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## FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

by AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh

## AFC EVENTS & PROJECTS

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# 02

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ONE ASIA  ONE GOAL

THE BIG INTERVIEW WITH

CARLOS ALBERTO PARREIRA

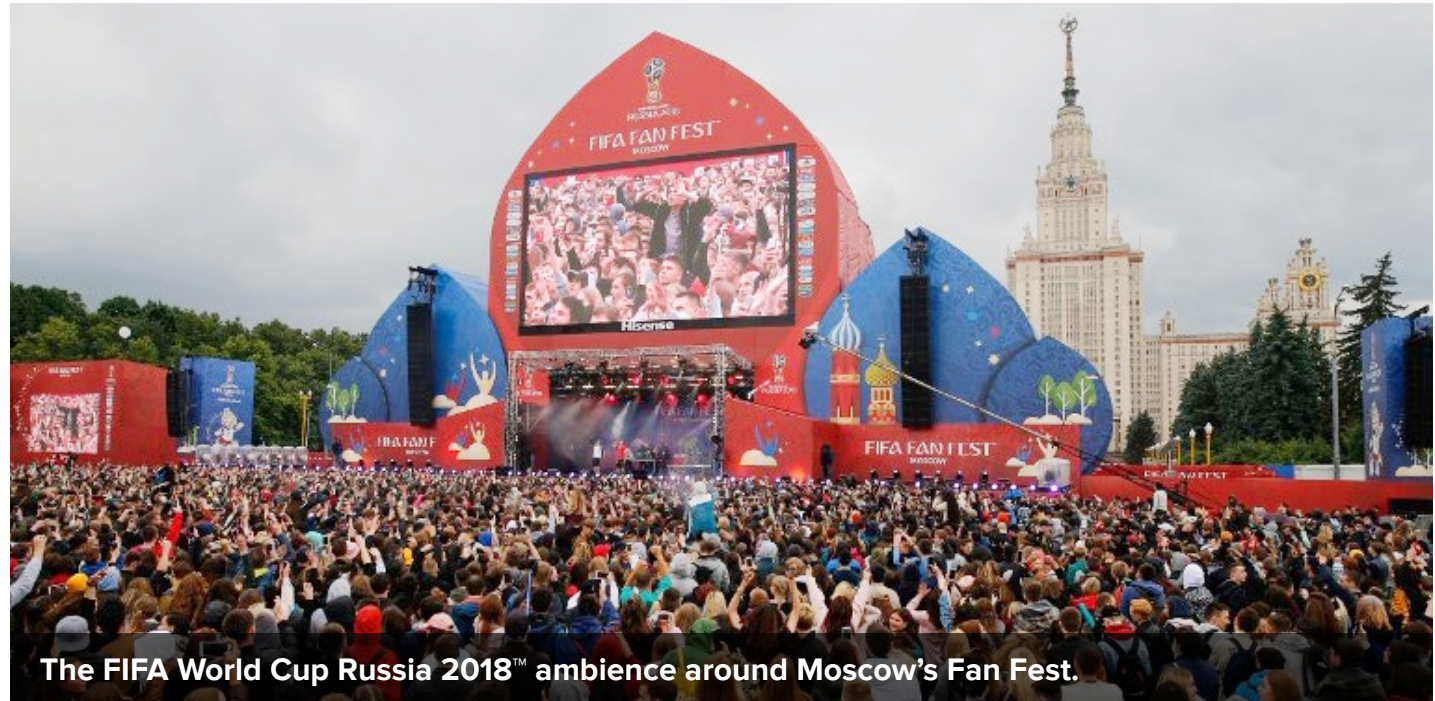


## FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

by Andy Roxburgh, AFC Technical Director

When I flew home from Moscow on Monday July 16 following the FIFA World Cup final between France and Croatia, I couldn't help humming the tune 'From Russia With Love' which comes from the 1963 James Bond film of the same title. As with many people around the world, the experience of Russia 2018 left an indelible impression on me and reinforced my love for the fans, the players, the game and the national teams. On ten occasions, I have been involved in football's greatest tournament (once as a national coach, twice as an assistant and seven times as a member of the governing bodies' Technical Study Group), and I was more than happy to endorse the view that this was the best World Cup in recent memory. It had everything: great matches, exciting players, beautiful stadiums, passionate fans and a variety of fascinating playing styles.

The mass invasion of fans from Latin America was astonishing. Vast numbers of Peruvians descended on Saransk, Ekaterinburg and Sochi - an effort which was recognised by FIFA at its



Best Awards in London when the Best Supporters Award was given to Peru. Meanwhile, the Brazilians, the Mexicans, the Colombians and the Argentinians swamped the host cities in Russia, bringing colour, noise and passion to the football grounds and the streets. Yet, according to the Russian authorities, the biggest number of visiting fans - 622,000 in total - came from China and the USA, which was surprising considering that neither country qualified for the finals. Both in the stadiums and at the Fan Parks, the atmosphere was friendly, spectacular and joyous. The importance of the supporters was highlighted by one of Latin America's most distinguished writers, Eduardo Galeano, when he wrote: "Playing without fans is like dancing without music." Or, in the words of the legendary Glasgow





Fans are the lifeblood of the game – football without fans is nothing.

**Jock Stein**  
*Former Glasgow Celtic Coach*



EDITORIAL

Celtic coach Jock Stein: “Fans are the lifeblood of the game - football without fans is nothing.” The all dancing, all singing supporters who descended on Russia were certainly the lifeblood of a memorable football extravaganza. The month-long show was watched by a world-wide TV audience of 3 billion, but it was the fans in Russia who provided a vital source of energy to the world’s best players. The wonderful Japanese fans even cleaned their sector of the stadium after each match in a show of respect for their hosts.

