The Belgian vision on youth development

Bob Browaeys
Denmark 21/11/2013
CV of Bob Browaeys (°1968, Belgium)

- Master in the Physical Education (University of Ghent)
- Holder of the UEFA-Pro licence (2007)
- Former goalkeeper of SV Waregem (1\textsuperscript{st} division, 3 appearances in 1990) and several 4th division clubs (10 years)
- Author of a book about goalkeeping (1993)
- FIFA instructor goalkeeping course since 2010
- National Youth Coach U15, U16 or U17 Belgium since 1999
  - 1 participation at European Championship U17 (semi-finals in 2007)
  - 1 participation at World Cup U17 (2007, South Korea)
- Director of the Belgian Coach Education School (2008-2012)
- Technical co-ordinator of the Flemish Football Federation (since 2009)
The promising Belgian style of football by National A-team players (anno 2013)

Is it coincidence (golden generation) or is there a relationship with the Belgian way of youth development?
CONTENT

• Football in Belgium
• Development Vision of the Belgian FA
• The Competition Structure
• The National Youth Teams
• Coach Education School
• The Topsport Schools
• Talent Identification
• Grassroots
• Club and Academy Management
CONTENT

• Football in Belgium
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Football in Belgium

- Population: 11,065,600 habitants
- Surface area: 32,545 km²
- Provinces: 9
- National languages: French (40%), Dutch (60%), German (74,000)
- Population density: 340 hab/km²
- Max distance: 280 kms
- Clubs: +/- 2000
- Registered players: +/- 400,000
- Teams: 17,902
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Development Vision of the Belgian FA

- Development vision of the Coach Education School is the reference
  - has been developed, taught and adapted for more than 10 years
  - has been tested in practice during training sessions at the topsport school and in the national youth teams

- Adjustment of the playing systems since the season 2002-2003
  - 5-5, 8-8 and 11-11 instead of 5-5, 7-7, 9-9 and 11-11
  - based upon scientific research (KUL)

- Spreading of the vision towards all Belgian FA projects and Belgian clubs

- The final product has a wide bearing surface: consultation and feedback of clubs, youth coaches, teachers, ...

- Constantly adapted to new trends in international football
Development Vision of the Belgian FA

1. Philosophy = ZONE

2. Programme = LEARNING PLAN

3. Method = GAME and intermediate forms

4. Actor = PLAYER

Youth Player

FUN
FORMATION

adult

football player
1. The FUN pillar
FUN = learning while playing!

- Fun for everyone: from 5 year old to professional player
- Even adults come to the training session to play a game
- Fun for every player, the less talented included!
FUN = learning while playing!

EACH PLAYER

- plays football almost all the time
- touches the ball frequently
- gets many scoring occasions
- can play freely
- is encouraged by his coach
- is supported by the parents
FUN = learning while playing!

We lost, we won, either we have fun!
2. The FORMATION pillar
EXPLORATION = to get used to the ball (5 – 7 years)

INDIVIDUAL development (7 – 17 years):

Basic skills and tactics = BASICS

Functioning in team = TEAM TACTICS

INTEGRATION in adult football (from 17 years)

Belgian vision on youth development
The whole of technical and tactical skills (BASIC COMPETENCES) needed by a player to function well within a 11 vs 11, irrespective of the playing system and playing concept.

7-13 years = GOLDEN AGE

Ideal age for development of psycho-motor function ability
TEAM TACTICS : definition

The whole of actions to function as well as possible as an individual player within a team, irrespective of the system and concept of play, and making use of the basics, the physical and mental skills.
DEVELOPMENT VISION OF THE BELGIAN FA

3. ZONE PHILOSOPHY
FOOTBALL IN ZONE AS DEVELOPMENT PHILOSOPHY

Zone Individual marking !

A playing concept and not a playing system!
Principles in loss of the ball (B- ) and in possession of the ball (B+ )!

-> Principles of zone are applied while playing 11 vs 11 from which the team tactics will be derived.

-> The learning plan contains team tactics which are learned in 5-5, 8-8 and 11-11
ZONE PHILOSOPHY: WHY?

To improve

- the reading of game situations
- the process of “decision making”
- the courage to take initiatives
- the ability to communicate
- the ability to concentrate

ZONE WITH YOUTH FOOTBALL PLAYERS

= Putting brains in the muscles!
4.

