



COACHES CIRCLE

KEEPING COACHES IN ASIA UP TO DATE WITH TECHNICAL NEWS AND DEVELOPMENTS

EDITORIAL

AFC Technical Director Andy Roxburgh
on why coach education matters

AFC COACHING CONVENTION

Raising standards across Asia

TOWARDS TOKYO 2020

1st AFC Conference for Olympic
Coaches in Kuala Lumpur



THE BIG INTERVIEW WITH

CARLOS QUEIROZ

01

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ONE ASIA • ONE GOAL

FOREWORD FROM AFC PRESIDENT

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Welcome to The Coaches Circle.

For many years our European friends have had a similar successful publication and I am delighted that the AFC can now have its own direct dialogue with the hundreds and thousands of coaches working on the continent - from elite clubs to grassroots.

Coaching is an important part of the technical development which is taking place in Asia and in this, the first edition of The Coaches Circle we gain insights into the world of top class coaches such as Carlos Queiroz, of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and information on the development trends of women's football.

I must congratulate the Asian Football Confederation's (AFC) Technical Director Andy Roxburgh and his staff on this new and valuable addition to the debate on coaching and coach education.

There is much more as well, as we look to continue the technical advancements of recent years. Please enjoy this first edition.



Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa
AFC President

WHY COACH EDUCATION MATTERS

by Andy Roxburgh, AFC Technical Director

My old colleague, Guy Thys, the most successful Belgian national coach in history, once declared: "Education is always indispensable, but the match remains the ultimate examination." He was right on both counts.

Football at the top level is a results-driven business and scorelines will inevitably influence the fate of the professional coach. For some it can be a lucrative occupation, but the risks, in terms of job security, reputation and future employment can be extremely hazardous. For example, research shows that in Brazil the turnover of head coaches in a year is around 90%, while in some Asian countries, it ranges from 50% to 80%. In a fiercely competitive environment, success will depend to a large extent on the talent of the players and the ability of the coaches. With the latter in mind, coach education programmes have an important role to play, and not just in preparing tomorrow's technicians for the front line.



Marcello Lippi in a training session with his former team (Guangzhou Evergrande)

TURNOVER OF HEAD COACHES IN A YEAR

90%

50%-80%

BRAZIL

ASIA

The first objective of any coaching scheme is to protect players from untrained, potentially incompetent coaches. This applies at all levels of the game, from grassroots to professional football. Also, some ex-players need to be protected from themselves and to discover their coaching limitations and needs before they try to become practising coaches. For many, even the gifted, participating in coaching courses/programmes can be



an eye-opener. The legendary Manchester United coach Sir Alex Ferguson agrees: "I had a different view of the game after I had attended the coaching courses." It was a similar experience for the world-renowned Fabio Capello: "The training at Coverciano (the Italian Coaching School) gave us our coaching know how."

The transition from player to coach is not always easy because a different perspective of the game is required and the skills needed to manage and lead a squad of players is not always understood by those who have been immersed in the personal performance mode of a player. Ryan Giggs, the newly appointed manager of Wales, recognised the value of his training as a coach when he said before his team played China in his first match in charge: "I am not a naturally outgoing person. That's where the Pro Licence helped. Everything comes with that little bit of experience."

When young coaches are well educated and developed there is a universal raising of standards and an increase in the chances of success. It is a case of progress by design, and not by chance. Gaining a coaching diploma is no guarantee of success, but it is a confirmation of an individual's coaching competence, and an important step on the road to greater things.



The training at Coverciano (the Italian Coaching School) gave us our coaching know how.

Fabio Capello



From a professional perspective, having a qualification establishes credibility and increases job opportunities. Member Association programmes also promote the concept of continuous professional development (CPD), so that young coaches have the possibility of increasing their knowledge and enhancing their abilities through further education. Keeping up-to-date is not just useful, but a must for those involved in a game that is fast paced, on and off the pitch. AFC's fitness tutor Magni Mohr summed it up: "It is easy to become old in football."

Complacency and the aging process are not to be confused with history. The great coaching schools, such as Spain and Germany, have a tradition and a wealth of knowledge to build on. In Asia, Japan and Australia are good examples of associations that are steadily building their coaching reputations by constantly refining their educational programmes. Those countries that set the benchmark in coach education are proud to defend their national identity, but they are also progressive in their enthusiasm for research, analysis and independent thinking. Reflecting on his time as a student coach, Marcello Lippi, the current coach of China, once said: "The Italian school at Coverciano does not give you truths – it gives you responsibilities." Preparing coaches for the future of football requires new methods and new ideas.