And then, there were the players: Modrić and Rakitić spreading the play; Hazard and Neymar running with the ball; de Bruyne and Mbappé countering at pace; Messi and Coutinho maintaining possession in tight areas; Pogba and Lukaku protecting the ball; while Kane, Griezmann, Ronaldo and others were finding the back of the net with grace and style. If Luka Modrić was the sun at its zenith, then Kylian Mbappé was the essence of a new dawn. Meanwhile, from the Land of the Rising

Sun, Asia’s most successful team, Japan, put Belgium into the shade for nearly 70 minutes of their Round of 16 match. In a four-minute spell just after half-time, Genki Haraguchi and fellow midfielder Takashi Inui both scored and posed their European opponents a daunting challenge. Belgium fought back, and a wonderful counter-attack, led by the dynamic Kevin de Bruyne, produced the winner and a result which broke Japanese hearts. Roberto Martinez’s men had shown character with their impressive recovery, but in their next game, all their technical and tactical qualities were called upon when they faced their biggest obstacle to date.

For me, the quarter-final clash between Brazil and Belgium in Kazan, was the game of the tournament - the magic of the yellow jersey confronted by the ‘Red Devils’. The former nearly scored after 8 minutes, when Thiago Silva hit the post following a corner from Neymar on the left. But, five minutes later, the ball was in the net. A Nacer Chadli corner, also from the left, was deflected



A Japanese fan cleaning up his sector after the match.



Rakitic and Modric playing key roles for Croatia.

by Brazil’s Fernandinho into his own net. If there was an element of good fortune in Belgium’s opening goal, their second was skill and precision personified: a driving run through midfield from Romelu Lukaku set up Kevin de Bruyne and, from the edge of the penalty box, the Manchester City man drilled the ball into the far corner to the Brazilian net. The bravery of coach Roberto



Martinez in playing with three attackers - who generally remained in advanced positions - and a 7-man defensive block, had to be admired. It was an inventive, high-risk strategy which also proved to be decisive and, despite a 76th-minute goal from Brazil's substitute Renato Augusto, Belgium advanced to the semi-finals in 'cavalier style'.

Talking about style, it is the variety of cultural differences and playing methods that makes the World Cup so special. Despite globalisation and the influences of players who play abroad, national teams usually reflect and represent their 'school of football'. For example, in Latin America, there is the green way (Mexico), the yellow camp (Brazil and Colombia) and the blue bloc (Uruguay and Argentina), each with their distinctive approach to the game and their deep-rooted mentality, but with certain common traits. The championship-winning nations in recent times - Italy, Spain, Germany and France - have had a worldwide impact. Nevertheless, international teams retain their own characteristics and playing features, as we have seen in Asia with the Japanese, the Koreans, the Australians, the Iranians and the Saudis. Variety is unquestionably the spice of life in international football and something which adds to its appeal and fascination.

For the first time, the Asian Cup, AFC's premier competition which gets underway in UAE in next month, will have 24 teams in the final tournament and expectations are intensifying. Following the positive vibes of the World



Makoto Hasebe in action against Belgium in the Round of 16 game in Rostov during the 2018 FIFA World Cup

Cup, it is hoped that enthusiasm for international competition will continue to rise and that Asia's best national teams will deliver on the continental stage. Carlos Parreira, a World Cup winner for Brazil and someone who worked in West Asia, told me at the World Cup: 'It may only be a few teams in Asia, but there is progress.' The aim is to maintain

that progress and to add to the number of Member Associations that have the capacity to compete at the highest international level. After the Asian Cup, I may not be humming 'From Russia with Love', but with the next World Cup coming to Asia, to Qatar, let's hope it is an optimistic and happy tune.

**W**ith a record six appearances as a national coach at the FIFA World Cup, Carlos Alberto Parreira from Brazil was an appropriate choice as the Head of FIFA's Technical Study Group at the World Cup in Russia 2018. The Brazilian coaching guru, who was the world champion with his home country in 1994, also managed Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Brazil (for a second time) at the final tournament.

Apart from the world crown, his trophy cabinet has displayed two AFC Asian Cups, a Copa América and the FIFA Confederations Cup. And, we shouldn't forget that he was a gold medallist in 1970 as an assistant to Mario Zagallo when Brazil's legendary team, including Pelé, Rivelino, Gerson, Jairzinho, Tostão and Carlos Alberto, won the Jules Rimet Trophy for the third time in Mexico City.

A native of Rio de Janeiro, a Carioca, Carlos had a highly successful career as a club coach: in Brazil, with Fluminense, Corinthians, Sao Paulo, and others; in Europe, with Valencia and Fenerbahce; and in the US with New York Metro Stars. In 1994, he was declared World Manager of the Year by the prestigious World Soccer Magazine. Motivational speaker, managerial expert and elite-level coach, he is a world champion – he is...



**CARLOS ALBERTO PARREIRA**



Carlos Alberto Parreira (L) speaks with Brazil's forward Neymar (C) and Brazil's defender and captain Thiago Silva during a training session.

## 1 WHAT WAS YOUR GENERAL VIEW OF THE WORLD CUP IN RUSSIA?

I have a very positive view, inside and outside the ground. Everything which has an impact on the game was very well organised: training grounds, transportation, the stadiums, etc. On the pitch we had confirmation of many of the principles of the game. These are not new, but they are fundamental. As France and Croatia showed us, to be successful in a competition, you need a real team. Having a team means having individual talents, but individuals who play for the team. It is about being well organised, having a solid defence, being compact.

The French had this with a top goalkeeper, two star centre-backs, someone in midfield (Kanté) who can defend, and players such as Pogba, Mbappé and Griezmann who can make the connections and be decisive in their actions. So France had all the ingredients to be successful: effective block defending and fast direct attacking. Croatia were also excellent with their solid defence, ball circulation in midfield and dangerous front three. In addition, they were able to penetrate at pace.



Belgium's midfielder Kevin De Bruyne - one of the players who shine in midfield during the FIFA World Cup Russia 2018

## 2 FROM A TECHNICAL PERSPECTIVE, WHAT IMPRESSED YOU MOST?

The attacking power of the teams, although classic midfield schemers were in short supply. However, the teams had their way of playing and, for most of them, this was very direct. The moment the ball was regained, they were thinking vertically and not wasting time with too many passes. The Belgians, the Croatians and the Brazilians were great at playing in the depth with incisive play. All the top teams had three or four players who could decide games. Technically, most goalkeepers were skilful with their feet. The full-backs were good, although maybe some were not overlapping as extensively as before – they played more of a

supporting role. Meanwhile many centre-backs were more than capable of building the play from the back.

