oleksandr Zinchenko	15 December 1996
Jonathan Tah	11 February 1996		
Leroy Sané	11 January 1996		
Joshua Kimmich	8 February 1995		
Poland (5)		Northern Ireland (2)	
Arkadiusz Milik	28 February 1994	Luke McCullough	15 February 1994
Karol Linetty	2 February 1995	Paddy McNair	27 April 1995
Mariusz Szepiński	12 May 1995		
Piotr Zieliński	20 May 1994		
Bartosz Kapustka	23 December 1996		
Spain (1)		Czech Republic (0)	
Héctor Bellerín	19 March 1995	—	
Turkey (4)		Croatia (5)	
Ahmet Yilmaz Çalık	22 June 1994	Tin Jedvaj	28 November 1995
Hakan Çalhanoğlu	8 February 1994	Mateo Kovačić	6 May 1994
Ozan Tufan	23 March 1995	Marko Rog	19 July 1995

Emre Mor 24 July 1997

Ante Ćorić 14 April 1997

Marko Pjaca 6 May 1995

Belgium (3)

Jason Denayer 28 June 1995

Divock Origi 18 April 1995

Jordan Lukaku 25 July 1994

Italy (1)

Federico Bernardeschi 16 February 1994

Republic of Ireland (0)

—

Sweden (2)

Victor Lindelöf 17 July 1994

Ludwig Augustinsson 21 April 1994

Portugal (1)

Renato Sanches 18 August 1997

Iceland (1)

Hjörtur Hermannsson 8 February 1995

Austria (2)

Alessandro Schöpf 7 February 1994

Marcel Sabitzer 17 March 1994

Hungary (3)

Ádám Nagy 17 June 1995

László Kleinheisler 8 April 1994

Barnabás Bese 6 May 1994

ANNEX 10. ALL QUALIFYING MATCHES UKRAINE “A” PLAYED IN PAIRS BEFORE OCTOBER 2018

No. 1			
25.03.1995	Croatia vs. Ukraine	4:0	EURO qualifiers
29.03.1995	Ukraine vs. Italy	0:2	EURO qualifiers
No. 2			
29.03.1997	Albania vs. Ukraine	0:1	WC qualifiers
02.04.1997	Ukraine vs. Northern Ireland	2:1	WC qualifiers
No. 3			
10.10.1998	Andorra vs. Ukraine	0:2	EURO qualifiers
14.10.1998	Ukraine vs. Armenia	2:0	EURO qualifiers
No. 4			
27.03.1999	France vs. Ukraine	0:0	EURO qualifiers
31.03.1999	Ukraine vs. Iceland	1:1	EURO qualifiers
No. 5			
05.06.1999	Ukraine vs. Andorra	4:0	EURO qualifiers
09.06.1999	Armenia vs. Ukraine	0:0	EURO qualifiers
No. 6			
04.09.1999	Ukraine vs. France	0:0	EURO qualifiers
08.09.1999	Iceland vs. Ukraine	0:1	EURO qualifiers
No. 7			
13.11.1999	Slovenia vs. Ukraine	2:1	EURO qualifiers
17.11.1999	Ukraine vs. Slovenia	1:1	EURO qualifiers
No. 8			
07.10.2000	Armenia vs. Ukraine	2:3	WC qualifiers
11.10.2000	Norway vs. Ukraine	0:1	WC qualifiers
No. 9			
24.03.2001	Ukraine vs. Belarus	0:0	WC qualifiers
28.03.2001	Wales vs. Ukraine	1:1	WC qualifiers
No. 10			
02.06.2001	Ukraine vs. Norway	0:0	WC qualifiers
06.06.2001	Ukraine vs. Wales	1:1	WC qualifiers
No. 11			
01.09.2001	Belarus vs. Ukraine	0:2	WC qualifiers
05.09.2001	Ukraine vs. Armenia	3:0	WC qualifiers