THE LEARNING PLAN

DEVELOPMENT VISION OF THE BELGIAN FA
THE MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT IN FOOTBALL

• To learn is:
  – a continuous process: objectives of development via.... via.... to (= lines of development)
  – cumulative: the acquired skills represent the basis for the skills yet to be learned

• The model of development in football:
  – based upon the development model in « ball sports »
  – 4 levels of development: fluent transition of one level into the other
  – the football age is the clue: big individual differences are possible in each development area (f.e. physical inferiority in relation to mental lead, taking into account the biological age)
  – The youth coach chooses learning objectives and contents based upon the level in the model of development
Technical and tactical objectives within the learning plan

- me and the ball (phase 1: 2-2)
- collective game “nearby” (phase 2: 5-5)
- collective game “2° degree” (phase 3: 8-8)
- collective game “far away” (phase 4: 11-11)

Game dimensions / phases of development
THE MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT IN FOOTBALL

Mental objectives within the learning plan

Teaching of mental basic skills

Use of mental skills in training sessions

Use of mental skills in competition

1. Motivation
2. Self control and self discipline
3. Concentration
4. Self confidence
5. Inter-personal and team relations
6. Lifestyle

Game dimensions / phases of development

me and the ball (phase 1: 2-2)

collective game "nearby" (phase 2: 5-5)

collective game "2° degree" (phase 3: 8-8)

collective game "far away" (phase 4: 11-11)
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

Physical objectives within the learning plan (taking into account the biological age)

Game dimensions / phases of development

- me and the ball (phase 1: 2-2)
- collective game “nearby” (phase 2: 5-5)
- collective game “2° degree” (phase 3: 8-8)
- collective game “far away” (phase 4: 11-11)
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

2 v 2 : duel (18m to 12m) ➞ 5y – 7y

Belgian vision on youth development
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

5 v 5: single diamond (35m to 25m) ➔ 7y – 9y
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

8 v 8: double diamond (60m to 40m) ➔ 9y – 11y

DOUBLE

DIAMOND

Belgian vision on youth development
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

11 v 11 : 1-4-3-3 (100m to 60m) ➞ from 11y
**THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1+K/1+K</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>U6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(5y to 7y)</td>
<td></td>
<td>U7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Football as a dribbling and shooting game
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

1+K/1+K  2/2  U6  ball acquaintance
(5y to 7y)

4+K/4+K  5/5  U7  opposition games
(7y to 9y)

U8  application 2/2
(7y to 9y)

U9  evolution towards nearby game

Football as a dribbling and shooting game

Football as a short passing game without off-side rule
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

1+K/1+K 2/2  U6  ball acquaintance
(5y to 7y)  

4+K/4+K 5/5  U7  opposition games
(7y to 9y)  

7+K/7+K 8/8  U8  application 2/2
(9y to 11y)  

Football as a dribbling and shooting game

Football as a short passing game without off-side rule

Football as a halflong passing game without off-side rule

U9  evolution towards nearby game

U10 application 2/2 + 5/5

U11 evolution to 2nd degree game

Belgian vision on youth development
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>5y to 7y</td>
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<td>evolution to 2nd degree game</td>
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<td>(11y to 17y)</td>
<td>11/11</td>
<td>U12</td>
<td>application 2/2, 5/5 and 8/8</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>U13</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U14</td>
<td>evolution to far away game</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>U16</td>
<td>to perfect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>U17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL

To learn is a cumulative process

BASICS

TEAM TACTICS

PHYSICAL

MENTAL

Belgian vision on youth development
**THE DEVELOPMENT MODEL IN FOOTBALL**

- Setting out the **basics** and **team tactics** for each development level
- Setting out the training session topics on a **physical** level
- Setting out the characteristics on a **mental** level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Team Tactics</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Mental</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2-2</td>
<td></td>
<td>5-7 years</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-5</td>
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<td>7-9 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-8</td>
<td></td>
<td>9-11 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-11 (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td>11-13 years</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>13-15 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-11 (2)</td>
<td></td>
<td>15-17 years</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Adaptation of the team tactics to new trends in international football

- 100% possession of the ball (4-3-3 ➔ 1 holding midfielder)
Adaptation of the team tactics to new trends in international football

- 100% possession of the ball (4-3-3 → 1 holding midfielder)
  - building-up from behind (short, half long and long)
  - aggressive high pressing
  - to counter the counter
Adaptation of the team tactics to new trends in international football