Also running with the ball and dribbling was often impressive. Just think of Kevin De Bruyne, Neymar, Lionel Messi, Mbappé, Coutinho and Hazard. The principles of penetrating runs and combinations were very much on show in Russia. We need players who are prepared to go one-against-one because this is one of the things that makes the difference. We don't want robot football with many touches, but no creativity – we need players who can create things in the middle and up front.

## 3 HOW DID YOU RATE THE BRAZILIAN PERFORMANCE IN THE WORLD CUP IN RUSSIA?

When you talk about the Brazilian team, the result clouds our opinions because we are expected to win things. Let's face it, against Belgium we created enough chances in the second half to have won the match. Then, the view might have been different. It's true we didn't play particularly well against Mexico or in the first half of the match with Belgium. We were vulnerable to the counter-attack and some players were not at their best. But generally the team was good, and it was a big disappointment that they didn't go further because a lot of opportunities were missed.



Gabriel Jesus of Brazil battles with Serbia's Nemanja Matic for possession in the Group E game

## 4 AS SOMEONE WHO HAS WON THE TITLE, WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO SUCCEED AT THE WORLD CUP?

The question needs a long detailed presentation. But, as coaches, we know that you need a plan, a coaching routine and at least three years of working with the team. Look at Jogi Löw, the previous winner, and Didier Deschamps, the latest winner, and the time they had to build something. They were able to impose their philosophy with players that they knew well. You also need to win outside the field with your organisation, your relationship with the fans and the media and to have order and structure. Of course, to win the World Cup, you need to have three, four or five outstanding players who will bring quality to the team. You need experience and a well-defined way of playing. This depends on the culture of the country, the history of the team and especially the philosophy of the coach. Croatia played the same way from the beginning of the tournament, while France played the same way even during the qualifiers. They had their way and they kept it – this is so important. You must have all the components at the one time: tactically, psychologically, physically, technically. You can't make mistakes. You need to be focused and to make the necessary compromises for the sake of the team. As I have often said, it is very difficult to become World Champion because you have to implement so many things at exactly the right time.



Karim Ansarifard of Iran celebrates with teammates Vahid Amiri and Majid Hosseini after scoring his team's first goal during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia



Go Yo-Han of Korea Republic in action as Marco Reus of Germany looks on during the 2018 FIFA World Cup Russia

## 5 WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE ASIAN TEAMS AT THE 2018 WORLD CUP?

I think of my time as a coach in West Asia, and what I have seen since. Korea Republic were always strong, Japan came to the fore in the last 20 years and performed well in Russia, while Iran has always been one of the best teams from a technical perspective. Iran could have put Spain out. They did very well, even although they didn't qualify. I think we must accept that at the world level there is still a difference between Asian teams and the best countries, but the gap gets smaller and smaller. When you see Iran matching Portugal; Korea Republic beating Germany; and Japan doing very well against Belgium in the Round of 16, you can see that the standard has improved. It may only be a few teams in Asia but there is progress. As I discovered in my time with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, you need the players to be exposed to top-level competition. It is not enough to play a few friendlies, there needs to be a continuous process. The players from Japan, Korea and Iran who play abroad bring so much experience to the national team. The coaches need to build the team spirit and make the players believe that they can compete with the best. As I said, the Asian teams have improved and the gap with the top is less than before.

## 7 WHAT ARE THE MAIN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COACHING A CLUB AND MANAGING A NATIONAL TEAM?

Firstly, we realise that there is no transfer market for national teams. What you do have is more responsibility, but less time to work. You must know exactly what you want because you can't waste time. You need to decide on the players you will select and the style you will use. And then, stick with it. You don't have much time to train them and you only see them once a month on average. At a club, you train to play – with the national team, you play to train. By that I mean it's important to use the games to build a solid foundation and not to experiment too much. Keep one team and develop it. For many, there is an advantage as a national coach in that you have a wide choice of selection, but a disadvantage is that you can't recover from a bad result within a few days, as is the case with the club coach.

There is a special problem in Brazil with too many club games and there is no patience with the coach if he doesn't produce instant success. Lose three games and you can be out. Usually, the media and the fans are more sympathetic towards the national team coach, as long as you qualify for the major finals. Being a national coach requires a special kind of lifestyle and I enjoyed it very much. I had to learn very quickly, but it was a great experience.

## 8 WHY DOES BRAZIL PRODUCE SO MANY TALENTED PLAYERS?

Firstly, it is about mass participation. Many, many people playing football. In Brazil, there are 28 states and each state has its own league, with first, second and third divisions. Plus there are a multitude of youth leagues at different age levels. With so many players, you can find quality. It is a football factory which never stops – it is running twenty four hours a day. From the age of two or three years old, the kids have a passion for football. There is a love for the game – it is in the blood. The enthusiasm never diminishes. As soon as the team was eliminated from the World Cup in Russia, the Brazilians were already dreaming of winning the title in Qatar in 2022. We have a wonderful spirit of optimism.



Carlos Alberto Parreira, footballer Adriano and goalkeeper Dida hold their trophies for the best 2005 coach, the 2005 scorer and the second best goalkeeper

## 9 HOW HAS THE GAME CHANGED DURING YOUR TIME AS A COACH?

This is another question for a lecture or a forum. The quick answer is that the game has changed dramatically, inside and outside the ground. Just think about the salaries that top players receive today in comparison with forty or fifty years ago. The TV rights have increased and so has the pressure on the players. Meanwhile, on the field, what was once a game dependent on individuals has become reliant on the collective, on teamwork. The speed of the game is much greater, the pressure on the ball intense, the space limited and the tactics more sophisticated. The game has changed dramatically, including the distances covered and the high-speed

bursts of play. As we have seen with the best teams at the World Cup in Russia, there is a trend towards attacking the opponent's penalty box as quickly as possible. Belgium was a great example of this fast, direct approach, particularly on the counter-attack.