As with all educational processes, there are some things which can't be taught: mental strength, humility, dedication, passion, decision making and how to handle defeat, to mention a few. But, how to analyse games, build teams, coach players, manage clubs, plan training, prepare matches, use tools, present information and lead squads can be taught and learned. Each association has a duty, an obligation, to train, to the highest level possible, its next generation of coaches. How well this is done will have a huge impact on the success of its national teams and clubs. There is no doubt that coach education matters. Yes, the match will remain the ultimate examination, but education will always be indispensable.

CARLOS QUEIROZ

Head Coach, Islamic Republic of Iran

Portuguese coach Carlos Queiroz burst on to the global scene with a flourish in 1989 when he coached Portugal's U16s to the European Championship and the U20s to the FIFA World title. The former goalkeeper, who was born in Mozambique, confirmed his gift for developing and managing young talents by lifting the U20 World Cup again in 1991. His success with the under-aged teams was rewarded when he was appointed National Team Manager of Portugal, a position he held for three years.

Club football followed, with stints at Sporting Lisbon, New York Metro Stars and Nagoya Grampus Eight in Japan. The world traveller continued his coaching odyssey with the national teams of UAE and South Africa (including a World Cup qualification with the latter), before Sir Alex Ferguson of Manchester United came calling and persuaded him to be his assistant and first team coach. Such was Carlos's reputation during that period that Real Madrid approached him to replace the highly-respected Vicente del Bosque. After a year in Spain, he returned to Sir Alex and Manchester United, contributing to another period of trophy collection in England and in Europe.

In 2008, his home country asked him to return as national manager and he proceeded to lead Portugal to the 2010 World Cup finals in South Africa. A 1-0 defeat to Spain, the eventual winners of the 2010 World Cup, in the knock-out rounds brought his tenure to an end and Carlos found a new role as the Head Coach of Iran. Two excellent qualification campaigns followed, giving him the distinction of taking three national sides to the World Cup Finals: South Africa, Portugal and Iran twice.

The celebrated Portuguese technician, with the well-used passport, is vastly experienced, very intelligent, highly competitive and forthright in his views. Let's hear more from the elegant, passionate Latin.



Carlos Queiroz and Andy Roxburgh at the 1st AFC National Coaches Conference, March 2018



CARLOS QUEIROZ FACT FILE

NATIONALITY

Portugal

AGE

65

INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS

FIFA World Cup 2014, AFC Asian Cup 2015, FIFA World Cup 2018 qualifiers

HONOURS CLUB/COUNTRY

Taça de Portugal - 94-95, Supertaça Cândido de Oliveira - 95 (Sporting)
Asian Cup Winners Cup – runners-up (96-97) (Nagoya Grampus)
Spanish Super Cup – 2003 (Real Madrid)
UEFA European U16 Championship – 89 (Portugal)
FIFA World Youth Championship – 89, 91 (Portugal)

MANAGED TEAMS	WIN %	TITLES
Portugal (1991 – 1993)	43.8	
Sporting Lisbon (1994-1996)	66	2
New Jersey Metro Stars (July 96 – Nov 96)	50	
Nagoya Grampus (1996-1997)	50	
United Arab Emirates (1998-1999)	50	
South Africa (2000-2002)	41.67	
Real Madrid (2003-2004)	57.63	1
Portugal –U20 (2008-2010)	55.5	2
Islamic Republic of Iran (2011 – present)	61.9	

1

HOW DID YOU BECOME A COACH?

I did not have another option than becoming a coach. I was supposed to be a singer, but that job was fully booked. My father was a football coach and a player. When I grew up it was only football, football, football and football. On Sundays, I would look forward to football. My dad came home and I would know if he won or lost. It was destiny for me to become a coach. I did not have the gift to become a top professional player. I woke up in hospital after an injury one day and the doctor told me that my knee was gone. I become obsessed with football coaching after that day.

2

TELL US ABOUT YOUR EARLY ROLE AS A TEACHER

At the time I started, there wasn't that much coach education. The University of Lisbon offered a special course – I had the chance to take part in a course offered to ex-players. There were two levels of the course offered by the university. Jose Mourinho was my student for five years. In fact, lots of Portuguese coaches came through that same system.

