

Book of Abstracts

1st NORDIC FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

The Game Through Many Lenses

11–12 May 2022

University of Jyväskylä, Finland
Agora building



JYVÄSKYLÄN YLIOPISTO
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

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UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

Capital of Sport in Finland
JYVÄSKYLÄ



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WELCOME FROM THE ORGANISING TEAM

Dear Friends of the Global Game,

Football is a truly global sport with the highest number of participants worldwide. The game is played by hundreds of millions of people, irrespective of age and background. Football has become the most popular team sport in all Nordic countries as well. What is most delightful, the number of girl and female players has grown sharply in recent decades. Further, the popularity of futsal has increased, which can be seen both in the number of participants and visibility in the media.

Football has undergone considerable changes in the past decades, which has also affected the Nordic countries. As a top-level sport, football has shifted towards more professional and commercial practices. Achieving success in elite football today requires comprehensive knowledge in numerous areas and professions. As a result, football is characterised by hybrid practices that involve the interaction and co-operation of various practitioners and stakeholders.

Despite the increasing professionalisation and globalisation at the different levels of football, volunteer activities in sport clubs still form the foundations, which is particularly true in the Nordic countries. In the Nordic welfare states, educational goals that reach beyond sporting achievements have been an integral part in the sporting and physical activities context, which has facilitated the development and growth of many football participants.

The Nordic Football Conference offers a programme that focus on key themes in football from different perspectives and creates opportunities to share best practices and forge alliances. The three areas around which we formulate the conference are (1) Coaching and player development, (2) Contemporary issues in football culture, and (3) The global football system. In addition, two overarching themes, (a) Sustainability and (b) Evidence-based practices run concurrently to form the backbone of the event.

On behalf of the Organising Committee as well the co-hosts, the University of Jyväskylä and the Football Association of Finland, we warmly welcome all participants, partners, and sponsors in Jyväskylä. The interest shown towards the event in the past months from the various segments of the game – researchers, practitioners, students, businesses, and the media – justifies the need to stage the conference. We truly hope this encounter will have a legacy and contribute to the development of international networks of football researchers and practitioners.

Hannu Itkonen
Chair, Scientific Committee



Mihaly Szerovay
Chair, Organising Committee



CONFERENCE SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

Wednesday 11.5.2022

- 8:00 Registration open (Main Entrance Hall)
- 9:00 Opening (Auditorium 1 & stream)
- 9:20 Address by City of Jyväskylä – Nina Rautiainen (Auditorium 1 & stream)
- 9:30 Keynote speaker – Bruno Travassos (Auditorium 1 & stream)
- 10:30 Coffee break (Main Entrance Hall)

- 11:00 Thematic sessions
 - No 1: Assessment in coaching education (Auditorium 1 & stream)*
 - No 3: Social and environmental responsibility in football (Auditorium 2)*

- 12:30 Lunch (Piato restaurant)

- 13:30 Parallel sessions
 - No. 1: Coaching and Player development (Auditorium 1)*
 - No. 2: Football performance (Auditorium 2)*
 - No. 3: Supporters and Audiences (Agora Gamma)*
 - No. 4: Special session on the Football in the Nordic countries book project (Ag C233)*

- 15:00 Coffee break & Break exercise (Main Entrance Hall)
- 15:30 Special guests – Pekka Luhtanen & Henri Lehto (Auditorium 1 & stream)
- 16:15 Pitch talk by Firstbeat – Christoph Rottensteiner: Training Load Management in Elite Football (Auditorium 1)
- 16:25 Information on the social programme (Auditorium 1)
- 16:30 Social programme
- 19:30 Welcome reception by the City of Jyväskylä (City Hall)

Thursday 12.5.2022

- 8:00 Registration open (Main Entrance Hall)

- 8:30 Parallel sessions
 - No. 5: Professionalisation, Player careers, and Migration (Auditorium 1)*
 - No. 6: Diversity and Inclusion (Auditorium 2)*
 - No. 7: Business, Economics, and Politics (Agora Gamma)*

- 10:00 Coffee break & Break exercise (Main Entrance Hall)
- 10:30 Keynote speaker – Arto Nevala (Auditorium 1 & stream)
- 11:30 Lunch (Piato restaurant)

- 12:30 Thematic sessions
 - No. 2: Data, insights and, knowledge management in a football organisation (Auditorium 2)*
 - No. 4: Sustainable workplace in the football industry (Auditorium 1 & stream)*

- 14:00 Keynote speaker – Bente Skogvang (Auditorium 1 & stream)
- 15:00 Coffee break (Main Entrance Hall)
- 15:30 Special guest – Jonathan Wilson (Auditorium 1 & stream)
- 16:30 Closing remarks – Hannu Itkonen & Mihaly Szerovay (Auditorium 1 & stream)

CONFERENCE ORGANISERS

Organising Committee

Mihaly Szerovay (Chair)	Professor of Practice, University of Jyväskylä
Anna Lee	Doctoral Researcher, University of Jyväskylä
Laura-Maija Suur-Askola	Communications Specialist, University of Jyväskylä
Sami Kalaja	Professor of Practice, University of Jyväskylä
Taru Nyholm	Head of Communications, FA of Finland
Ville-Pekka Inkilä	Head of Research & Development, FA of Finland
Marianne Miettinen	Head of Performance, girls, FA of Finland
Taru-Maija Heilala-Rasimov	Congress and Event manager, University of Jyväskylä
Henri Louste	Conference Coordinator
Juhana Kyöstiä	Conference Coordinator

Scientific Committee

Hannu Itkonen (Chair)	Professor, University of Jyväskylä
Esa Mangeloja	Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä
Sami Kalaja	Professor of Practice, University of Jyväskylä
Johanna Ihalainen	Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä
Søren Bennike	Head of Research, Football Association of Denmark
Mihaly Szerovay	Professor of Practice, University of Jyväskylä

Conference Support

Soila Joutsalainen	Event Coordinator, University of Jyväskylä
Linda Nilsson-Aro	Event Coordinator, University of Jyväskylä
Esa Nykänen	Department Coordinator (ICT), University of Jyväskylä
Matti Haveri-Heikkilä	ICT Coordinator, University of Jyväskylä
Maria-Sofia Halttu	Coordinator, University of Jyväskylä
Meri Hyvärinen	Graphic Designer
Hanna Salomäki	Graphic Designer

Conference Assistants

Luca Seale, Michaela Lavičková, Valtteri Karjalainen, Vojtěch Hynek, Veera Manninen, Ivan Čulák, Henri Qvickström, Mina Salib, Sergi Manzano, Petteri Itäranta, Nikke Tuhkanen, Joonas Lahtinen, Samu Kauppila, Mikko Poutiainen, Kimberley Wood, Anni Laitinen



KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS

AN ECOLOGICAL DYNAMICS APPROACH FOR PLAYER DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING IN FOOTBALL AND FUTSAL

Bruno Travassos

Assistant Professor, Sport Sciences, University of Beira Interior, Portugal

Chair: Jani Sarajärvi (Doctoral Researcher, University of Lisbon)

Team sports such as futsal and football are considered complex adaptive systems in which the performance of players and teams emerges from interactions among individual, task and environment constraints. That is, each player explores the game environment to identify possibilities for action, according to its individual capabilities to perceive and act. Based on that, in a research last year we have explored the relevant informational variables (inter-player distances, angles, spaces covered or orientation and alignment with the goal or the ball) that support individual (dribbling, shooting, individual defending), group (passing and defending in small groups of players) and collective (attacking or defending patterns of play) tactical behaviours. However, from empirical experience coaches advocated that to improve the players' perception of informational variables and tactical actions, they need first to develop the individual game fundamentals. Game fundamentals are micro-behaviours that support players' adaptive behaviour through the development of individual motor capacities (laterality, controlling the ball, change of direction), individual visual orientation in the field to pick up information from the game environment and spatial relations in the field in relation to ball position and goal (body orientation, feinting, off-ball movements).

Thus, from the game complexity, practice tasks for players' development and performance should be simplified to define the boundaries that support the identification and improvement of individual and collective tactical solutions according to game demands. Each task should be manipulated considering the tight coupling between the information to be perceived and the range of possible actions that facilitates goal achievement. This perspective emphasizes the correspondence between the demands of competition and the structure of the training exercises across practice sessions. Some examples in football and futsal will be presented to improve the understanding of coaches' practice.



NORDIC FOOTBALL – DEVELOPMENT, EQUALITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY

Bente Skogvang

Associate Professor, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences, Norway

Chair: Hanna Vehmas (Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä)

This keynote speech will focus on the development of football in the Nordic countries with focus on equality and sustainability which are crucial for the sport. I will use my own story as academic practitioner with huge experience from football in different roles and at all levels to address contemporary issues in football culture. My experiences as practitioner are from being a player, coach, leader and referee, i.e. starting a female team in my home village Manndalen in Northern Norway (Sapmi) in 1978, player at the second level in Norway, coach for girls and boys from 8 to 16 year olds, 1st employed director (1993–1996) of the interest organisation for women's football 'Serieforeningen for kvinnefotball' (today Toppfotball, women), member of the executive board in Norwegian football association (NFA) (1996–2002), legal committee, referee committee, and international referee on the first FIFA list (1995) with being the main referee of the first women's Olympic final in Atlanta 1996 with nearly 80,000 spectators.

In the academic field my doctoral thesis from the Norwegian School of Sport Sciences; 'Elite football – a field of changes' ('Toppfotball – et felt i forandring', 2006), focused on football, gender, professionalisation, commercialisation and media within men's and women's elite football in Norway. My work as researcher also includes the following larger projects within football: Women's football in USA, Sweden & Norway; Women in sport in Spain, England, Germany & Norway; the international NORCORP project, 'Scandinavian women's football goes global'; and the on-going project is to write the history of women's football in Norway.