One thing which will never change is the importance of technique and skill. Football is about controlling the ball and controlling the game. Why do the clubs pay a fortune for players such as Neymar? Because they have the skill, the technique, the ability to decide games. What has not changed is the need for skill and the passion for the game.

## 10 WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIALS WHEN DEALING WITH STAR PLAYERS?

This is a good question. I have worked with some of the best players in the world, and the first thing you realise is that they are normal people, just like us, and they like to be treated as normal. They don't want to be treated differently in the dressing room or inside the camp. If you respect the player, he will respect you. You must show them that you care and give them your attention. Transparency is crucial. Whatever you have to say, you must say it to them personally. They like to hear from you. Next, there can be no special privileges for special talents. Everyone is treated equally. The bank accounts may be different, but in the national team they are all the same.



Ronaldo trains with Parreira and teammate Lucio in 2006

## 11 WHAT IS THE VALUE OF FUTSAL AS A DEVELOPMENT TOOL?

All the top Brazilian players started with futsal. Many clubs promote this because the children, from 8 years upwards, learn the basic skills, learn how to play in small spaces. This 4 v 4 game encourages creativity, involvement, one against one situations. After a few years of this, sometimes up to 13 years old, the children have something to bring to field when they move to the outside game and are confronted with bigger spaces and increased numbers.



Futsal is often a starting point for kids in Brazil to develop their football playing skills at a young age.

## 12 AS WE LOOK AHEAD TO THE 2020 OLYMPICS IN JAPAN AND THE 2022 WORLD CUP IN QATAR, ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE GAME?

We have seen the principles of the game reinforced in Russia and the modern game has many excellent qualities. But I have to emphasise the value of ball possession. It is through ball possession that players communicate, and it is only by having the ball that you can impose your style, your superior technique, your ability to dribble. What you do with the ball beyond that is something else which has an interesting history. Barcelona, with 800 passes is one way, while others accept less time on the ball. Both can be successful. The demands of the game need speed of technique and movement, and this keeps the game interesting and constantly improving.

In Brazil we are optimistic because of the emerging talents, some of whom are already starting their professional careers in Europe. Remember, Neymar, who is our best player, is still young enough to play in the next World Cup. When you have talent, it is easy to be optimistic.

## WIDE-RANGING AGENDA IN SHANGHAI



The AFC Elite Club Coaches Forum is fast becoming one of the highlights of the Asian coaching calendar. This year the third forum was held again in Shanghai and produced another wide-ranging discussion on the future of football in Asia at what was hailed as a milestone event.

In a new development after the Forum, AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh also addressed 50 elite coaches from the Chinese Super League and Jia League at a Chinese Football Association Coaching Summit.

During the Forum sessions, Asia's top coaches from China PR, Japan, Korea Republic as well as the Islamic Republic of Iran, looked at the impact of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia on Asian football.

Two-time UEFA Champions League winner Paulo Costa, then coach of Chinese Super League club Tianjin Quanjian, who reached the AFC Champions League East Zone quarter-finals before losing to the eventual winners Kashima Antlers was among the attendees.

Also joining the Forum was Choi Kang-hee, then manager of another quarter-finalist Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors FC of Korea Republic and AFC Coach of the Year 2016 as well as Branko Ivankovic, the highly-experienced Croatian coach who took the Islamic Republic of Iran's Persepolis FC to the AFC Champions League final.

Winfred Schaffer, then coach of Islamic Republic of Iran's other quarter-finalists Esteghlal, was joined by coaches from Australia, Japan and China PR including Shanghai SIPG coach Vitor Pereira and Shanghai Shenhua's Wu Jingui.



Other Chinese Super League representatives were Chris Coleman, who led Wales to the semi-finals of Euro 2016 and now coaches Hebei China Fortune and Li Xiaopeng of Shandong Luneng Taishan.

Melbourne Victory's Kevin Muscat is an ever present at all three of the Elite Coaches Forums while he was joined this year by Sydney FC coach Steven Corica, who scored his club's first ever AFC Champions League goal as a player in 2007.

Muscat said: "Every year we learn of the pressures on individual coaches and how they deal with those pressures. Coaching can often be an isolating job but sharing experiences in this Forum is vital."

There was appreciation of Japan's performance after they reached the Round of 16 and came close to beating the eventual third-placed team Belgium.

The group also looked at the structure and timing of the AFC Champions League as well as the continued improvement of playing standards of Asia's pinnacle club competition. They also considered the implications of a 'unified' calendar for club football in Asia.

There was a general agreement that the level of the competition was improving year on year but there was still work required in areas such as physical fitness and game intelligence.

The leadership role of coaches was discussed including the challenges facing them in the rapidly changing landscape as well as information sharing on training top teams at the highest level on the continent.

Much of the information and many of the learnings were shared with the CFA Coaching Forum held at the Shanghai SIPG stadium which focused on management and leadership skills.



Coaching can often be an isolating job but sharing experiences in this Forum is vital.

**Kevin Muscat**  
*Melbourne Victory FC Coach*



The coaches, all Pro or A license holders, were part of the intensive course to aid the continued development of football in China PR.

Andy Roxburgh said: "These are always crucial few days where coaches from across Asia could share ideas, understand challenges and learn new things from each other in a confidential environment. The top coaches have the confidence to share their experiences and knowledge for the benefit of the game."

Also in attendance, for the first time, were a group of elite coaches from the Chinese FA including several former national team coaches such as former Manchester City, Crystal Palace and China PR defender Sun Jihai.



## INSPIRATION AND ANALYSIS IN KUALA LUMPUR

Women's football in Asia continued to build on its strong foundations with the conclusion of the second Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Women's Football Development Seminar in September.

The event brought some of the world's leading women's football experts to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia for a three-day seminar.

The event was opened in style as the delegates celebrated the world-class achievements of Japan's head coach Asako Takakura, who lifted the AFC Women's Asian Cup Jordan 2018 title in May as well as the performance of her compatriot Futoshi Ikeda, who led the young Nadeshiko to the 2018 FIFA Women's U-20 World Cup in France.

AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh set the tone for the seminar with a keynote overview on 'Football Development in Asia,' which addressed the five essential development pillars: women's football, competitions, coaching, grassroots and elite youth.

Thailand's women national head coach Nuengruthai Srathongvian, who also attended the seminar's first edition in 2016 said: "Being able to hear from successful coaches like Asako Takakura and Futoshi Ikeda helps reinforce many of the things that we are aiming to achieve.

"Previously, the Football Association of Thailand focused primarily on the men's side, but today we are more focused than ever to develop a strong grassroots for



young girls. From the last seminar, we have continued to grow and now we have several football academies and a sports school, where we scout budding talents, many of whom are participating in the 2019 AFC U-16 Women's Championship Qualifiers.

"We want to give them good international exposure to develop their skills, as they are the future stars of the senior team."

The second day of the seminar focused on a technical analysis of the highly-successful AFC Women's Asian Cup Jordan 2018 as well as an in-depth global perspective session by Arijana Demirovic, FIFA's Women's Football Development Manager.

The seminar also proved to be an invaluable resource for participants who were able to draw insights on best practices and case studies from the Continent's most promising nations, which include Hong Kong, India and Jordan.

Lebanon women's football expert Rana Nakhle said: "The seminar is extremely useful for me personally. Women's football in Lebanon is still at its early stages, and a seminar like this only improves our knowledge and gives us ideas on how to move forward."

"The Lebanese Football Association is placing greater emphasis on women's development. Former national players have returned to assist with our grassroots movement, and the results are slowly showing, especially in the ongoing AFC U-16 Women's Championship 2019 Round 1 Qualifiers, where Lebanon have secured two consecutive wins."

The seminar concluded with the 'Big Interview' featuring legendary women's football coach Nils Nielsen, who was runner-up in the 2017 Best FIFA Women's Coach



Award after guiding his native Denmark to the final of the UEFA Women's Euro 2017.

The highly-experienced technician, who was most recently the assistant coach of China PR's U-20 side, stressed on the need for creating more integrated approaches to women's and men's football development while paying tribute to the undeniable growth of the women's game in Asia.

"Asia is moving like a rapid train, it has world champions, it has the desire, it has the leadership. Some teams have further to go than others, but I believe that Asian football is moving forward together. As long as everyone, all nations, continue to have the ambition to improve, there is no limit to what you can achieve."

## PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

**D**reams v Reality must be one of the most frequent contests on the fixture list of life. Many coaches can dream of winning the AFC Champions League or the Asian Cup but only a select handful can translate it into reality. Similarly, when we start playing we all dream of reaching the top. But the realities of the game tell us that only 0.05% of the footballing population actually earn money from playing, let alone get to lift an Asian Cup or a World Cup. Amid the coaching fraternity, it's the same story. The vast majority are working at the base of the football pyramid. In other words at the grassroots levels of the game. Quantifying this majority across the AFC member associations is not easy. But, for orientation, the European Union offers the statistic that eight million coaches are working at grassroots levels within their territories.

Coaching aspects were integrated into the 2nd AFC Grassroots Conference, staged in Kuala Lumpur during the month of November. Allowing and encouraging children to enjoy some football evidently has links with the professional game, in the sense that it helps to generate the fan bases and TV audiences of the future. Some professional clubs, such as Liverpool and Manchester City, deploy coaches at schools and holiday camps in Asia – the latter being operational in a number of Chinese provinces. And there is, of course, a talent detection angle with promising players ushered



along pathways towards the summit. As the legendary Rinus Michels commented “good coaches use the basic criteria of street football for their vision of grassroots development”. But the most valuable grassroots programmes are not designed for talent detection purposes. The idea is to serve and strengthen local communities, to promote healthy lifestyles, to allow all members of society equal opportunities to play and enjoy the game and, not least, to develop the ability to control emotions and learn social skills.

All this means that coaching becomes a different job. Different from the loftier sections of the pyramid where match strategies and analysis of opponents come into play. At the Grassroots Conference, AFC technical director Andy Roxburgh outlined three basic areas of grassroots coaching. With children, he maintained, the coach is basically a football teacher. At youth level, the role is more of a football developer. And it is only at adult level that management issues figure more prominently in the job description. “With kids,” he elaborated, “the

ideal coach would be more of a friendly helper – a good organiser and a competent demonstrator of the basic skills. More importantly, we’re talking about someone who is a genuine football enthusiast and a thoroughly reliable person.”



**Football has to be fun for kids or it doesn't make sense.**

**Johan Cruyff**



Johan Cruyff always insisted “football has to be fun for kids or it doesn’t make sense”. And during the Grassroots Conference, a strong case was argued for promoting the fun element via small-sided games. In particular, the 4x4 format (the addition of goalkeepers is optional) has a number of virtues – starting with the potential for involving as many as 50 or more players on one full-size pitch divided into four or five smaller units of approximately 40x20m. Playing short games (10 minutes each way, for instance) with a size 3 or 4 ball and goals of a size appropriate to the age group, allows the youngsters to have fun and, through constant contact with the ball, to develop their control, passing, shooting, tackling, dribbling and, in the case of the keepers, handling and saving – not to mention good grounding in reading the game, decision-making and intensive communication with team-mates. At this level, the ‘coach’

is a game teacher on the touchline at each small-sided game, whose contribution is all about offering guidance and protecting the simplicity of the fun football.

One of the highlights of the Conference was the presentation by AFC General Secretary Dato’ Windsor John of the newly-introduced AFC Special Grassroots Awards for the year’s best grassroots leader, club and project. From a coaching perspective, the first category took the eye – even though ‘leadership’ is not related exclusively to coaching. Among the nominees singled out for special merit was India’s Shailesh Karkera, the instigator of some 70 grassroots festivals and, currently, a national grassroots instructor with, on an impressive track record, eight courses (for men and women) in six states, where he has trained 192 grassroots leaders. “The re-defined AFC grassroots philosophy,” he says, “has enabled me to venture into new areas and I have built the confidence and know-how to work with Special Needs children and mothers, along with the Underprivileged and Disturbed Youth category, while simultaneously training new coaches and volunteers, trying to give them the tools to do likewise as a grassroots coach.”