3 WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE U20 TEAMS THAT MADE THEM SO SUCCESSFUL?

It was the way we structured the teams that made them so special. The solidity and how they were built. I have moments in my life that were a privilege. One was when I was able to express myself freely as a coach. In the youth categories, nobody cared about how the teams were doing or youth development in general. I was working freely – I could implement my ideas. The problems came when we got to the World Cup, and everybody came into the picture offering different views and causing different problems. The first time Portugal qualified for the Olympics was in Atlanta with Figo. What made those teams special were the foundations, the approach and how to prepare national teams. It was my goal since the beginning to go to all places in Europe such as Italy, Spain and Greece. The success of our project was not to copy anyone. I refused to copy. At that time, everyone was copying Ajax and Cruyff. I tried to take the best of each experience and adapt it to the

Portuguese mentality. The foundation of each team was the secret of our success. We started with the small things, and not to confuse performance with potential. We went through all those things and became champions. One of the most important aspects was that I changed the competition systems in Portugal. Those teams had 3 or 4 years of preparation. The players became used to each other – the team members of '91 were prepared from 11 years old at the district level – we put in place a project that allowed them to gain World Cup experience at a young age. All the work for the next championship is already in place. We are thinking about the future by preparing youth groups early. The profile of each player is in place. On the road to Russia, the road to Qatar. When the president doesn't find money for the youth set up, he is harming the potential for winning the World Cup in 7-10 years. Consistent time and effort is needed. As Sir Alex said, "to win is one thing, but to win consistently is another".

4 HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE OF COACHING AS A NATIONAL YOUTH COACH?

The players need to learn the game. I remember at the special coach education programmes in Portugal, my head was full of ideas. But I didn't know where to start. The solution for my first training session was to let the players play. From that day I learnt what to do in each session. Let the players play, and understand from there what they need to learn. The players must dictate how we play. The style was to teach them, how to independently make decisions. We should not be afraid to teach them how to play the game. When I was a young coach, and we played

France and Germany, everything about each situation was fantastic. My style was to make them compete, to challenge. Together, when you have collective solutions you can do anything. The game is all about leadership. To be or not to be a coach. To win or not to win. Winning matters – we need to teach them how to win. My coaching style is that you should be committed to develop your skills through the heart of winning. It is to make the players believe that what they are doing will produce results.



Iran's head coach Carlos Queiroz reacts with his players after the FIFA 2018 World Cup qualifying football match between Korea Republic and Iran

5 THAT GROUP OF YOUTH TEAMS THAT WON TWO YOUTH WORLD CUPS, WHY DID THEY NOT MAKE IT TO THE WORLD CUP IN 1994?

That's football – there is always a chance of winning and a chance of not. Winning at football is a process. You cannot cut corners. Germany, England and Spain have a history behind them. Miracles can happen but the day after, it is the consistent ones that succeed. The problem with Portugal was not enough depth to the squad. However, like many other countries, they now have long term plans. Each level of development has to be high. The current manager of Portugal is going to have a big problem for the World Cup because he has 40 players ready to play in most positions. Their resources within the team are extremely high.



Portugal the winners of EURO 2016



Carlos and Sir Alex's partnership at Manchester United

6 SIR ALEX TOLD ME THAT HIRING YOU WAS ONE OF THE BEST DECISIONS HE EVER MADE: HOW DID THAT RELATIONSHIP WORK?

The most important thing with Sir Alex and me was that I went there to learn. I always asked Capello for advice – so when I got a call from Sir Alex, Fabio said take it, as I had an opportunity to develop at Manchester United. The way Sir Alex saw the game was the best thing about him. Football and the game are different things, not the same. One is the passion; the other is about TV, marketing and contracts. The game is the way you see football. Even some players don't watch the games. The way Sir Alex saw the game reminds me of my father - the romantic part of football. The second thing was the principles, the values and ideas. We had the same view about the game and that is why we got on.

7 AS A CLUB MANAGER, YOU GAINED A LOT OF EXPERIENCE WORLD-WIDE BEFORE YOU WORKED AT MANCHESTER UNITED AND REAL MADRID: HOW DID THIS HELP YOU TO DEAL WITH THE SUPERSTARS AT THESE CLUBS?