I will present parts of the history, especially how the Nordic countries i.e. Finland, Norway, and Sweden, played a crucial role in the 1980's at the international tournaments in China, which led the path to the first world cup and the first Olympics in women's football. Nordic teams took part in these tournaments, and the Norwegian executive Board member, Ellen Wille was the first female speaker at the FIFA congress in Mexico City in 1986 asking for a world cup in women's football as well as inclusion of women's football in the Olympic programme. Today, there are professional options both for men and women in the Nordic countries, and this summer (2022) England will host UEFA Women's EURO. The path to professionalisation of the sport is addressed from a practitioner and researcher standpoint.

Keywords: Nordic football, development, equality, sustainability, academic practitioner



FROM NATION-BOUNDNESS TO GLOBALIZATION? FOOTBALL AS A CHANGING GAME AND SOCIAL PHENOMENON

Arto Nevala

Senior University Lecturer, University of Eastern Finland

Chair: Hannu Itkonen (Professor Emeritus, Sociology of Sport, University of Jyväskylä)

The old refrain is “Football is a global obsession, a people’s game played by millions and watched by billions. It is much more than a sport.” That is true: football is a phenomenon that has changed the world. However, changes in the world have also changed football during the more than 150 years of the modern history of football.

In my presentation, I will investigate how the development of football as a game and a social phenomenon has been related to the macro-level political, economic, and social developments of society from the latter half of the 1800s all the way up until the 2020s.

I look at the history and present day of football through five world-wide, global trends. These trends are: (1) industrialization, urbanization, and the birth of a wage labour society; (2) nationalism and democracy; (3) globalization; (4) neo-liberalism and commercialization; and (5) technologicalization. My presentation is based on research into football by myself but, above all, by many colleagues around the world. On the other hand, the analysis is based on the idea of the different speed of social change, as introduced by the famous French historian Fernand Braudel.

In summary, political and social upheavals changed football only a little during the first 120 years. The core of football was conservatism. Since the 1990s, football has changed more than ever before. The changes have been at least as rapid as, and parallel to, those in many other areas of society. While there is still a lot of tradition in football in the 2020s, global trends have changed football’s macro-level culture, the rules of the game, and grassroots practices, as shown by the examples that I use. In this way, football is also one example of the fragmentation of unified cultures: in today’s world, a wide variety of football is played under the same name.



SPECIAL GUESTS

Jonathan Wilson

Sport Journalist and Author

Jonathan Wilson is one of the most articulate and insightful writers in the football world. Wilson has written for several newspapers and football magazines, currently for the Guardian and the Sports Illustrated. He is also the author of 11 books, including the modern classic: *Inverting the Pyramid – The history of football tactics*. In addition, Wilson is the founder and the editor of the quarterly published football journal *The Blizzard*. This year, Football Supporters' Association (The FSA) rewarded him for the third time with the title of Football Writer of the Year.



In this session, the conversation will revolve around the evolution of the game and society.

Interviewer: Ville-Pekka Inkilä (Head of Research and Development, FA of Finland).

Pekka Luhtanen

Professor Emeritus, Finnish Institute of High Performance Sport (KIHU)

Professor Luhtanen is a pioneer of football game analysis and coaching education. Luhtanen defended his doctoral dissertation in the early 1980s at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. He served as a coach and coaching educator and as a member of various UEFA committees for decades. He also worked as a Senior Researcher in the Research Institute for Olympic Sports (KIHU). His research output is impressive with over 120 football-related publications under his belt. Professor Luhtanen is a life member of the UEFA, and he was also presented to the Hall of Fame of Finnish Football in 2021 by the Football Association of Finland.



Henri Lehto

Head of Performance Analysis at Football Association of Finland

Henri Lehto works as the Head of Performance Analysis at Football Association of Finland as well as the video analyst for the men's national team. Earlier Lehto acted as the Head of Centre of Excellence and Development in Central Finland as well as an Expert in Team Sports in the Research Institute for Olympic Sports (KIHU). Alongside Pekka Luhtanen, Henri Lehto will discuss about the development of performance analysis in football.



Interviewer: Tom Nevanpää (Chairman of the Regional Parliament, FA of Finland)

The background image shows two young boys on a grassy field. They are wearing blue tracksuits with the Finnish national football team crest (Suomi) and a Nike logo. They are looking down at a soccer ball on the grass. The image has a warm, golden-brown tint.

THEMATIC SESSIONS

We are staging four thematic sessions, which are positioned around the three core areas and two overarching themes of the conference.

Each session lasts 90 minutes with three talks of 20 minutes by invited speakers. We selected speakers to maintain a balance of international and Finnish perspectives. There is time dedicated for discussion with the active involvement of the audience.

We are following a “Science meets practice” approach, that is, we draw on research evidence, practical experience, as well as explore practical implications of the given topic area. Crucially, our goal is to identify and discuss knowledge gaps that can lead to action in order to develop both practice and theory.

THEMATIC SESSION 1: ASSESSMENT IN COACHING EDUCATION

Auditorium 1

This session aims at unwrapping various perspectives of evaluation in formal coaching education. When, what and who do we or can we evaluate? What are the assumptions as well as interests of stakeholders related to evaluation? Our experts – featuring a great balance of academic and practical experience – draw on theory as well as research evidence to share their experience on this timely topic.

Chairperson: Sami Kalaja (Professor of Practice, University of Jyväskylä)

Speakers

Kirsi Hämäläinen (Principal Lecturer, Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, Finland)
Assessment in coach education

We have a long history of assessment which is mainly pointing out of mistakes and some kind of proof of quality by assessing knowledge repetition. We need to rethink and think over what is necessary to assess. If the goal is to promote athlete centred coaching, growth mindset, positive atmosphere – we have to treat the coaches in a similar way we would like them to work with their athletes.

Matti Lähitie (Head of Education, FA of Finland)
Evaluating coaches and coach educators at the courses of the FA of Finland

Evaluation is important part of learning process for both coaches and coach educators. Evaluation and learning of individuals can also help organisations to identify needs for learning. In this thematic session, we will discuss interactively about validity, reliability, practicality, and usefulness of evaluation in coach education.

Harriet Jowett (Behavioural Insight Lead, The FA, UK)
Learner-centric evaluation – ensuring coaching qualifications are fit for purpose

One remit of The English FA is to provide educational courses and content that empowers people to get into football in other ways than playing e.g., coaching, refereeing, volunteering. Aside from delivering the tactical requirements of a course, it is crucial that learners who engage with the courses and resources feel confident to put into practice what they've learnt. In this talk, I will highlight how research ensures that the needs of learners are at the heart of decision making for continuous product development in this area.

THEMATIC SESSION 2: DATA, INSIGHTS, AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN A FOOTBALL ORGANISATION

Auditorium 2

This thematic session explores organisational solutions and best practices of drawing on data and insights to create value to specific target groups and inform decision making. Recent practices of knowledge creation are presented by experts of the Belgian, Danish, and Finnish national associations.

Chairperson: Mikko Aitkoski (Club Licensing Manager, FA of Finland)

Speakers

Matteo Balliau (Data Strategist & Analyst, Royal Belgian FA)

Digital platforms and insights at the RBFA

Are you curious about how a football federation leverages digital, data and insights to realise its objectives? This presentation takes you through the RBFA strategy, way of working and realisations.

Søren Bennike (Head of Research, Danish Football Association)

From academic research to practice – The case of GameChanger.nu

In the Danish FA it is an ambition to collaborate with academic institutions. One key question is how to implement research results. This presentation will discuss issues in that manner and provide you with the example of www.GameChanger.nu.

Geet Raju (Data Scientist, FA of Finland)

Enabling the Finnish football community through the Football Association of Finland (FAF) Intelligence Centre

In this talk, we get an insight on Knowledge Management in the context of the FAF. Key strategic questions (knowledge gaps) are addressed and answered through the FAF's Knowledge Gap Framework. Furthermore, we understand that solving a knowledge gap need can be more impactful than simply addressing a key strategic question.

THEMATIC SESSION 3: SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY IN FOOTBALL

Auditorium 2

This session delves into broad questions regarding the social and environmental responsibility of football. We will discuss the theory of change and societal goal-setting in football, as well as measuring societal and environmental impact. Relatedly, we take a closer look at the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model, developed by UEFA, that aims at evaluating and quantifying the social benefits of football. Finally, we discuss the environmental responsibility of the football community. UEFA's recently launched Sustainability Strategy 2030 will serve as a framework for this session.

Chairperson: Kimmo J. Lipponen (CEO, Finnish Business and Society ry; Board Member, FA of Finland)

Speakers

Kimmo J. Lipponen

The key trends of sustainability: what are major corporations focusing on and what could football community learn from them

The presentation will introduce the current trends and role of sustainability in modern business strategies, the drivers and ambition level of their actions as well as ways of measuring societal and environmental impacts. The potential applications to football clubs and other members of football community will be introduced and discussed.

Tim Crabbe (Chief Executive, Substance; formerly Professor of the Sociology of Sport at Sheffield Hallam University, UK)

UEFA GROW SROI model in the Nordic region: Results, new developments, and challenges

This presentation will address the emergence of the UEFA GROW SROI model and its methodological approach. It will then consider results generated in the Nordic region at both national and club levels. Finally, it will focus on new developments and challenges associated with alignment of the model to sustainability agendas and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Hilppa Gregow (Head of Unit, Weather and Climate Change Impact Research, Finnish Meteorological Institute).