Bronze-medallist Rizal Rasudin, chairman of the Admiralty Community Sports Club in Singapore, gives equal relevance to the quality coaching at grassroots levels. “the development of parent volunteers is a key area,” he maintains. “Our programme is based on sending volunteers to coaching courses and, once they are qualified, involving them in our youth and amateur teams.” And the same philosophy helped Cheah Swee Ming of Brunei Darussalam to become the first winner of the AFC Best Grassroots Leader Award. As co-founder of the Projek Ikan Pusu, alias PIP, he has dedicated the last 18 years to offering grassroots football to youngsters in the 5-19 age group – and ushering the best of them into club and league football. When he kick-started PIP, there were no structured programmes for children

so, negotiating with schools the use of their playing fields, he set about organising grassroots activities and offering coaching free of charge. As a physical education teacher and lecturer, he had the necessary nous to set up a coaching department and, as he puts it, “persuade, inspire and motivate” a team of volunteer coaches and pay for them, out of his own pocket, to attend the courses which would earn them ‘C’, ‘B’ or even the ‘A’ licence obtained at the tender age of 25 by Mohd Ikhmaral Izzat, one of the first group of youngsters to enjoy the benefits when PIP appeared on the scene in 2001.



With 11 member associations already signatories to the AFC Grassroots Charter and seven more currently in the application process, grassroots football is on the move – and AFC’s commitment to this cause is being constantly upgraded, including additional funding for grassroots development projects. Hopefully, this will create even greater opportunities for men and women who wish to make an impact at the base of the football pyramid by translating their love of the game into coaching at grassroots levels.

## AFC SPECIAL GRASSROOTS AWARDS 2018



**WINNER**  
Cheah Swee Ming  
(Brunei Darussalam)



**WINNER**  
Matrix Community FC  
(Malaysia)



**WINNER**  
JFA Festival  
(Japan)

### Best Grassroots Leader 2018

**RUNNER-UP**

Rada Krishan Nadesan (Malaysia)

- Shailesh Laxman Karkera (India)
- Risal Rasudin (Singapore)
- Zou Yougen (China PR)
- Abdulrahman Hassan Al Muftah (Qatar)

### Best Grassroots Club 2018

**RUNNER-UP**

Lochinvar Rovers FC (Australia)

- Yuhua Constituency Sports Club (Singapore)
- Mumbai City FC (India)
- Nanling Tielang (China PR)
- Projek Ikan Pusu Football Development Programme (Brunei Darussalam)

### Best Grassroots Project 2018

**RUNNER-UP**

SALT Academy of the Football Federation of Cambodia

- Football Fever (Australia)
- Football Development Project for Public School (Saudi Arabia)
- Football with a Heart (Singapore)
- Enjoy This Game Tournament (China PR)

## THE SERIOUS BUSINESS OF FUN FOOTBALL

The second AFC Grassroots Conference in Kuala Lumpur led to the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) strengthening its commitment to continue developing grassroots football in Asia.

The three-day conference attracted 100 dedicated grassroots representatives from 41 Members Associations (MA) who share and support the AFC's Vision to ensure that football remains as the most popular sport in Asia.

In his keynote address, AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh stressed on the importance of 'The Serious Business of Fun Football.'

"It is serious business organising and leading fun football and the aim for all grassroots development is to encourage everyone to play. Very, very few play professionally but we have to remember that all top stars were once grassroots players. Grassroots football is about mass participation - it is football for all," said Roxburgh.

A classic format of 4 versus 4 to encourage more young children to play the sport was also discussed and demonstrated at the conference. It was well received by grassroots representatives as the format is easy to organize and promotes the game at grassroots level.

Hong Kong Football Association Limited Grassroots Football Manager Samuel Oliver Bensley said: "It is fantastic how I have so many ideas from this conference which I can implement in Hong Kong. We don't have many pitches in Hong Kong so we have to be creative in ways to find a solution. That's why the 4 versus 4





format and its variations are great. We have used this format before and will continue to do so with the aim of getting as many players as we can on the pitch.”

The conference also provided a timely retrospective of what the Asian football family has achieved since first AFC Grassroots Conference in 2016. Participants also took the opportunity to exchange ideas, discuss issues

in grassroots football and foster better relationship between the MAs.

Cheri J. Stewart, the Executive Director of Guam FA, who is attending the conference for the second time, said: “Grassroots is the foundation which feeds into everything that we do in terms of coaches, referees and the national team. It is very important for all the

MAs to come together and see that they are not alone. We are here to exchange ideas and find ways on how to overcome some of the challenges we face.”

Head of Grassroots for the All India Football Federation Anju Turambekar was delighted to join the second AFC Grassroots Conference.

“I attended the first conference and this is not only a refresher course but it offers so much more than that. It is fantastic how the conference posed questions for us to think about and to work on in our grassroots projects. It is great to see so many people attending this conference and we are all learning from each other, working together collectively on improving on grassroots development.”



It is very important for all the MAs to come together and see that they are not alone. We are here to exchange ideas and find ways on how to overcome some of the challenges we face.

**Cheri J. Stewart**

*Executive Director of Guam FA*





One of the three elements of AFC's Vision and Mission was to maintain football's position as the top sport on in Asia by increasing participation and engagement at all levels and by stimulating greater interest in each aspect of the game.

The introduction of AFC's Grassroots Charter, an endorsement tool, supports the Member Associations) in their core task of implementing grassroots programmes and activities. The MAs' grassroots programme is evaluated at gold, silver and bronze levels to demonstrate the progress they have made.

## AFC GRASSROOTS CHARTER

### CATEGORIES

**GOLD**



FOOTBALL FEDERATION AUSTRALIA



JAPAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

**SILVER**



CHINA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



JORDAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE

**BRONZE**



BHUTAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION



NATIONAL FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF BRUNEI DARUSSALAM\*



GUAM FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



HONG KONG FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



LAO FOOTBALL FEDERATION\*



LEBANON FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION\*



MACAU FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION



FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF MALAYSIA



FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF MALDIVES\*



FOOTBALL FEDERATION OF MYANMAR\*



FOOTBALL FEDERATION OF SRI LANKA\*



VIETNAM FOOTBALL FEDERATION

\*MAs still under assessment for approval

## TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS IMPLEMENTED

The Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Competitions Committee has agreed with a report from the AFC Technical Committee task force which recommended that the AFC U-16 and U-19 competitions become U-17 and U-20 competitions from the 2023 finals to ensure Asian teams are competitive in FIFA tournaments.