I never had a problem with superstars. I had problems with players who thought they were superstars. That is a problem. The real stars have this feeling inside of being better – perfectionists. You cannot be a star without being selfish. But it means constantly learning. Ronaldo, Beckham, etc. knew what to do. You make them feel like they are worth something. The players need to know why they are there – they need to know their role. The subs need to see and hear the head coach – their manager, at all times. Superstars are not a problem. It is when other issues such as marketing and promotion start to get in the way that is when problems start. At Real Madrid, take Ronaldo: Tuesday night we had UEFA Champions League; Wednesday, Thursday and Friday he would be filming, Saturday he was playing again. Today, the financial demand of the players means that football is not their top priority. Football must remain a priority if we are to move forward.

8 WHAT MAKES SOMEONE LIKE RONALDO SO SPECIAL?

We would arrive to training at 7:15 am, myself and Sir Alex. Wayne Rooney and Ronaldo would be there at the same time, or even earlier. They had this inner obsession with improving. This comes from inside and is something special. When we worked with Veron – he stayed on the pitch and did not leave until he had to. We were in the office in Manchester. The kit man said we are waiting for Ronaldo and it is 2 in the afternoon. I had to run behind the trees to the training pitch and there is Cristiano working alone, with the same drills to improve his ability. We started with this scientific approach to taking free kicks. He never left the pitch until he found the right way to hit it. His idea was to be better, to be the number one.



Carlos congratulating Ronaldo on qualifying for FIFA World Cup 2010

9 HAVING PARTICIPATED IN THE ASIAN CUP FINALS AND FIFA WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS, WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ABOUT NATIONAL TEAM FOOTBALL IN ASIA?

I've worked in Japan and UAE and I see things with some pessimism. In 30 years Asia could be in a different position. But where are the players? There are more top players in Europe. The football players in Asia should be in a more prominent position. I know, Asian football is different to European football. We need to solve this development problem. On the road to the future, you will encounter challenges: new challenges demanding new solutions. Asia has been copying models for the last 30 years. Experience is when you have an evolution. But here the same mistake keeps occurring. One season there is one coach, and then he gets sacked and it is a different coach. This is ridiculous. The way the competitions are organised is an issue due to the climate, the funding and the distance. In the game today, money talks. That is what is making the difference. Think about it: 65% of the money earned by the Premier League comes from Asia. In my opinion; the federations have the solutions; coach education. Also, we must have a voice to influence football. If you copy solutions – you only reach routine and stagnation. Just when you think Europe is sleeping, they show a

natural process of development. They continue to develop ideas. The gap is there in the first place due to differences in policies. We must implement policies – we must be innovative, we must re-invent ourselves with a unique approach. AFC has a huge responsibility to build better programmes, with more power. Bring the coaches with better solutions to push football forward. In Europe, football is fast, intense and they develop all aspects of speed. You must start with the players. The players are the centre of these ideas. How to develop our players is the key to providing solutions. The gardens are the game, the players are the flowers. The roots and the seeds are needed to develop quality players like Ronaldo and Messi. Look at European champions Portugal. They invested millions in infrastructure. The flowers need water and that comes from the way the players are trained. Light represents the competition system. Without a good competition system, the players don't have any experience and consolidation. Gardeners represent good coaches. The environment represents the football culture. In my opinion, AFC must look at how to develop the players as a priority.

10 WHO DO YOU THINK IS GOING TO WIN THE 2018 WORLD CUP IN RUSSIA? WHAT DO YOU EXPECT FROM ASIAN TEAMS AT THE WORLD CUP?

Brazil, Argentina, Germany will always be contenders. We keep the same expectations. Every single day we should try and improve and do it better. With Iran, our aim is to reach the knock out rounds. There are big challenges ahead of us but that means we cannot make excuses.

11 IR IRAN WILL FACE PORTUGAL AND SPAIN IN RUSSIA — A MAJOR CHALLENGE?

It is a great opportunity and Iran must accept the challenge. A special result is what is needed for Iran. Our preparation needs to be top-class in order to have a special result. Asian teams need to do it better to get out of Russia with credibility.

12 WHAT IS THE PROGRAMME THAT YOU OFFER SO THAT YOUNG PLAYERS CAN CONTINUE TO DEVELOP?

As an U23 Coach, your responsibility is to deal with the best players, the elite players. There needs to be a policy of development. U17, U19 and U23 competitions to help player development. In conclusion, we talk about competitions, coach education and player development. We need to listen and learn. AFC must be the voice of Asian football and make every effort to reduce the gap with Europe and South America.