Air quality measurements and climate impact research to support football activities

Climate resilient sports facilities and safe air quality conditions are crucial for football activities. The most recent IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report and UEFA2030 sustainability strategy highlight the urgency to adapt to and mitigate climate change. The 2020–2021 pandemic demonstrated that we must also pay attention to the air quality safety monitoring in collaboration with the football clubs.

THEMATIC SESSION 4: SUSTAINABLE WORKPLACE IN THE FOOTBALL INDUSTRY

Auditorium 1

Recent trends in society such as those linked to technology, digitisation, the pursuit for diversity and equality, and ongoing globalisation have impacted the football industry as well. In these ever-changing conditions, creating a sustainable environment for players and other professionals is crucial. In this session, we are looking at the quality of working and playing conditions as well as potential pathways to professionalism in the football industry. More specifically, we are investigating this topic from three angles: equality and inclusion, player's rights, and youth football.

Chairperson: Marianne Miettinen (Head of Performance, Girls, FA of Finland)

Speakers

Heidi Pihlaja (Head of Development, Women's Football, FA of Finland)

Equality and Inclusion in sports – why is it not only the right thing to do, but also good business?

A strong purpose and strategic work to reach the sustainable development goals is a vital condition for many industries in order to succeed in their business transformation. In the context of sports, this transformation is not yet the case.

Panu Autio (Executive Director, Football Players' Association of Finland; Futsal player and coach)

Football and futsal as a workplace: International and Finnish perspectives

Football as a profession is one of the most desirable dream jobs when you ask about it from little boys around the world. The glamour at the highest level is extraordinary, but most professionals are not living a wealthy life. Especially in Finland, professional athletes rarely earn more than an average employee and do not have the same rights (unemployment, insurance, pension) as workers in other professions.

Anders Belling (Doctoral Researcher, University of South-Eastern Norway)

The professionalization of youth football in Norway: A game of two halves for the Norwegian sport model?

The Norwegian sport model's ideal of "sport for all" realizes as a great example by the large support football has among children and adolescents. The "Children's Sports Regulations" imply that ranking of athletes or teams based on results are not allowed until the age of 12. However, the late specialization model being criticized every time the Norwegian national team does not qualify for World Cups and Euros. In this talk, I explore how talent development processes in Norwegian youth football in the past decade have challenged the fundamental values of the Norwegian sports model.



PARALLEL SESSIONS

We received over 60 abstracts from 15 countries on a wide range of topics related to football – both research and best practice abstracts – concerned with the main areas and themes of the conference.

Contributions vary from experienced scholars through early career researchers to practitioners in football.

After a careful evaluation by the scientific committee, we have accepted almost 50 abstracts out of which 36 are presented on-site at the conference. We have divided the abstracts into seven parallel sessions. On both days of the conference, we have scheduled 90 minutes for parallel sessions for both days of the conference with 3-4 parallel sessions at one time. The time allocated for each presentation is 10 minutes plus 5 minutes for discussion.

Wednesday 11 May 2022
13:30–15:00

PARALLEL SESSION 1: COACHING AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Auditorium 1

Chair: Kerkko Huhtanen (Project Researcher, University of Jyväskylä)

13:30

Enhancing role efficacy in youth football: Applying the 5C's to job descriptions by position
Daði Rafnsson, Reykjavik University

13:45

Skill in football: A scoping review with a discussion on new perspectives (case header skill)
Jani Sarajärvi, University of Lisbon; Rui Freitas, University of Lisbon; Mika Elovaara, Richmond Kickers, USL League One; Anna Volossovitch, University of Lisbon

14:00

The game formats in Finnish youth football
Lauri Salovaara, University of Jyväskylä

14:15

Development of additional training opportunities for junior athletes at Training Room Killeri
Sanna Paasu-Hynynen, Jamk University of Applied Sciences

14:30

The role of leadership in a national team's success
Sakari Holopainen, University of Jyväskylä; Marja Kokkonen, University of Jyväskylä; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä; Niilo Konttinen, Finnish Institute of High Performance Sport (KIHU)

PARALLEL SESSION 2: FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE

Auditorium 2

Chair: Johanna Ihalainen (Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä)

13:30

Training load comparisons between days within a microcycle in Finnish National league women soccer players during a competitive season

Eero Savolainen, University of Jyväskylä; Simon Walker, University of Jyväskylä; Johanna Ihalainen, University of Jyväskylä

13:45

Position specific physical demands of national level female football players during competitive matches

Juho Mäkinen, University of Jyväskylä; Eero Savolainen, University of Jyväskylä; Johanna Ihalainen, University of Jyväskylä; Taija Finni, University of Jyväskylä

14:00

Goal-scoring indicators in the Finnish women's elite football league 2020–2021

Marko Hakanen, University of Jyväskylä; Olli Paakkari, University of Jyväskylä; Henri Lehto, Football Association of Finland; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

14:15

Analysis of the load required in training and matches in young U10 football players

Samuel Manzano-Carrasco, IGOID Research Group, University of Castilla-La Mancha; Antonio Hernández-Martín, IGOID Research Group, University of Castilla-La Mancha

14:30

Stress factors for Romanian elite football referees – a 15-year perspective

Andrei Antonie, University of Eastern Finland

PARALLEL SESSION 3: SUPPORTERS AND AUDIENCES

Agora Gamma

Chair: Anna-Katriina Salmikangas (Senior Researcher, University of Jyväskylä)

13:30

Nordic national football stadiums: Past and present

Even Smith Wergeland, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design; Hans Kristian Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway

13:45

The fan strategy for the National Men's A-Team – "So close you can feel it"

Nikolaj Schelde, Danish Football Association

14:00

History of Finnish football supporter culture from 1980s onwards

Sami Koskelainen, University of Helsinki

14:15

Tifo within the Swedish supporter culture

Sara Karlén, Malmö University

14:30

Finnish women's experiences on supporting football: A case study on Seinäjoen

Jalkapallokerho's supporter group Klopit

Susanna Liljander, University of Jyväskylä; Anna-Katriina Salmikangas, University of Jyväskylä

14:45

The development of supporter cultures in Norway: Global influences and local identities

Hans Kristian Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway

PARALLEL SESSION 4: SPECIAL SESSION ON THE FOOTBALL IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES BOOK PROJECT

Ag C233

Chair: Hannu Itkonen (Professor Emeritus, Sociology of Sport, University of Jyväskylä) & Arto Nevala (Senior University Lecturer, University of Eastern Finland)

13:30

Norway: Inclusion, exclusion, and modernization

Arve Hjelseth, Norwegian University of Science and Technology; Frode Telseth, University of South-Eastern Norway; Bente Ovedie Skogvang, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences; Pål Augestad, University of South-Eastern Norway.

13:45

The history of Swedish football

Robert Svensson, Örebro University; Daniel Alsarve, Örebro University; Daniel Svensson, Malmö University.

14:00

Football in Denmark – a game influenced by state policy

Søren Bennike, the Danish Football Association; Rasmus Storm, The Danish Institute for Sports Studies & Trondheim Business School; Karsten Elmoose-Østerlund, University of Southern Denmark; Nikolaj Schelde, the Danish Football Association; Laila Ottesen, University of Copenhagen

14:15

Finland: Civic activities, growing participation, diversification, and professionalisation

Hannu Itkonen, University of Jyväskylä; Arto Nevala, University of Eastern Finland; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

14:30

Women's football in Norway – between the local and the global for a sustainable future

Bente Skogvang, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

14:45

The historical rivalries of Swedish club football

Torbjörn Andersson, Malmö University

Thursday 12 May 2022
8:30–10:00

PARALLEL SESSION 5: PROFESSIONALISATION, PLAYER CAREERS, AND MIGRATION

Auditorium 1

Chair: Antti Laine (Senior Researcher, University of Jyväskylä)

8:30

Transfer Patterns – narratives from Sweden

Katarzyna Herd, Lund University

8:45

Playing careers of Finnish female football players - Factors affecting the duration, continuation, and termination of the careers

Leena Torpo, University of Jyväskylä

9:00

Empirical research in player careers

Matteo Balliauw, Royal Belgian FA / University of Antwerp

9:15

Serving for state and industry by doing nothing but practice and play: Football shamateurism in East Germany, Hungary, and Romania

Andrei Antonie, University of Eastern Finland; Sandy Adam, Leipzig University; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

9:30

From amateurs to professionals – professionalization of Finnish football from the 1970s to 2000s

Jouni Lavikainen, Sports Museum of Finland

9:45

Out of national women's football team: Experiences of former Ghanaian players

Ralph Frimpong, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana; Victoria Sarfo Konadu, University of Education, Winneba; Ernest Yeboah Acheampong, University of Education, Winneba

PARALLEL SESSION 6: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Auditorium 2

Chair: Marja Kokkonen (Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä)

8:30

Sexual minorities and questions of (in)equality in men's football and football culture

Samu Kytölä, University of Jyväskylä

8:45

"Sometimes it's difficult". Different inclusion profiles of young players with a migration background

Marko Kananen, The South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences; Kari Saari, The South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences

9:00

Female top players in Finland

Vesa Vares, University of Turku

9:15

Women's football in Iceland: Don't wait for change. Just do it

Daði Rafnsson, Reykjavik University

PARALLEL SESSION 7: BUSINESS, ECONOMICS, AND POLITICS

Agora Gamma

Chair: Esa Mangeloja (Senior Lecturer, University of Jyväskylä)

8:30

Something old and something new: Identities and cultural significance of footballers as entrepreneur athletes

Joakim Särkivuori, University of Jyväskylä

8:45

The pathway towards professionalization

Juan Fuentes Fernández, LaLiga

9:00

Football match attendance in Finland

Esa Mangeloja, University of Jyväskylä; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

9:15

Politics of football: Exploring conceptual linkages

Mira Söderman, University of Jyväskylä

PARALLEL SESSION ABSTRACTS

Wednesday 11 May 2022
13:30–15:00

PARALLEL SESSION 1: COACHING AND PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Enhancing role efficacy in youth football: Applying the 5C's to job descriptions by position

Daði Rafnsson, Reykjavik University, Iceland

The aim of this research was to enhance efficacy in coaches and role efficacy in players by designing job descriptions by position using a psychological skills training framework, the 5Cs for coaching psychological skills in youth football (Harwood & Anderson, 2015). Psychological skills training has been described by experts as football's biggest area of improvement in the coming years (Austin, 2018). As clubs and federations adapt psychological skills training into their curriculums, consideration must be given to how it can be used to positively affect performance. While psychological characteristics have emerged as relevant predictors of performance in football, expert coaches' assessment and perspectives have tended to be widely neglected in research (Musculus & Lobinger, 2018). Through a workshop and individual interviews, nine expert coaches contributed to job descriptions for seven positions describing desirable behaviour in competition. The coaches were eager to participate and found the exercise of framing role requirements to the 5Cs helpful to communicate their vision to players.