At their meeting in Muscat, Oman under the chairmanship of Saoud Al Mohannadi heard that the AFC Technical Committee had set up to review the AFC age-group competitions, and they recommended a unified eligibility cut-off date.

The task force felt there was a need to change the structure to aid player development. They also stressed the need for continued integrity checks as well as education for young players who will be asked to sign contracts and under-go MRI tests in line with the current practice.

The new AFC U-17 and U-20 Championships will be played in the same year as the corresponding FIFA tournaments with the qualifiers in the preceding year. The first edition of the new championship will start with qualifiers in 2022 and the finals in 2023 to give Member Associations more time for preparation.



## FIFA TECHNICAL STUDY GROUP PRAISES ASIAN TEAMS



Not only did Japan shine at the FIFA World Cup in Russia but they also won their first ever FIFA Under-20 Women's World Cup in France in August.

And it is fascinating to review the FIFA Technical Study Group's report into the competition which concluded that women's football is showing great improvements from a technical, tactical and fitness perspective .

With the FIFA Women's World Cup 2019™ set to kick off in France next year, the report's key conclusions focus on the improvements in goalkeeping and defensive organisation since the launch of the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup in 2002.

This year's showpiece was one with the fewest goals scored (89) as compared to 113 goals at the previous edition in Papua New Guinea in 2016. With a tournament average of 12.9 shots on goal per team in a game, champions Japan excelled with 7.5 shots on goal, second only to the United States.

There was praise for the Asian teams in their use of three-player combinations to create overloads and unlock defences.

The report said: "Asian teams are particularly known for successfully deploying this method – in which a player first plays a one two with a team-mate and then releases a third player on the overlap – and that mastery was once again on display, with DPR Korea and Japan repeatedly releasing players into space this way."

The report also highlighted Japan's speed of movement stating: "Japan were particularly adept at combining speed with an overall awareness of what was going on around them, perhaps as a result of the extra focus that they place on this quality. This is a

concept that they instill in their players from an early age, with coaches actively encouraged to focus on decision-making in all their training drills and to embolden players to act on their own initiative.

“Girls in Japan tend to start playing football from the age of six, and their enjoyment and love of the game – stoked by this encouragement to express themselves are among the defining reasons why so many of them progress and hone these skills throughout their development.”

AFC President Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa praised the development of women’s football around the world as teams prepare for the FIFA Women’s World Cup next year in France.

“Women’s football is growing at a fast pace in Asia and around the world. The success of Japan at the FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup and FIFA Women’s World Cup 2011 have encouraged more women in Asia to play the sport professionally and at the grassroots level.

“The statistics provided by the FIFA Technical Study Group are a remarkable indication of how women’s football has improved on and off the field over the years. Evidently, this translates into better performances by teams at the highest level as seen by Japan at the FIFA U-20 Women’s World Cup.”



FIFA™  
U-20 WOMEN'S WORLD CUP  
FRANCE 2018

[▶ CLICK HERE FOR TOURNAMENT'S VIDEO HIGHLIGHTS AND TECHNICAL REPORT](#)



AFC Diamond of Asia  
**Zhang Jilong (CHN)**



AFC Player of the Year  
**ABDEKARIM HASSAN (QAT)**



AFC Women's Player of the Year  
**WANG SHUANG (CHI)**



AFC Futsal Player of the Year  
**ALI ASGHAR HASANZADEH (IRN)**



AFC Coach of the Year (Men)  
**OIWA GO (JPN)**



AFC Coach of the Year (Woman)  
**ASAKO TAKAKURA (JPN)**



AFC Member Association of the Year (Inspiring)  
**JAPAN FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**



AFC Member Association of the Year (Developing)  
**DPR KOREA FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**



AFC Member Association of the Year (Aspiring)  
**MONGOLIAN FOOTBALL FEDERATION**



AFC Asian International Player of the Year  
**MAKOTO HASEBE (JPN)**

## OTHER WINNERS OF AFC ANNUAL AWARDS MUSCAT 2018

AFC Youth Player of the Year  
**TURKI AL AMAR (KSA)**

AFC Women's Youth Player of the Year  
**SAORI TAKARADA (JPN)**

AFC President's Special Recognition Award  
**WILD BOARS F.C. (THA)**

AFC President's Special Recognition Award  
**FUTOSHI IKEDA (JPN)**

AFC President Recognition Award for  
Grassroots Football (Inspiring)  
**CHINESE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

AFC President Recognition Award for  
Grassroots Football (Developing)  
**FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION OF SINGAPORE**

AFC President Recognition Award for  
Grassroots Football (Aspiring)  
**PALESTINE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION**

## THE AFC PAYS TRIBUTE TO DICK BATE AND KEN SHELLITO

### Dick Bate

The former Technical director of the Malaysian national team and former Elite Coaching Director of the FA of England passed away in April this year at the age of 71.

Dick was a former non-League player in England before he went into coaching and worked with the Football Association of Malaysia between 1992-95 before returning to the United Kingdom with Premier League clubs Watford and Cardiff City.

He was also the Technical Director of the Canadian Soccer Association between October 2005 until July 2006 when he joined Watford.

After Dick lost his battle to a brain tumour earlier this year his wife, Maggie, is fundraising for The Giles' Trust, a fund that sits under the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham Charity (QEHB Charity) which supports patients with brain tumours. Maggie and Dick had seen information on the Trust when they visited the hospital and had decided that they wanted to raise funds for it and now The Giles' Trust funds everything from a dedicated clinical research nurse to enable patients access to clinical trials, items on the ward to make a patient's stay more comfortable to cutting edge research.