13 WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF U23 FOOTBALL?

There needs to be more emphasis on its importance as a part of development. People don't know where they stand if all the best players are not at the final tournament, as was the case in China. There needs to be a continuous development from a young age.



AFC U23 Championship 2018 final between Uzbekistan and Vietnam

A LOOK IN THE MIRROR

There are times when it becomes appropriate – if not always agreeable – to take a serious look in the mirror. If Asian football faces up, blemishes appear. In Olympic men's football, a roll of honour comprising 25 gold-medallists reveals victories for nations from four confederations. Asia has yet to join that particular quartet in singing We Are The Champions. Those with a long memory might recall that Asia's first appearance on the podium came half a century ago when Shunichiro Okano led Japan to third place under the auspices of German coach Dettmar Cramer who, at that stage, was revered as "the father of Japanese football". There was then a 44-year wait until Korea Republic beat Asian rivals Japan to take the bronze medal in 2012.

Then there's the FIFA World Cup. Since it was born at the turn of the century, the final tournament has been staged ten times in Asia. But it seems to be a no-go area for 'home advantage'. The victorious clubs have come from Spain (five times), Brazil (four), Italy (two) plus England and Germany (once apiece).

And so to the FIFA World Cup. In the last two decades, France, Brazil, Italy, Spain and Germany have had their names engraved on the trophy. In other words, one champion from South America and four from Europe – the western segment of Europe, to be precise on geographical



Korea Republic's impressive performance against Great Britain in the London 2012 Olympic Games

detail. When the latest chapter was drafted in 2014, the four participants from Asia travelled home after the group stage, having jointly accumulated one point from a potential total of 36.

Is all this pure coincidence? All top coaches admit that, in the recipe for success, luck is among the ingredients. But the sheer weight of evidence seems to undermine the 'bad luck' theory and justify a session in front of the mirror. Being self-

critical – even excessively self-critical – can turn out to be a positive exercise – and this was an invitation delivered at the 1st AFC Conference for Olympic Coaches staged in Kuala Lumpur earlier this year.

It was by no means the sole ingredient of the three-day event. The conference theme 'Towards Tokyo 2020' was a clear indication that a priority was to plot the preparation route towards the return of the Olympic Games to Asia. The launching pad was a



One on one with Park Ji-sung: The Korea Republic star spoke about his career experiences

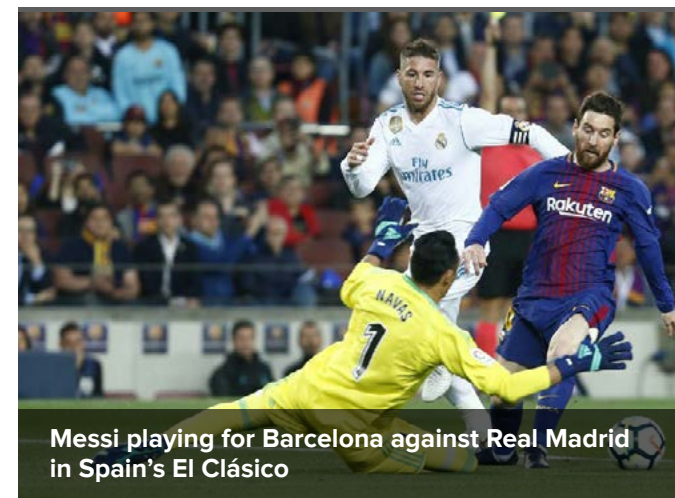
review of the AFC U23 Championship China 2018, including an interview with Ravshan Khaydarov, head coach of the Uzbekistan side that defeated Vietnam 2-1 in extra-time to win the title. The event also featured presentations by high-profile names such as former Korea Republic captain Park Ji-sung; FIFA's head of coaching and player development Branimir Ujevic; and Danish expert Jens Bangsbo, the former assistant coach to Marcello Lippi at Juventus aptly described by AFC technical director Andy Roxburgh as a "fitness guru" on the basis of his dedication to football-specific sport science.