• 100% possession of the ball (4-3-3 → 1 holding midfielder)
  → building-up from behind (short, half long and long)
  → aggressive high pressing
  → to counter the counter

• Runs: create space and exploit space (ex. the “Villa”-run, EC 2008)
Adaptation of the team tactics to new trends in international football

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  ➔ building-up from behind (short, half long and long)
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• Runs : create space and exploit space (ex. the “Villa”-run, EC 2008)

• Efficiency in the zone of truth (ex. the “Shevchenko-run, EC 2012)
Adaptation of the team tactics to new trends in international football

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• Runs: create space and exploit space (ex. the “Villa”-run, EC 2008)

• Efficiency in the zone of truth (ex. the “Shevchenko-run, EC 2012)

Challenging youth players to make “new” mistakes by playing the most difficult football (also the physical and mental requirements are higher)
5. GAME and INTERMEDIATE forms
“An acquired skill in the application of certain activities (training session) can only be transferred into a new condition (the game) when there exists a maximum of resemblances between the two situations”
Variation of game and intermediate forms
1 unit can include different training session

Belgian vision on youth development
In the beginning: most simple game form (f.e. 2 against 1), afterwards evolution to more complexe forms and ending with the most complexe game form (f.e. 4 against 4).
METHODOICS

During the recognition phase: starting with the final form, and afterwards evolving toward the most simple game form needed to solve a problem. Afterwards, more complexe forms are progressively introduced and at the end the same game form is used as at the beginning.
6. FOCUS ON THE PLAYER

BELGIAN FA

DEVELOPMENT VISION OF THE

Belgian vision on youth development
FOCUS ON THE PLAYER
The role of the youth coach is to create an inspiring and stimulating learning environment:

- Interaction youth coach and player
- Match focused tasks and game situations
- Player is given the opportunity to solve the game problems himself
- Learning environment is responsible for learning results
FOCUS ON THE PLAYER

thumb up Let him - make his own decisions
- experience (own experience)

thumb up Support him, be patient and give him confidence

thumb up Help him - to make the right decisions
- to find a solution
- with a positive coaching

Give a man a fish, you feed him for a day …

Teach a man to fish, you feed him for a lifetime!
More games

More fun

And more brains!
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• The **Competition Structure**
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Competition structure First Team

**BELGIUM**

- Professional Football
  - 1\textsuperscript{st} National Division (16 teams)
  - 2\textsuperscript{nd} National Division (18 teams)
- Amateur Football
  - 3\textsuperscript{rd} National Division (32 teams - 2 groups)
  - 4\textsuperscript{th} National Division (64 teams - 4 groups)
- Provincial Divisions
Competition structure Youth Teams

BELGIUM

Professional Football Elite Level

Interprovincial Level

Provincial Level

Regional Level

Elite Youth 1 & 2 (16 teams + 18 teams)

Labeling system in Amateur Football based on quality criteria (checklist)
Competition structure Elite Youth Teams (1 & 2)

- U6, U7, U8 and U9 : 5v5
- U10, U11 and U12 : 8v8
- U13, U14, U15, U16, U17, U19 and U21 : 11v11

- U7 : only friendly games
- U8 - U10 : 2 series of 8/9 clubs (A + B-teams)
- U11 - U19 : 1 serie of 16/18 clubs
- U21 : 1 serie of 16/18 clubs

Only ranking from U13 !
2014 - 2015 ➔ Adaptations on Amateur Level

- U6 ➔ 2v2
- U13 ➔ 8v8
- Every boy/girl until U17 plays at least 50% of the time ➔ 4 quarters and after each quarter all substitutes must come on the field
- No more series of 16 teams but series of 8 ➔ transport time ↓ and adaptation after the 1st round (not based on ranking but on a level code)
- More flexibility for girls and lowest level older than 12 year ➔ 8v8 as a valuable game format
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Belgian vision on youth development

The Talent Identification Pyramid

9 provincial selections

Players from Amateur clubs

⇒ U12A/B, U13A/B, U14, U14F, U15, U15F, U16 and U16F

Identification system U14

Players from elite clubs (1 & 2) and regional selections

⇒ Based on maturity (late, average, early)