Keywords: *coach efficacy, role efficacy, football, 5Cs*

Skill in football: A scoping review with a discussion on new perspectives (case header skill)

Jani Sarajärvi, University of Lisbon, Portugal; Rui Freitas, University of Lisbon; Mika Elovaara, Richmond Kickers, USL League One; Anna Volossovitch, University of Lisbon

The concept of skill is a central element in football, and it has been studied from many different perspectives. Theoretical bases and concepts used in these studies as well as considered skills vary notably. A global view on the scientific skill-related football interventions would help to comprehend and to identify gaps in current knowledge. The aim of this scoping review was threefold: (a) to categorize the underpinning theoretical bases, concepts and skills that have been used in the skill-related interventional studies in football, (b) to summarize the skill-related interventions, (c) to identify the research gaps that need to be addressed. A scoping literature search was carried out in accordance with PRISMA guidelines. A total of 3,569 articles was identified, and the descriptive findings revealed a broad focus of skill-related interventions in football. Specifically, (a) examined articles were based on two main lines of skill theories (self-organization approaches and information processing, 43.2% and 17.6%, respectively) or did not have theoretical grounding (39.2%), (b) different key concepts (>60) have been used and need to be standardised to facilitate future research and practice, c) majority of football skill-related research was conducted in Europe (79.7%) with samples focused on male participants (89.2%), thus revealing the need for broadening the scope throughout the world, and especially to women participants. Findings from this scoping review highlight the need to continue the discussion on the definition of skill in football and to study football skill more holistically at the player and group levels.

Keywords: *learning; skill adaptation; soccer; motor skill; technique*

The game formats in Finnish youth football

Lauri Salovaara, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

The purpose of this literature review is to present the body of research and introduce the current state of Nordic, English, and Belgian game formats in youth football. The main focus is to provide decision-making support to the development of game formats in youth football in Finland. The game formats used in the target countries of the literature review are 11v11, 9v9, 8v8, 7v7, 5v5, 4v4, 3v3, and 2v2. The current model in Denmark and Belgium resembles the current model in Finland, while the models in England and Sweden are close to each other. In the Danish, Belgian and Finnish models, the formats are 11v11, 8v8, and 5v5. The smallest game format varies between 2v2, 3v3, and 4v4. In England and Sweden, the similar formats are 11v11, 9v9, 7v7, and 5v5. In addition to these, in Sweden, there is a 3v3 format and two different field sizes in the 9v9 and 7v7 formats. The physical activity in youth football is high, regardless of the game format. The number of technical variables differs between used game formats. A smaller game format affects player involvement in the U8-U14 age groups. The higher number of technical actions also leads to a high number of successful actions. The literature review concludes that the Finnish game formats follow the example of Danish and Belgian game formats and remain mostly unchanged.

Development of additional training opportunities for junior athletes at Training Room Killeri

Sanna Paasu-Hynynen, Jamk University of Applied Sciences, Finland

Training Room Killeri is a combined place and concept that have been created to an old, empty racetrack auditorium. This place serves as an additional training space for junior athlete teams of area to increase quality of training and to prevent injuries in sports. It leverages the concepts developed for top athletes in the Training Room (TR) project. The purpose of TR Killeri has been to develop safe training facilities for junior athletes in accordance with the principles of sustainable development and strengthening the quality of related training. The equipment of the space is largely recycled, and the space has been developed at the lowest possible costs to make training there as cost-effective as possible. As a part of the project sports clubs, coaches and athletes participated in the development using service design. Other elements of the project were training pilots. Aim of pilots were to increase the development of features that supports the training of the sport, as well as the quality of the training. Pilots underwent tests, with an eight to sixteen-weeks progressive guided exercise program in between. The programs were developed in collaboration with the sports physiotherapists of the Training Room project in accordance with the best practices studied and developed. Activities were extended to neighbouring municipalities by offering pilot training using remote methods. As a result of this project the performance of athletes has strengthened, and the quality of additional training has increased. Second result is an exercise facility that provides safe training conditions throughout the year.

Keywords: *sustainability, research-based practices, junior athletes*

The role of leadership in a national team's success

Sakari Holopainen, University of Jyväskylä; Marja Kokkonen, University of Jyväskylä; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä / Football Association of Finland; Niilo Konttinen, Research Institute for Olympic Sports

Every elite football team wants to maximize their success. Especially in international football, smaller footballing countries need to perform well as underdogs when pursuing qualification to the group stage phase of international tournaments. With limited player options, development of leadership within the team might be one solution to achieve better results. The purpose of this study was to find out team members' perceptions on what kind of leadership behaviours and leadership structures occur in a men's football national team participating in the UEFA Euro 2020 and how those are connected to the team's success. Due to the precise nature of the target sample, we applied a qualitative approach. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five coaches and two players. The interviews were analysed with a hybrid approach to thematic analysis. The results emphasized the importance of team cohesion between the coaching staff, between players and the whole team. Coaches felt that with a particular investment on the team's psychological wellbeing they can get the team to overachieve. Coaches' leadership behaviour was seen as a big part of the team's success by all the interviewees. The effectiveness of peer leaders amongst the players was explained by their unselfish personalities and small egos and work ethic. Our study suggests that paying more attention and investing to the leadership of coaches and players, team's chances of success could be increased without player changes. To be able to put these results into practice, a leadership development section could be introduced to coach education programs.

Keywords: football, leadership structure, athlete leadership, coaching behaviour, leadership development

PARALLEL SESSION 2: FOOTBALL PERFORMANCE

Training load comparisons between days within a microcycle in Finnish National league women soccer players during a competitive season

Eero Savolainen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Simon Walker, University of Jyväskylä; Johanna Ihalainen, University of Jyväskylä

Appropriate training load within a microcycle is important to optimize performance. The aim of this study was to compare training load between days within a microcycle in national-level women soccer players during competitive season. 103 players from 7 teams from the highest Finnish women's football league participated to the study. 2183 training load samples were collected over 4–8-week period (depending on the team) from all training sessions and matches of each team by polar team pro-system (10Hz GPS, heart-rate monitor). The days within the microcycle were standardized based on the proximity to following official match day (MD): MD-5 (five days before match day), MD-4, MD-3, MD-2, MD-1 and MD. The following variables were used to define external load: total distance (TD), very-high-speed-running distance (VHSRD, >19 km/h) and number of accelerations and decelerations (ACC&DEC). Heart rate was used to describe internal load. All variables were analyzed in absolute and time-normalized values. Differences between microcycle days were assessed using Friedman's test. All training load variables were highest on MD. From MD-5 to MD-1 training load followed pyramid periodization; increasing from MD-5 to MD-3: TDabsolute +25%, TDtime-normalized +17%, VHSRDabsolute +120%, VHSRDtime-normalized +100%, ACC&DECabsolute +61%, ACC&DEctime-normalized +57%, and decreasing from MD-3 to MD-1: TDabsolute -29%, TDtime-normalized -13%, VHSRDabsolute -89%, VHSRDtime-normalized -31%, ACC&DECabsolute -35%, ACC&DEctime-normalized -22%. Training load during MD-5 and MD-4 was relatively low, likely due to need to recover from previous match. MD-3 was the microcycle's most demanding training day. During MD-2 and MD-1 training load progressively decreased towards MD, representative of tapering.

Keywords: *football, periodization*

Position specific physical demands of national level female football players during competitive matches

Juho Mäkinen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Eero Savolainen, University of Jyväskylä; Johanna Ihalainen, University of Jyväskylä; Taija Finni, University of Jyväskylä

The purpose of this study was twofold: to investigate position specific physical demands of national level female football players; and to examine how these demands change during a match (comparison between first and second half and in 15-minute intervals). Seven teams from the Finnish National League participated in the study. Eighty-five players met the inclusion criteria, and a total of 340 individual match observations from 68 individual matches were included for analysis. The Polar Team Pro -player tracking system (with 10 Hz GPS units, including 200 Hz tri-axial accelerometer, gyroscope, magnetometer and HR monitor) was used to assess positional data and HR response of the players. This study demonstrated that women's national level football matches require a wide variety of physical demands from players, while the number and distance of these performances vary from position to position. In general, physical demands were highest for wide midfielders, and lowest for central defenders. Wide midfielders and forwards performed significantly more very high-speed running, sprinting, number of accelerations and decelerations than other outfield positions. Physical demands vary during a match and are highest in 0–15-minutes and

decrease especially after 60 minutes of play. The findings of present study were similar to those reported in previous studies, showing that very high-speed running and sprint running increase with competition level, while total distance remains more stable.