No. 12			
10.11.2001	Ukraine vs. Germany	1:1	WC qualifiers
14.11.2001	Germany vs. Ukraine	4:1	WC qualifiers
No. 13			
12.10.2002	Ukraine vs. Greece	2:0	EURO qualifiers
16.10.2002	Northern Ireland vs. Ukraine	0:0	EURO qualifiers
No. 14			
07.06.2003	Ukraine vs. Armenia	4:3	EURO qualifiers
11.06.2003	Greece vs. Ukraine	1:0	EURO qualifiers
No. 15			
06.09.2003	Ukraine vs. Northern Ireland	0:0	EURO qualifiers
10.09.2003	Spain vs. Ukraine	2:1	EURO qualifiers
No. 16			
04.09.2004	Denmark vs. Ukraine	1:1	WC qualifiers
08.09.2004	Kazakhstan vs. Ukraine	1:2	WC qualifiers
No. 17			
09.10.2004	Ukraine vs. Greece	1:1	WC qualifiers
13.10.2004	Ukraine vs. Georgia	2:0	WC qualifiers
No. 18			
04.06.2005	Ukraine vs. Kazakhstan	2:0	WC qualifiers
08.06.2005	Greece vs. Ukraine	0:1	WC qualifiers
No. 19			
03.09.2005	Georgia vs. Ukraine	1:1	WC qualifiers
07.09.2005	Ukraine vs. Turkey	0:1	WC qualifiers
No. 20			
07.10.2006	Italy vs. Ukraine	2:0	EURO qualifiers
11.10.2006	Ukraine vs. Scotland	2:0	EURO qualifiers
No. 21			
25.03.2007	Faroe Islands vs. Ukraine	0:2	EURO qualifiers
28.03.2007	Ukraine vs. Lithuania	1:0	EURO qualifiers
No. 22			
08.09.2007	Georgia vs. Ukraine	1:1	EURO qualifiers
12.09.2007	Ukraine vs. Italy	1:2	EURO qualifiers
No. 23			
13.10.2007	Scotland vs. Ukraine	3:1	EURO qualifiers
17.10.2007	Ukraine vs. Faroe Islands	5:0	EURO qualifiers
No. 24			
17.11.2007	Lithuania vs. Ukraine	2:0	EURO qualifiers
21.11.2007	Ukraine vs. France	2:2	EURO qualifiers
No. 25			
06.09.2008	Ukraine vs. Belarus	1:0	WC qualifiers
10.09.2008	Kazakhstan vs. Ukraine	1:3	WC qualifiers
No. 26			

06.06.2009	Croatia vs. Ukraine	2:2	WC qualifiers
10.06.2009	Ukraine vs. Kazakhstan	2:1	WC qualifiers
No. 27			
05.09.2009	Ukraine vs. Andorra	5:0	WC qualifiers
09.09.2009	Belarus vs. Ukraine	0:0	WC qualifiers
No. 28			
10.10.2009	Ukraine vs. England	1:0	WC qualifiers
14.10.2009	Andorra vs. Ukraine	0:6	WC qualifiers
No. 29			
14.11.2009	Greece vs. Ukraine	0:0	WC qualifiers
18.11.2009	Ukraine vs. Greece	0:1	WC qualifiers
No. 30			
12.10.2012	Moldova vs. Ukraine	0:0	WC qualifiers
16.10.2012	Ukraine vs. Montenegro	0:1	WC qualifiers
No. 31			
22.03.2013	Poland vs. Ukraine	1:3	WC qualifiers
26.03.2013	Ukraine vs. Moldova	2:1	WC qualifiers
No. 32			
06.09.2013	Ukraine vs. San-Marino	9:0	WC qualifiers
10.09.2013	Ukraine vs. England	0:0	WC qualifiers
No. 33			
11.10.2013	Ukraine vs. Poland	1:0	WC qualifiers
15.10.2013	San-Marino vs. Ukraine	0:8	WC qualifiers
No. 34			
15.11.2013	Ukraine vs. France	2:0	WC qualifiers
19.11.2013	France vs. Ukraine	3:0	WC qualifiers
No. 35			
09.10.2014	Belarus vs. Ukraine	0:2	EURO qualifiers
12.10.2014	Ukraine vs. FYR Macedonia	1:0	EURO qualifiers
No.36			
05.09.2015	Ukraine vs. Belarus	3:1	EURO qualifiers
08.09.2015	Slovakia vs. Ukraine	0:0	EURO qualifiers
No.37			
09.10.2015	FYR Macedonia vs. Ukraine	0:2	EURO qualifiers
12.10.2015	Ukraine vs. Spain	0:1	EURO qualifiers
No. 38			
14.11.2015	Ukraine vs. Slovenia	2:0	EURO qualifiers
17.11.2015	Slovenia vs. Ukraine	1:1	EURO qualifiers
No. 39			
06.10.2016	Turkey vs. Ukraine	2:2	WC qualifiers
09.10.2016	Ukraine vs. Kosovo	3:0	WC qualifiers
No. 40			
02.09.2017	Ukraine vs. Turkey	2:0	WC qualifiers