More information can be found at:

<https://www.hospitalcharity.org/thegilestrust>



## Ken Shellito

It was with great sadness that we learnt of the death of our colleague Ken Shellito, who was a video analyst for the AFC for many years. He passed away on October 31, 2018 at the age of 78.

Ken would operate from a small room at AFC House analysing all the matches that were played in Asia – so we could all benefit from his insights and remarkable knowledge.

He passed away at his home in Sabah, Malaysia surrounded by friends and family. In Malaysia, Ken had also been a coach, a pundit on the local station Astro and headed the Chelsea Soccer Club In Sabah as well as working for the AFC.

Shellito spent his entire playing career at Chelsea, making 123 appearances between 1959 and 1965 before injury struck, and managed the club in the 1977-78 season.

“Chelsea Football Club is extremely saddened to learn of the passing of our former player and manager Ken Shellito at the age of 78,” said a club statement.

“A home-grown player who went on to win promotion with the club and represent England in the 1960s, he was also an important youth coach at Chelsea before being put in charge of the senior side between 1977 and 1978.”



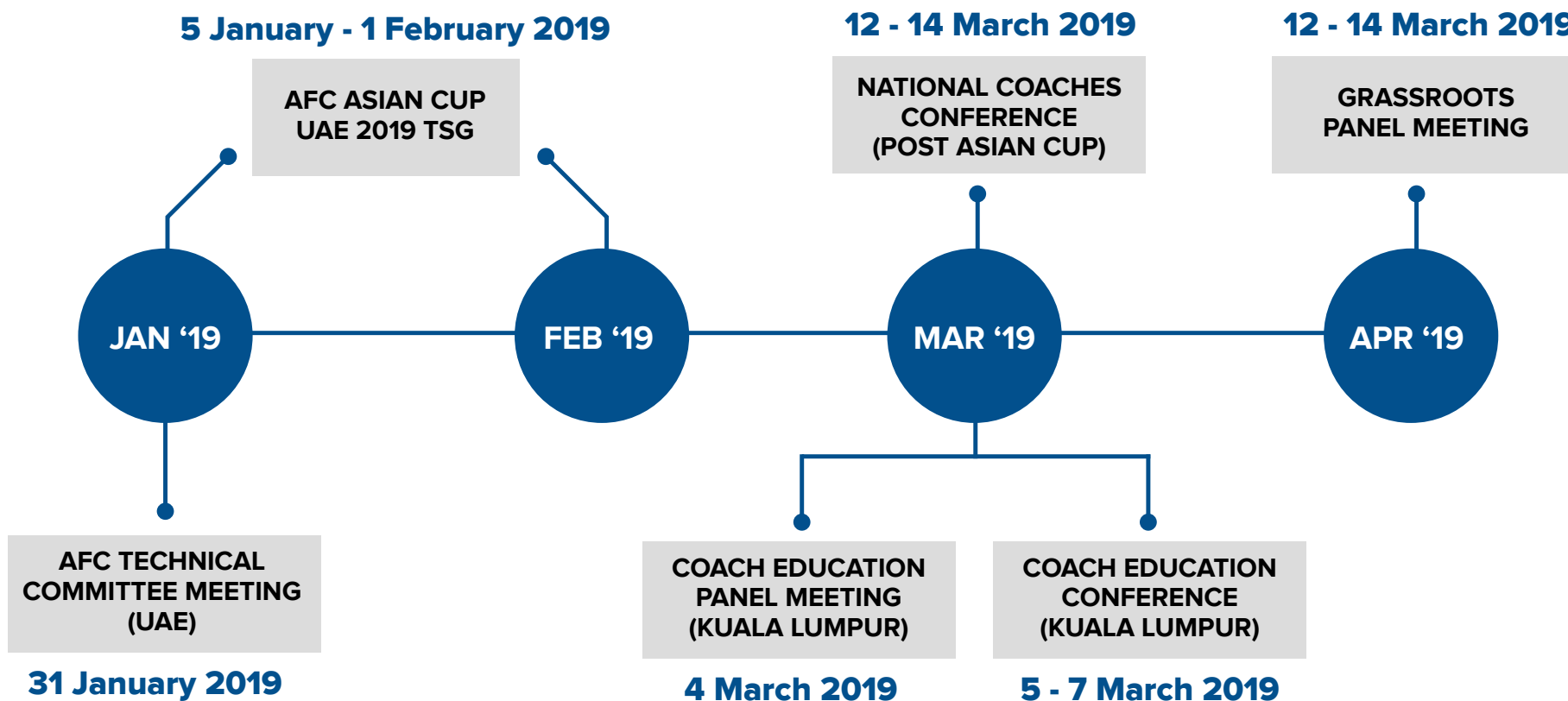
Born in East Ham, in the London East End, Shellito joined Chelsea as a 14-year-old on the same day Jimmy Greaves signed on at Stamford Bridge. He was part of Tommy Docherty’s side of the early 1960s and helped Chelsea win promotion from the Second Division in the 1962-63 season.

He won his single England cap in 1963 but a knee injury curtailed his career and he became youth team

coach – as well as caretaker manager – at Stamford Bridge, developing players like Ray Wilkins, who played 84 times for England and was a one-time Jordan coach. Wilkins sadly passed away this year as well.

Ken was a former manager of Cambridge United in 1985 before moving to Malaysia where he worked for the Kuala Lumpur FA, the Perak FA and the Sabah FA.

## KEY DATES



## JOB OPPORTUNITY



Coaches with an AFC or UEFA Pro-Licence and extensive international experience in men's football are invited to consider the vacant position of Head Coach of the National Senior Men's Team advertised by the Myanmar Football Federation.

This is an exciting opportunity to influence the future of Myanmar men's football and help achieve the team's preparation and performance objectives.

Resumes should be submitted to Myanmar Football Federation for the attention of CEO Mr. Phone Naing Zaw and Technical Director Mr. Eric Abrams. Applications should be received by 10 January 2019.

For further information click on the button below.

[▶ DOWNLOAD AND VIEW JOB DETAILS HERE](#)

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# COACHES CIRCLE

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