Keywords: women's football, physical performance, physical demands, position specific, match analysis

Goal-scoring indicators in the Finnish women's elite football league 2020–2021

Marko Hakanen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Olli Paakkari, University of Jyväskylä; Henri Lehto, Football Association of Finland; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

The result in any football (soccer) match is decided by the number of goals. Because of this, the identification of goal-scoring indicators is an essential part of match analysis. Evidence-based information about mid- and long-term performance indicators and actions that lead to goal-scoring in football is valuable for assessment and planning of the training process. Internationally, detailed analyses of elite women's goal-scoring are few. This study focuses on the Finnish women's elite football league and shows which are the most reliable technical, tactical, and spatial indicators in goal-scoring in relation to ways the opponent's defensive organization affects goal scoring. All goals of the seasons 2020–2021 and all possessions that led to goal-scoring have been saved in a database and analyzed. The study sample consists of 658 goals made in 310 games. Match performance analysis was conducted via observation method recognized the key parameters during possession. The reliability of analysis was confirmed using the intra-observation agreement (two observers, 40 random goal-scoring, same analysis parameters, two time points). Statistical analysis was performed with SPSS (Chi square, logistic regression). Preliminary results indicate that the number of one touch finishes, the proportional relationship between open play or set play or goal scoring and goal pass areas are the same in both elite women's games and elite men's games. In this ongoing study, deeper analyses will focus on how goal scoring situations are created and what elements are repeated for successful results.

Keywords: goal-scoring, performance analysis, elite women's games

Analysis of the load required in training and matches in young U10 football players

Samuel Manzano-Carrasco, IGOID Research Group, University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain; Antonio Hernández-Martín, IGOID Research Group, University of Castilla-La Mancha

Global Positioning System (GPS) is widely used in professional football and in the adult population, providing external load data that allows coaches and staff to analyse physical demands. Nevertheless, there is a paucity of knowledge of external load in training and matches of young players. The aim was to analyse performance variables and physical demands of U10 football players according to playing position, pre-match trainings (MD-4 and MD-2) and match day (MD). Twenty-one U10 amateur players (10.2 years) were analysed using the GPS WIMU PROTM 15Hz, over a period of 3 months. The variables of total distance, high intensity and sprint distance, maximum speed, maximum speed acceleration, maximum acceleration, acceleration distance and a number of high-intensity accelerations were analysed in absolute and relative values with respect to competitive match play. U10s showed that midfielders in matches covered more distance and higher intensity acceleration than in training ($p<0.05$; ES: 0.72 to 1.57) and with respect to defenders and forwards ($p<0.05$; ES: 1.05 to 2.00). Relative results compared to match day showed midfielders had a significantly lower percentage of total distance than defenders and forwards ($p<0.05$; ES: 0.76 to 0.83). Playing position influences physical performance in such a way that U10 midfielders cover

greater distances and perform a greater number of high-intensity actions in training and matches than defenders and forwards. Therefore, coaches and staff should consider a minimum control of the training load as there are differences between positions and players can adapt better to the demands.

Keywords: *elite football referee, stress factors, mental preparation*

Stress factors for Romanian elite football referees – a 15-year perspective

Andrei Antonie, University of Eastern Finland

Romanian elite football referees have an amateur status although they behave as professional athletes. In 2009, only the most important games were broadcasted on TV and all the games were played during weekends. Nowadays, all games from the top league are on TV and the football days start on Friday and finish on Monday. All these changes brought major challenges in terms of job and occupation for referees. The first aim of the study is to discover the internal and external stress factors, the referees have to face at the highest level of Romanian football. Secondly, a comparison between stress factors which occurred in 2009 and 2021 during the interviews with the elite officials. The present study is using a qualitative research approach with participant observation and guided in-depth interviews. The qualitative methods were chosen in order to get a deeper perspective about the referees' stress factors. Firstly, Romanian top league referees (N= 5) were interviewed face to face during the Romanian Elite Referees' Conference in Antalya (Turkey) in February 2009. Secondly, they were interviewed via zoom due to the pandemic situation in January 2021. The referees' identity is protected, as no names appear in the study. This is done to avoid problems which could result if their identity is revealed. The stress factors were discovered during the interviews and concluded that some of them might negatively influence their performance on the pitch.

Keywords: *elite football referee, stress factors, mental preparation*

PARALLEL SESSION 3: SUPPORTERS AND AUDIENCES

Nordic national football stadiums: Past and present

Even Smith Wergeland, The Oslo School of Architecture and Design, Norway; Hans Kristian Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway

National sports stadiums are often deeply affected by questions of 'nationality' and the idea of a specific 'national' sports culture. This has an impact on how they are designed, developed and operated. In this paper we explore the legacy of Nordic national football stadiums. Our main case is Ullevål stadium in Oslo, which we compare with the national football stadiums in Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden. Through this study we argue that the meaning of national stadiums is influenced both by assumptions about national sports identity and expectations embedded in football architecture. A key finding is that the modernist idiom of 'form-follows-function' still seems to reign as a token of football stadium quality, in contrast to the idea of the postmodern stadium, associated with aesthetic confusion and shallow commodification. Yet we also found that typical modernist and postmodernist features often co-exist, both historically and today. Another crucial finding is that history continues to play a part in the contemporary configurations of Nordic national stadiums, even in cases where the original stadium has been completely obliterated or reconstructed. We build on previous scholarly work on Nordic football culture and geographical, anthropological and architectural studies of football stadiums.

Keywords: national identity, football stadiums, Nordic sports cultures

The fan strategy for the National Men's A-Team – "So close you can feel it"

Nikolaj Schelde, Danish Football Association

From 2016–2018 The Danish FA (DBU) experienced major conflicts with the players putting both sides in bad stands among the Danish people, which resulted in a widely used hashtag #ikkemitlandshold (#Notmynationalteam). The conflict created a huge gap between the players, DBU and the fans. This resulted in low ticket sales and lacking support from the fans. Therefore, in 2019 DBU launched a new fan strategy. It has resulted in twice as many very loyal fans to our matches, and sold-out stadium to all the men's national teams matches in 2021 – the tickets were only sold to season ticket holders or fan club members (no public sale). The strategy builds on knowledge from quantitative post-match surveys dating back to 2013, large-scale workshop (+100 participants), open sessions via SOME channels and workshops with partners, SLO's from clubs and NA's. The trust and honesty from the stakeholders were an eye opener for DBU. We need to listen more to our fans. We saw that we had to do things differently. Therefore, the strategy and its success are based on doing things in another way than we used to: We shall involve our fans in all initiatives, inform more about basic practicalities, generate passion/excitement in everything we do, and we must reward the involved fans to show them gratitude. We must bring players, fans and DBU closer to each other and think about the three parties as one single team – So close you can feel it.

Keywords: fans, insights, strategy, business development

History of Finnish football supporter culture from 1980s onwards

Sami Koskelainen, University of Helsinki, Finland

Supporter cultures are historically and culturally contingent phenomena. Finnish football supporter culture has changed greatly in the past few decades: while match atmospheres in the 1990s were often derided as funeral-like, by the 2010s passionate fan groups had coalesced around many clubs and the national team. Plenty of studies have looked at supporter cultures and their histories around the world, but Finland has received little scholarly attention so far. To fill this gap, this study researches the history of Finnish football supporter culture from the 1980s onwards. How has the supporter culture changed? How have European supporter cultures influenced Finnish practices? And how have Finnish football authorities approached the supporter phenomenon? Football Association Finland's (FAF) archival documents, media texts, and fan-created texts such as fanzines and online discussions are the study's sources. Based on these sources, the study provides an overview of how Finnish supporter culture and FAF's spectator policies have developed over the past few decades. This study argues that a new kind of Finnish supporter culture emerged in the late 1990s. The new supporters fashioned themselves after their European counterparts, seeing Europeanisation as a way to improve match atmospheres and football's status in Finland vis-à-vis other sports. Some of their new practices, such as the use of pyrotechnical products, clashed with FAF's spectator policies. This has created conflicts between supporters and football authorities. Understanding Finnish supporter culture's historical development will help clubs and regulators develop supporter policies that avoid aforementioned conflicts in the future.

Keywords: football history, fan studies, supporter culture, Europeanisation

Tifo within the Swedish supporter culture

Sara Karlén, Malmö University, Sweden

The purpose of this study is to investigate tifo within the Swedish supporter culture related to Allsvenskan. Tifo is the fans organized choreographies' performed before the game starts. Tifo includes several things, as big paintings, flags, banners, and pyrotechnics. Earlier research about football fans in Sweden has been focused on fans, hooligans, ultras, and female fans. However, deeper investigation about tifo has been neglected. The empirical material will consist of focus-groups interviews, observations of creating and performing tifos. Theoretically, inspiration from Reckwitz (2019) theory of Singularities will be used. Singularities are the aesthetics and feelings of uniqueness that creates value in the society. The project will be produced as a doctoral thesis and recently started; therefore, limited results could be presented. Preliminary result is that there is a competition between the different teams tifo-group of who creates the most neat and inventive tifo, and that creativity is high valued. The results of this study could contribute to knowledge about different fans and expand theoretical assumptions of fans. Also, organizer and the police could use it to reduce conflicts. Lastly, aesthetically, and cultural aspects of sports phenomenon could give new insights. Potential practical implications could be to get access to the group since they are closed and sceptical to include outsiders. Perhaps earlier informants could help me access the groups.