National Youth teams

U15, U15F, U16, U16F, U17, U17F, U18, U19, U20

EACH PLAYER ON THE RIGHT LEVEL!
National youth teams: goals

- To search for the most talented players by age group
- To organise training sessions, training camps and games and to provide quality development according to the Belgian FA vision
  - the best with the best against the best
  - it’s all about making new mistakes
  - hard work beats talent
  - the best coach is the player himself (self development)
- To make post-game analyses (on strengths and weaknesses) for the player and the club
- To improve cooperation between Belgian FA and clubs
  - To prepare for a professional and international career
  - To prepare for the A-team (ultimate aim)
Cooperation National teams and club

No association has won the youth competitions more than Spain, and it is no coincidence that many of their presently supreme senior side – players like Iker Casillas, Fernando Torres and Andrés Iniesta – have also won UEFA tournaments at junior level. "If you look at the Spanish system, it has been fantastic for producing players at senior level," Boyce said.

"And if you take Belgium, they were struggling for quite a few years, now they are becoming a force in European football again. They have been building for quite a few years to produce a team with players who have come through the U17 and U19 age groups. It shows you the benefits."

*Jim Boyce, UEFA Youth and Amateur Football Committee chairman on Uefa.com (15/01/2013)*
Belgium A-team, 2013

1. Courtois (°92, Atletico Madrid) (U19)

De Bruyne (°91), Chelsea
Defour (°88), Porto
 Chadli (°87), Tottenham
Lukaku (°93), Everton
Mertens (°87), Napoli
Naingolan (°88), Cagliari
Pocognoli (°87), Hannover
Mignolet (°88), Liverpool
Casteels (°92), Hoffenheim
Bakkali (°96), PSV
Play for Belgium

Think team first

Belgian vision on youth development

Be a pro

Be a winner
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Basic courses 2013-2014

UEFA-PRO DIPLOMA (240h)
Management of professional teams

EXPERIENCE

UEFA-A DIPLOMA (114h)
coaching of senior teams (until 2nd division)

CERTIFICATE A (148h)
coaching of senior teams (until 4th division)

EXPERIENCE 1 year

UEFA-B DIPLOMA (112h)
11-17 year/postformation/amateur (until 2nd prov. series)

CERTIFICATE B (60h)
5 - 11 year

INITIATOR CERTIFICATE C (60h)
Vision / didactics / basic motor function / safe sports

BELGIAN vision on youth development
Specific courses 2013-2014 (1)

- UEFA-A Elite Youth: 150h (since 2008)
- Crash courses
  - ex-internationals UEFA-B: 40h
  - ex-internationals UEFA-A: 60h
  - ex-professional players UEFA-B: 60h
- Course Goalkeeping coach (since 2004)
  - level I (youth): 36h
  - level II (seniors): 36h
  - level III (prof): 36h
- Course for Director of Youth Academy (since 2004)
  - Amateur (level I): 90h
  - Elite (level II): 60h
Specific courses 2013-2014 (2)

• Futsal
  - UEFA-B FUTSAL : 120h
  - UEFA-A FUTSAL : 120h

  New structure from 01/09/2014 ?

• Physical coach
  - level I (youth) : ? h
  - level II (seniors) : ? h
  - level III (prof) : ? h

  New project from 01/09/2014 ?

• Mental coaching (since 2012)
  - level I (youth) : 20h
  - level II (seniors) : 20h

• Talent identification : 16h (since 2009)

• UEFA-updating courses (to obtain a UEFA-licence valuable for 3 years)
  - UEFA-PRO : 15h = 15 points
  - UEFA-A : 15h = 15 points
  - UEFA-B : 15h = 15 points
Main principles of our Coach Education

• Focus on quantity ➔ to increase the number of qualified coaches (2000 candidates/year)
  ➢ organization of C-level (60 hours) on demand of the clubs
  ➢ on different days
  ➢ low fee (200 euro for « C »)
Main principles of our Coach Education

• **Focus on quantity** ➔ to increase the number of qualified coaches (2000 candidates/year)
  ➢ organization of C-level (60 hours) on demand of the clubs
  ➢ on different days
  ➢ low fee (200 euro for « C »)

• **Focus on quality**
  ➔ to increase the number of competent coaches
  ➢ sessions of 4 hours (1x/week) ➔ reflection time
  ➢ content continuously adapted on new trends
  ➢ to coach the (new) instructor
  ➢ mentorship during practical sessions in clubs
  ➢ focus on self-development and long life learning
  ➢ reality based learning
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Topsport/Foot-Elite 2013-2014 (14y – 18y)