05.09.2017	Iceland vs. Ukraine	2:0	WC qualifiers
No. 41			
06.10.2017	Kosovo vs. Ukraine	0:2	WC qualifiers
09.10.2017	Ukraine vs. Croatia	0:2	WC qualifiers
No. 42			
06.09.2018	Czech Republic vs. Ukraine	1:2	NL qualifiers
09.09.2018	Ukraine vs. Slovakia	1:0	NL qualifiers

WC qualifiers — FIFA World Cup qualifiers
EURO qualifiers — UEFA Euro qualifiers
NL qualifiers — UEFA Nations League qualifiers

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Збірні команди національних футбольних асоціацій

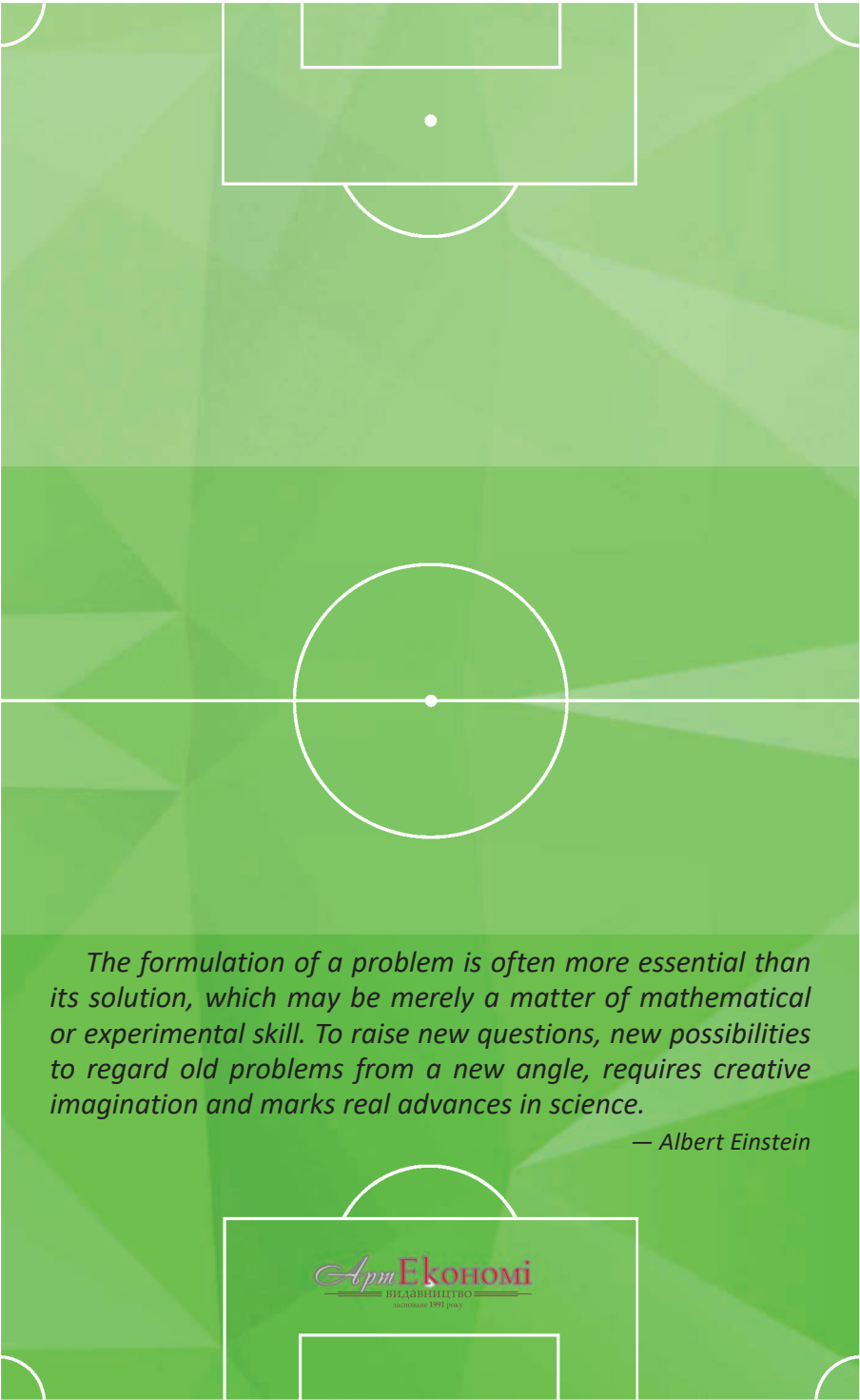
(Англійською мовою)

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The formulation of a problem is often more essential than its solution, which may be merely a matter of mathematical or experimental skill. To raise new questions, new possibilities to regard old problems from a new angle, requires creative imagination and marks real advances in science.

— Albert Einstein