Keywords: tifo, fans, fandom, supporter, ultras, Sweden

Finnish women's experiences on supporting football: A case study on Seinäjoen Jalkapallokerho's supporter group Klopit

Sara Karlén, Malmö University, Sweden; Susanna Liljander, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Anna-Katriina Salmikangas, University of Jyväskylä

Academic research has had an increasing interest in women's experiences on supporting men's club football. Such studies have been carried out for instance in England, Turkey and Denmark in the 2010s. However, this contemporary issue of football and gender is yet to be addressed in Finland. The purpose of this case study is to examine the experiences of Finnish women supporting football as members of Klopit, a supporter group of men's Veikkausliiga football team Seinäjoen Jalkapallokerho (SJK). The main interests of the study are women's supporter behavior, their status in the supporter group, and their experiences of sexism. Drawing on a phenomenological hermeneutical approach, seven semi-structured interviews were analysed using theory-guided content analysis. One of the background theories used was Giulianotti's taxonomy of spectator identities in football. Based on the analysis, the participants were committed supporters who expressed supportership by chanting and clapping in the Klopit end of OmaSp Stadium. All participants were equal members of Klopit and authentic supporters of SJK. In addition, most of the women emphasized that they identify as supporters without the prefix of "female". The women had not experienced sexism in Klopit, but some of the women had encountered sexism related to football spectatorship elsewhere. In conclusion, the participants of the study had positive experiences of supporting SJK. Klopit emphasizes equality and good behavior, which seems to have affected the experiences of the women. Further research is needed as the experiences may differ when compared to women in other supporter groups.

Keywords: football, supporters, women, experiences

The development of supporter cultures in Norway: Global influences and local identities

Hans Kristian Hognestad, University of South-Eastern Norway; Arve Hjelseth, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

In this paper, we aim to analyse the development of supporter cultures in Norwegian football. Football is the most popular spectator sport in Norway, although attendances in the top league of men's football have gradually declined since 2010. While the majority of those attending club football may regard it as a pastime, and nothing more than two hours of partisan entertainment, the dawn of more activist and ideologically oriented supporter cultures have been evident in European football since the late 1980s. While these supporters represent a clear minority in numerical terms, they have become influential in defining the norms of support, as well as opposing certain trends in modern football, usually related to issues of commercialization. In Europe, many supporter groups consider the dawn of major commercially driven leagues around Europe from the early 1990s, as a threat to 'traditional' football cultures. By contrast, modern supporter culture in Norway developed parallel to, and was in some respects part of, the modernization and commercialization of the game from the early 1990s. These processes are analysed in terms of identities and identity work, as well as through power relations between supporters/spectators and clubs/associations and sponsors. In particular, we highlight the construction of local football identities in Norway since 1990, expressed within the complex interplay of influences from a variety of supporter practices in the global world of football. A finding from our analysis is that influences from different regional football cultures have generated a culturally complex supporter culture in Norway. In our presentation, we will discuss how globalization has affected football culture in Norway.

Keywords: Norwegian football, football supporters, football identities, globalization of football

PARALLEL SESSION 4: SPECIAL SESSION ON THE FOOTBALL IN THE NORDIC COUNTRIES BOOK PROJECT

Norway: Inclusion, exclusion and modernization

Arve Hjelseth, Norwegian University of Science and Technology; Frode Telseth, University of South-Eastern Norway; Bente Ovedie Skogvang, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences; Pål Augestad, University of South-Eastern Norway

In this overview of the development of Norwegian football, we present two main narratives, one of modernization and one of inclusion and exclusion. Both narratives are contextualized in terms of broader social, political and cultural trends. Inclusion and exclusion. We discuss these issues in terms of class and gender. While Norwegian football has never been as related to social class as has been the case in some other countries, it started as a pasttime for younger men from the upper and middle classes, and gradually became more popular among the working class. In the 1920s, sport became politicized. Likewise, football was considered exclusively a game for men and boys for a long time. Women's football was integrated into the NFA in the late 1970s, but it took time to earn recognition for women's football as a top level sport. The national women's team were a stronghold of women's football in the 1990s. Modernization: Norwegian football were strictly amateur, at least on paper, until the mid-80s, but rapidly turned fully professional in the early 1990s. Several new all-seated stadiums with improved VIP facilities were built, media and sponsors gained more influence, and Norway became part of a global football market. By 2008, Norway was second only to Scotland in Europe in terms of attendances at men's top league fixtures. Modernization, however, also involves the challenge from a global football TV market, which is discussed.

Keywords: Norwegian football, women's football, modernization of football, football and social inclusion

The history of Swedish football

Robert Svensson, Örebro University, Sweden; Daniel Alsarve, Örebro University; Daniel Svensson, Malmö University, Sweden

Football entered Sweden in the late nineteenth century. It rapidly gained popularity and are still one of the most popular sports in Sweden. While the rules are almost the same as on the arrival, everything else has changed, and the purpose of this paper is to present the history of Swedish football. Synthesizing previous research, we position Swedish football in its societal and sport context and describe processes such as professionalisation, commercialisation, and demographic spread. During the interwar years football established as a part of the entertainment 'industry' and by the 1950s it was perceived as the national sport. While the public interest was a fact, football was for long only for men. Early attempts to initiate women's football did not get support. To stay competitive internationally, SvFF overturned the amateur regulations in 1967. The professionalisation process was however slow. It was not until after the Bosman ruling that Swedish male elite players became full-time employed. During the 1960s and 70s the number of women's teams increased, and in 1972 female football was formally organized in a national league. Youth football also grew substantially during this period. Still with differences, football today is well-established among men and women. In the future, the balance between idealism and commercialism will probably continue. The 51 percent rule that proclaims that the majority of the club must be owned by the members will most likely continue to be a hot potato as it, according to its critics, constrains the financial flow into the clubs.

Keywords: history, Sweden, football

Football in Denmark – a game influenced by state policy

Søren Bennike, the Danish Football Association; Rasmus Storm, The Danish Institute for Sports Studies & Trondheim Business School; Karsten Elmoose-Østerlund, University of Southern Denmark; Nikolaj Schelde, the Danish Football Association; Laila Ottesen, University of Copenhagen

Football in Denmark is a popular game that engages with men and women of all ages. Both on and off the pitch. People are involved as athletes, volunteers, employees, fans and so forth. According to the national survey on sports participation, 9% of the adult population (16+) and 31% of children (7–15) regularly play football. This presentation unfolds a country specific chapter in the "Football in the Nordic countries" book project. We kick off by describing the early years of football starting from the 1870s. From there, we highlight decisive landmarks, important for the understanding of Danish football. We continue by exploring the present landscape of football differentiating between grassroots, professional and self-organised football. Finally, we will close with a focus upon current and future challenges. Overall, we will conclude that Danish football is characterized by four unique traits: firstly, organised club football started in 1878, and is based on an autonomous associative decentral democratic structure holding clubs, regional county unions, the League Association, the Women's league Association and the national Danish Football Association; secondly, a high number (+1600) of grassroots clubs, financially dependent of 98 municipalities, is spread around the country; thirdly, late professionalism beginning from 1978, due to danish sport and culture policy; and fourthly, the creation of a certain business model of professional football, including talent development, engaging sponsors, floating shares, facilities and stadium development and diversification.

Keywords: *Denmark, Policy, Organisation, Football*

Finland: Civic activities, growing participation, diversification, and professionalisation

Hannu Itkonen, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Arto Nevala, University of Eastern Finland; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

Football arrived in Finland with English seamen in the late nineteenth century. Although Finland engaged in international football as early as the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm, football did not become a popular national game. The Football Association of Finland (FAF) emphasised that football should be developed according to amateur principles. Between the World Wars, football had to fight with the Finnish version of baseball (pesäpallo) for living space. Football has been a sport of the cities and urban areas and spread to the countryside slowly. Nevertheless, unlike in other sport domains with a split between non-socialist and workers' sport movements until the 1990s, the FAF united the political sides from the 1940s. The well-functioning civic sector, the agricultural economic structure, the slow urbanisation, and the lack of facilities prevented the emergence of market-oriented professional football. While football is the largest sport as measured by the number of players, this has not been transformed into international success or growth in attendance. Consequently, Finland has undergone modernisation and nation-building processes without any significant addition from football. In the 1970s, the commercial sector began to gain relevance in the sport environment. The men's league was set up in 1989 and the women's league was established in 2006. While these point to the differentiation in the sports landscape, no considerable football business has evolved; even today, elite football is characterised by various levels of semi-professionalism. International games at all levels as well as increasing player migration have bound Finland more closely to the global football system.

Keywords: *football, Finland, Nordic country, civic society, professionalisation*

Women's football in Norway – between the local and the global for a sustainable future

Bente Skogvang, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences

The earlier years of huge resistance and discrimination has neither stopped women in football playing nor coaching, leading, nor refereeing. The development of women's football in Norway has been substantial. The numbers of players have increased from 1,500 registered players (1975) to 29% of all players, and 113,036 registered in 2019. From the 1990's the Norwegian women's national team has had significant successes both in European championships, World Cups, and the Olympics, but still it struggles with acceptance, inclusion and support at club level. The last few years some female elite teams have emerged into male premier league clubs also in Norway, some of them successfully, and others not. Norwegian key players as Ada Hegerberg are breaking barriers internationally as the first women winning the Ballon d'Or, and several Norwegian players are playing in professional leagues abroad. In this paper, I address how women's football, has to act between the local and the global, to build a sustainable sport for the future. Fieldwork conducted in Norwegian men's, and women's football clubs (Skogvang, 2006; 2013; 2019) as well as qualitative in-depth interviews carried out in 2020 and 2021 with key persons (players, coaches, leaders, and referees) are presented. Results show that women footballers are strongly dependent on enthusiasts and voluntariness at local level in combination with promotion of the sport in Nordic countries as well as globally. National and local sponsors, support from media, the league union, family and friends are crucial for the development in Norway as well as internationally.