Start in september 1998 organized by the Belgian FA

Total : 303 players (36 girls)
4 additional training sessions (morning)

**total Flanders**
- 225 topsport pupils
- 15 NL teachers football
- 5 NL goalkeepers coaches (3h/w)

**total Wallonia**
- 78 topsport pupils
- 6 FR teachers football
- 3 FR goalkeeper coaches (3h/w)
The objective of the Topsport Project

To offer a supplementary quality education of 4 additional training sessions a week, which is complementary to the education in the club (the HELP-FUNCTION)

For talented players with a topsport status:
- automatically as a youth international
- or after passing a selection test (only for players from an elite label clubs and a provincial final selection)
5 crucial keys of success

1. All talented players have the opportunity
   - early and late mature
   - players mainly from 1st division clubs but also from lower divisions and girls from national selections
   - favorable geografical spreading (no problem of transport)

2. Strong learning environment
   - training sessions with all the most talented players
   - 250 extra training hours a year, based upon the development vision of the Belgian FA

3. A specific educational "topsport"-management + offering the possibility to obtain a full diploma
   - teachers of football (experience as players and coaches, diploma UEFA-A and pedagogical diploma)
   - smaller class groups, study guidance, specific exams regulations and possibility to train with the A-team
5 crucial keys of success

4. **Guarantee** for continuity and expertise
   - Continuity: same staff of coaches, same learning plan
   - Expertise: 15 years of know-how

5. **100% oriented** to individual development
   - not based upon the building of a team
   - a modular system with BASICS and TEAMTACTICS objectives and qualitative evaluations (7 per year)
   - learning objectives per training session, per week, per module and per year
   - a specific individual monitoring based on analysis of the strengths and the weaknesses of the player
From Topsportschool to International level

Dries Mertens (Napoli, °87)
Thibaut Courtois (A. Madrid, °92)
Kevin De Bruyne (Chelsea, °91)
Moussa Dembele (Tottenham, °87)
Steven Defour (Porto, °88)
Axel Witsel (Zenit, °89)
Nacer Chadli (Tottenham, °89)
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Grassroots in Belgium

Grassroots = football on the basis

Youth amateur football (from 5y)
Football for disabled people
Veterans football
Girls football
Football at school

Grassroots = + 95% (!!!) from our football
Grassroots in Belgium

- To **promote** football and futsal for youth (boys and girls)
- To let **more youth players play more** hours football per year (football camps, football at school, futsal competitions, ...)
- To organise football activities and promote football for **disabled people**
- To raise the quality of the lessons **football in the schools**
Grassroots in Belgium

- To guarantee the “rights of the child” when playing football (➔ The Panathlon Charter on the Rights of the Child in Sport, GENT 24 September 2004 )

All children have the right

• to practise sports
• to enjoy themselves and to play
• to live in a healthy environment
• to be treated with dignity
• to be trained and coached by competent people
• to take part in training that is adapted to their age, individual rhythm and competence
• to match themselves against children of the same level in a suitable competition
• to practise sport in safe conditions
• to rest
• to have the opportunity to become a champion, or not to be a champion
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• **Club and Academy Management**
Club and Academy Management

- **Primary customers of a Federation?** Clubs and their Academies
- **Objective?** to support them to run their Club & Academy successful
- **How?** by implementing Quality & Performance Management
- **What?** Foot PASS Belgium Project
- **Who?** Federation in collaboration with Double PASS, spin-off of the University of Brussels
Club and Academy Management

Auditing & Rewarding
- objective and independent measurement
- Classification and certification of clubs (quality labels)
→ by Double PASS as ISO

Supporting
professional advise on youth / talent development
→ by the Federation (Club Support Managers) in accordance with the Belgian vision on youth development
Club and Academy Management

Foot PASS Belgium Model

Effectiveness

Facilities & Equipment

Communication & Co-operation

Academy Staff

Athletic & Social Support

Strategic & Financial Planning

Organisational Structure

Talent Identification & Development

PASS

Belgian vision on youth development
Club and Academy Management

Facts & Figures

• More than 450 grassroots and professional clubs
• 125 audited clubs per year
• 15 Staff members (auditors and Club Support managers) involved
• Since 2002 for professional clubs
• Since 2006 for grassroots clubs
Summary of the Belgian style of football by players born in 1996
Thank you for your attention!