Keywords: women's football, Norway, local, global, sustainability

The historical rivalries of Swedish club football

Torbjörn Andersson, Malmö University, Sweden

The presentation will be about the most important rivalries in Swedish men's football in a historical perspective from around the year 1900 until today. The theme will be the rivalries in Stockholm between AIK, Djurgårdens IF and Hammarby, in Gothenburg between IFK Gothenburg, Örgryte IS, GAIS and BK Häcken and in the province of Skåne between Malmö FF, Helsingborgs IF and Landskrona BoIS. The different phases of the rivalries will be analyzed as well as and the more detailed nature in terms of e.g. class background, politics, fandom and geography (local and regional identity) will be clarified. The historical crowd troubles and the modern hooliganism associated with the matches will be included in the analysis. The method is qualitative based on the interpretation of a large source material consisting of for interviews, sports magazines, daily newspapers, internet material and the clubs' archive material.

Keywords: Sweden, club football, history, rivalries, glocalization

Thursday 12 May 2022
8:30–10:00

PARALLEL SESSION 5: PROFESSIONALISATION, PLAYER CAREERS, AND MIGRATION

Transfer Patterns – narratives from Sweden

Katarzyna Herd, Lund University, Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences

This paper presents results from a project about transfer patterns in Swedish football. The aim was to study how players understand, copy with and narrate the modern transfer system. Players as well as chief scouts from several Swedish clubs were interviewed (e.g. from Malmö FF, IFK Göteborg, AIK, Hammarby IF). Described as 'slave market', 'necessary evil', or 'pawn shop', the system structures lives not only of players but also of their families and even supporters, as they voice strong opinions with every transfer. I shall present the Swedish narratives about the system, as Sweden is considered a pit stop in the global transfer market and Swedish football (from players' and clubs' perspectives) tries to sustain itself and maintain a specific identity in the increasingly aggressive business environment that football seems to become.

Keywords: transfer system, Swedish football, Allsvenskan, scouts

Playing careers of Finnish female football players – Factors affecting the duration, continuation and termination of the careers

Leena Torpo, University of Jyväskylä

Aims: International studies show that female football players quit their playing careers early before their best playing years. In Finland, however, there is a lack of research on the topic. The purpose of this study was to identify reasons for career termination and career continuation among Finnish female football players. Another aim was to examine how female players can combine their careers with studies, work, and social life. **Methods:** The population of the study consisted of active and former football players from two of the highest levels in Finland. The research data was collected by an online questionnaire in February 2022. The questionnaire was distributed via the channels of the Finnish Players Union, social media, and personal contacts. Altogether, 227 individuals responded to the questionnaire, and 139 of them were current players. **Results and conclusions:** The most common identified reasons for career termination were lack of motivation, injuries, working life related reasons, decrease in physical performance, and the time-consuming nature of football. The most prevalent reported reasons for career continuation were enjoyment of playing and training, sense of community in the team, personal athletic development, health and well-being, competing and winning, and achieving goals. Players evaluated playing career to be more easily combined with studies than with working life. Family, friends, and partners were identified to be big support for most players. The results indicate that there are many reasons behind a termination decision. More resources should be allocated to support female football players and their career continuation. *women's football, sport career, sport career termination, sport career continuation*

Keywords: women's football, sport career, sport career termination, sport career continuation

Empirical research in player careers

Matteo Balliauw, Royal Belgian FA / University of Antwerp

In order for football players to develop successful careers, a number of important decisions have to be made. In which academy will they enrol, when to make a transfer abroad, and how to avoid financial problems are important research questions. Using regression analyses, these three questions have been answered in the sports economics literature, leading to interesting findings for both academics and practitioners. (1) Youth players' market values improve by being part of better youth academies. (2) Youth players rather not leave their home country before obtaining first-team experience. (3) In order to avoid financial issues, a number of factors are important to be kept in mind.

Keywords: youth development, international transfers, player financials

Serving for state and industry by doing nothing but practice and play: Football shamateurism in East Germany, Hungary and Romania

Andrei Antonie, University of Eastern Finland; Sandy Adam, Leipzig University; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

This presentation aims at discussing the opportunities and limitations of football players in East Germany, Hungary and Romania in the period between the end of World War II (1945) and the collapse of the Eastern bloc (1989). Football served as an important propaganda tool for the communist regimes in Eastern Europe. Therefore, the political elites supported football players financially with sinecures in the military, police, and in commercial and industrial companies, as well as by releasing them for training and competitions in their associated clubs. Their status as "shamateurs" granted them privileges in socialist societies over common people but also limited their possibilities to develop professional careers as compared with their counterparts in the West. Drawing on scientific literature and documents, we discuss similarities and differences that footballers have experienced in their career development paths. We will show that all four types of shamateurism, as introduced by Dunning (1999) have occurred separately and in combination in the countries being subject to our study. We therefore contribute to the academic literature by discussing and further developing the concept of shamateurism. We will show that a one-fits-all approach in understanding football player careers in Eastern European countries during the communist period is ill-suited.

Keywords: capitalism, career paths, communism, Eastern Europe, shamateurism

From amateurs to professionals – professionalization of Finnish football from the 1970s to 2000s

Jouni Lavikainen, Sports Museum of Finland

For most of the 20th century Finnish football was characterized by amateurism of organizations, clubs, coaches, and players. Players combined football with studies and full-time jobs, receiving small under-the-table rewards on the side from their clubs. In the 1990s and 2000s, the landscape of Finnish football changed with professionalism becoming norm among biggest clubs and elite male players. This research approaches the diverse and understudied process of professionalization in Finnish football from the perspective of players, by focusing on the players' socioeconomic position. Main research questions are how and why football changed from an after-work hobby to a full-time

sport in Finland, and how did players' sources of income, use of time, job and living arrangements and mentality change as a result. As primary source material oral history interviews were conducted with former players with long playing and sometimes coaching careers in the highest division of men's football in Finland. Complementary sources included newspaper articles and contemporary archival sources. The results reveal how the players' earnings, career pathways and training conditions gradually developed towards professionalism from the 1970s onwards, how the top clubs reached full professionalism in the early 2000s, and why players of smaller top division clubs have had to contend with various levels of semi-professionalism until the present day.

Keywords: *amateurism, professionalism, professionalization, football, Finland*

Out of national women's football team: Experiences of former Ghanaian players

Ralph Frimpong, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana; Victoria Sarfo Konadu, University of Education, Winneba; Ernest Yeboah Acheampong, University of Education, Winneba

In Africa, very few women hold leadership positions in sports organisations. Encouraging women, especially former athletes to get involved in the development and management of sport is essential on the continent. This paper explores the experiences of former female national team players in the context of Ghana football. The current study gives preference to their motives for playing football and experiences along their career paths. The results presented are based on two in-depth interviews with former female national players aged between 42 and 47 years. The interviewees' responses suggest that various motives play a role in their football choices including siblings support (e.g., among males), fun, opportunity to travel abroad, national and social recognition, passion and encouragement from loved ones in their communities. However, they experienced certain difficult moments that can provide important lessons for young female players, which may offer them the opportunity to enhance both their economic and social status. The study concludes by discussing empirical data that shed light on their experiences and some post-career opportunities for female players.

Keywords: *education, motive, national team, post-career opportunity, female football players*

PARALLEL SESSION 6: DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Sexual minorities and questions of (in)equality in men's football and football culture

Samu Kytölä, University of Jyväskylä

Along with the more general trends of improved LGBTQ+ recognition in different domains of life (in Europe), issues of sexual minorities have emerged in the sociology of sports and related fields (e.g. Anderson 2011, 2015; Magrath 2016, 2017; Cleland, Magrath & Kian 2018). Despite the ongoing shifts in tolerance, acceptance and erosion of prejudice, severe problems of invisibility and under-representation remain particularly in 'fields' of male football cultures – i.e. everyday institutional and non-institutional football activities. Moreover, tolerance and acceptance, while univocally positive anti-discrimination developments, do not yet imply inclusion, integration, or equality. Part of my larger research project on LGBTQ+ matters in football, this paper discusses the severe under-representation of sexual minorities in men's football, particularly in the Finnish context. While my main theoretical frameworks are sociolinguistics, (critical) discourse analysis, multimodality, digital communication and ethnography, this paper focuses on media discourse analysis. Openly (L)GBTQ+ stakeholders in men's football are very few, with openly gay players a strikingly absolute minority. My research project is based on two hypotheses: current circumstances and attitudes prevent (1) gay stakeholders (players, coaches, referees, supporters, etc.) from being openly gay/queer, or (2) many interested gay/queer men from even joining the sport. Institutional measures (by FIFA, UEFA, national associations; see e.g. Magrath & Stott 2019) are taken; however, media (and social media) coverage of continuing 'homophobia' and sexism in football (see e.g. Magrath 2019a), suggests that much more work is needed on institutional and grassroots levels before football cultures can be equal and safe for all.

Keywords: sexual minorities, football media, LGBTQ+, inequality, discrimination

"Sometimes it's difficult". Different inclusion profiles of young players with a migration background

Marko Kananen, The South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Xamk); Kari Saari, The South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences (Xamk)

As a truly global sport, football is commonly perceived as an effective way of inclusion for people with a migration background. Within the context of football, cultural, linguistic, racial or religious differences seem less relevant than in many other social fields. However, an emerging body of research warns against characterizing football as a level playing field where everyone has an equal access and opportunities. On the contrary, football can also be used for exclusion and discrimination. The mechanisms through which inclusion and exclusion take place within football have however remained vastly untreated. In order to bridge this gap, the Offside -research project (2019–2022) has followed the ins and outs of four Finnish youth football clubs for a period of three years. Building on a broad collection of empirical data that ranges from ethnographic observations and interviews to surveys and video analysis, it has explored the different mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion faced by young players with a migration background. The preliminary findings suggest that instead of being fixed, the borders between insiders and outsiders are constantly re-/negotiated in brief moments where different sociocultural norms and expectations meet. These moments are shaped by social, cultural, economic and football capitals and they result in different 'inclusion profiles' among the young players. This presentation will highlight these different profiles and discuss the key challenges of inclusion within Finnish youth football.

Female top players in Finland

Vesa Vares, University of Turku, Finland

In general, football has not been a source of success for Finland. However, in women's football the story is more convincing than in men's. Finland has become an almost regular qualifier to the UEFA Euro and has once reached the semi-finals. I publish a history of women's football this spring (in Finnish) and the history of Finnish women's football is included. I have interviewed (a structured interview) several Finnish national team players, gathering their career experiences, and used archive and press sources to study the early stages of Finnish women's football. The material reflects experiences of being set aside and belittled in ways that have sometimes been meant to be encouraging and benevolent, but also of progress – from using men's jerseys and late training hours to making football a profession and being recognized by the national media. I link my results to the development of the Scandinavian welfare state and general gender discussion of sport. Simultaneously, the players' backgrounds and experiences have been much the same as in other countries (compared to existing literature of the latter, both scientific and memoirs). A potential practical implication may be the advancement of equality in sport. An interesting question is also how the relative success lately in several team sports has changed the Finnish self-image – towards team sport from the traditional "lone wolf" aspect.

Keywords: women's football, gender, national team

Women's football in Iceland: Don't wait for change. Just do it

Daði Rafnsson, Reykjavik University, Iceland

Women's football in Iceland has flourished since the national team became the first 'A' national team to qualify for a major tournament in 2009. In just over a decade since, women have pushed the glass ceiling of participation, empowerment, media coverage, and achievement. This presentation examines this evolution through societal transformation theories and the viewpoints of five women who played a role in the change. Expected findings include clubs in Iceland run by community organisers, who might be more driven to enact social change than clubs run as businesses. Most major clubs have incorporated equal opportunity into their official strategies. Career pathways run parallel for male and female footballers, from an early start to first-team opportunities. For young women, role models visible in mainstream media can supercharge achievement motivation. Finally, the Football Association of Iceland does not have a women's football strategy. It simply has a football strategy. That includes a licensing system for both men's and women's teams, equal pay for national team players, and a marketing strategy promoting male and female stars side by side. Hopefully, the case of Iceland can encourage others to adopt a "just do it" mindset and strategies to accelerate the development of women's football.

Keywords: women's football, gender, strategy, equality, opportunity

PARALLEL SESSION 7: BUSINESS, ECONOMICS, AND POLITICS

Something old and something new: Identities and cultural significance of footballers as entrepreneur athletes

Joakim Särkivuori, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Sport-related youth subcultures and growing popularity of alternative sports are phenomena of the era of differentiated sports culture. The social media of the 2020s is a tool for socializing to the subcultures, following one's own development and even commercializing one's own skills. In semi-structured thematic interviews, this master's thesis in social sciences of sport examined motives, identities, cultural significance, and work ecosystem of six creative entrepreneur athletes in football. Out of six informants, three had their professional interests in freestyle football and three in football videos: 'freestyle-' and 'trick shot' -schools could then be separated. There is mutual respect in the freestyle football community from professionals to beginners. Respect is built above all on subcultural capital and not merely on competitive success. The cultural significance of those who focus on football videos is more related to brand and career, but sports performance and artistry are still in symbiosis. Entrepreneurship in creative industries requires adventurous nature, courage, ambition, and willingness to compromise on the comforts of a regular life. For a freestyle football player to become a pro, he or she must practically become a creative entrepreneur athlete. The commercialization appeal of subcultures is greater than in the past. Social media modifies subcultural capital very actively. Research on the mix of social media and sport subcultures can help sport sociology to develop some solutions to the problem of reducing physical activity. The cash flows of creative entrepreneurship as a niche market of postmodern sport industry also deserve more diligent academic research.

Keywords: freestyle football, entrepreneurship, creative industries, social media, sport industry

The pathway towards professionalization

Juan Fuentes Fernández, LaLiga, The Spanish Football League

LaLiga, through its sports department, and in cooperation with LaLiga clubs, have developed programs in Spain and abroad with the aim to improve football and to create better youth developments programs. Among its collaborations, we can highlight in the Nordics the project with Swedish Elite Football and EDM Damallsvenskan. As with the Swedish Football league, where all academy managers of all the Swedish clubs visited LaLiga clubs in Spain during 2021, with the aim to interchange know-how with the youth development and academy managers in LaLiga Clubs. Similar programs in Africa, MENA, Asia, and the Americas are taking place every year with the aim to impact also in the professionalization of football. LaLiga has collaborated with several federations, leagues, clubs, and ministries (depending on the country). In total, more than 400 projects have taken place in 38 countries, impacting on directly 175.000 players and 20.000 coaches. The programs starts with MOUs signings with the federation or leagues where both organizations commit to football development in different areas (it can be grassroots and youth development or even other areas of interest where LaLiga has know-how (technology, digitalization, commercialization, management, marketing or fan engagement). The mission behind is bringing knowledge generated over the years by the professionals of LaLiga to all countries and continents to be able to impact in football development in a global stage, being able to transmit the know-how of LaLiga's own methodology.

Keywords: youth development professionalization, elite football

Football match attendance in Finland

Esa Mangelaja, University of Jyväskylä, Finland; Mihaly Szerovay, University of Jyväskylä

Football fans prefer to see their favourite team win in close matches. Compared to other forms of entertainment, the outcome of sport game is unknown beforehand. Opera audience knows the plot in advance, but in football the winner is revealed only after 90 minutes. The scientific literature of modern sport economics demand theory implies that successful leagues must be based on relatively even competition. This degree of parity within a league is labelled as competitive balance. Sport leagues usually claim that outcome uncertainty is necessary to maintain interest among fans. In this paper, uncertainty of outcome hypothesis is tested applying football data from the highest tier in Finnish men's football, currently known as Veikkausliiga. We apply modern statistical and econometric time-series methods for data to reveal inference between the chosen variables. The time period covers 1947–2020. Empirical results show that Finnish football attendance is positively related to competitive balance between the rivalling teams. Increased alcohol consumption in the society is not related to football attendance, but we found that the number of games played during the season is positively related to ticket sales. Number of teams in the league seems to be negatively related to attendance. In the future, the football leagues need more relevant information on the fan behaviour and scientific analysis for optimizing the box office revenue. Regarding future research avenues, the time of the year, the condition of the stadium and the ticket pricing could be investigated to see whether there is a correlation with on-site attendance.

Keywords: sport economics, competitive balance, uncertainty of outcome hypothesis, demand of sport, alcohol consumption

Politics of football: Exploring conceptual linkages

Mira Söderman, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

These days, the intertwinement of football and politics has become commonplace, and nobody would seriously suggest that they should be kept apart. The manifestations of politics in football are numerous. Totalitarian or authoritarian regimes can use football as a propaganda tool, but also politicians in liberal democracies may use football to boost their political careers. Other examples concern, for example, how states intervene in football by means of legal or financial regulation and recently debates surrounding football and “identity politics” have gained prominence. As valuable and interesting as these approaches are, they often tend to overlook the political aspects of the game itself. In this paper, I will present an alternative reading of politics of football and discuss the topic from the point of view of a political scientist. The point of departure for my tentative analysis is to consider politics as a contingent and controversial activity that is potentially found in any human activity, also in football. This enables us to contemplate some previously neglected political aspects of football and to consider politics as a common—albeit often implicit—part of football matches.

Keywords: politics, football, contingency, political science

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

After the academic programme of the first day of the conference (11 May), we are offering a social programme for the participants. You can choose one out of the four options listed below. All programmes will finish until 18:30 so that you have enough time to arrive at the Welcome Reception hosted in the City Hall by 19:30.

- **Practical application of technology in football training by Firstbeat Technologies**

During the practical demonstration participants get to see how football training can be monitored and planned by using Firstbeat Technologies equipment. Demonstration includes players from a local football club, so participants from the conference can observe.

Location and timing: Football pitch next to the Faculty of Sport and Health Sciences (Kampuksen kenttä), which is a 10-minute walk from the conference venue. Our conference assistants will guide you to find the place. The session starts at 17:00.

- **Training Room project by JAMK – Performance and ancillary training conditions for junior athletes**

By participating, you will get to visit the additional training space for junior athletes, which is built at a low cost in the old auditorium building of the horserace track. The development work has been done by means of service design with clubs that play sports in the area. You can follow the ancillary exercises of the football juniors, and hear about the change in the concept of the space in accordance with sustainable development.

Location and timing: There is a bus transport to the Killeri horserace track starting from the car park of the conference venue. The bus takes off at 16:45.

- **Alvar Aalto walk tour by Visit Jyväskylä**

A guided walk tour around the university campus and city centre to explore Jyväskylä's unique architecture. The tour visits various locations with the masterful buildings designed by the world-famous Alvar Aalto.

Location and timing: Start from the main entrance of the conference venue at 16:45.

- **Stand-up paddleboarding on the lake by Tavinsulka**

A guided paddleboarding session on the lake Jyväsjärvi. Suitable for anyone with swimming ability, regardless of physical condition or previous experience

Location and timing: Pier next to Hotel Alba, which is located 100 meters from the conference venue towards lake Jyväsjärvi. Instruction starts at 17:00.

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