However, using the imminent Olympics as a starting point, the key question was how to help Asian teams to bridge the gaps and consistently merge with the world's best in the future. An interesting way to start might be to invite readers to grab a sheet of paper and list the challenges to be overcome – or the barriers between Asia and the international

summit. It might start with the physical realities of the Asian confederation in terms of distances, travel schedules, time differences and extremes of climate – factors which become a hindrance when attempting to promote the sort of interchanges capable of fuelling a surge in abilities to perform at the highest competitive levels. Some might include a lack of world renown among Asian clubs and leagues as one of the inhibiting factors – though it is one that could be equally well-applied to other confederations.

Others might jot down continual comparisons with Europe on their lists of conditioning factors. On the one hand, it is undoubtedly legitimate to look to Europe for benchmarks. On the other hand, an obsessive desire to replicate can be counter-productive if it means turning a deaf ear to home truths. "I would like to play like Barcelona," is a frequently-heard comment among the coaching

profession, followed by the admission "but I can't". In other words, the pursuit of ideals needs to be tempered by realities. Not everybody has a Messi.



Messi playing for Barcelona against Real Madrid in Spain's El Clásico



AFC U23 Championship 2018: Japan vs Uzbekistan

Talking of whom, how many readers would write something like “shortage of big talents” on their list of the challenges facing Asian football? If this is thought to be a factor, why? Are insufficient resources being directed towards development at grassroots and elite youth levels? Is there a shortfall in investment levels within Asian football? Are investments being purposefully directed? How often is ‘lack of facilities’ likely to feature on the list of impediments? In the longer term, how important is it to provide adequate training installations and grassroots play-areas? How important is it to devise valid strategies within member associations where football might not currently be the No 1 sport?

Talking of strategies, one of the perennial debating points on planet football is whether bottom-to-top or top-to-bottom is the more valid approach. Some advocate building from the bottom; others maintain that success at the top will haul up the game’s popularity and status. Whatever the answers, they will underscore

the importance of strong, purposeful political and sporting leadership during the process of converting visions and projects into hard reality.

But, to hark back to the opening paragraphs, football discussions inevitably return to the question of results. And plotting the pathway to ‘results’ is unquestionably the responsibility of the coach. So what can be done to help the coaching profession to continually raise standards and, at the peak of the pyramid, to bridge the gaps along the approaches to the international summit?

On their wish lists, some coaches may have expressed discomfort about access to interchanges of knowledge – an aspect echoed by some of the tenants of benches in the AFC Champions League where, they feel, the East-West segregation leaves them short of opportunities to measure themselves and their teams against the other half of the confederation. The inference is that amplifying international encounters will help to prepare players for the competitive intensity of life at the top. Moves in this direction might include the staging of international ‘mini-tournaments’ involving, say, four teams. Or the staging of AFC age-limit tournaments on an annual basis rather than the current biennial format.

A search for benchmarks could quickly lead to Spain, whose successes on the senior stage have been underpinned by 17 titles and 8 silver medals in age-limit competitions over the last two decades. The consistent production of talent has been based on a clear philosophy embracing key elements such as technique in tight situations, speed of ball-circulation, off-ball movement, concise job descriptions for each

playing position and character-building issues such as humility, respect and team ethic. Still in Europe, Germany embarked on a run of successes in age-limit competitions as a result of a profound re-think on the way the ‘German style’ could best evolve. Foundations were laid in a new, upgraded academy set-up; and improvements in fitness-conditioning, specialised coaching, performance analysis and player involvement were key elements in a new playing environment.

At the same time, most national team coaches – not least those in Spain and Germany – would underscore the importance of the day-to-day development work performed at club level. Standards of domestic competitions – at senior and youth levels – vary considerably. As AFC technical director Andy Roxburgh remarked during the conference in Kuala Lumpur, “some leagues are breeding grounds, but not finishing schools”. The question here is what can be done to upgrade domestic and AFC competitions. In the longer



AFC Champions League 2017 Final Urawa Reds vs Al Hilal

term, the development of elite youth academies encourages steps in the right direction, provided that smooth pathways are laid between youth and senior football. All too often, potential talents earn promotion to first-team squads where brakes are applied to development by long spells on the bench. The knock-on effect is a dilemma for national team coaches obliged to reflect on the viability of selecting players who are not regular starters at their clubs. For coaches at all levels, the challenge is to select the right talents and use them to the greatest effect. But the first step is to discover the talents with genuine development potential – hence the importance of scouting systems implemented by coaches with a shrewd eye for the game.



U-16 Championship: IR Iran vs Iraq

The 'shrewd eye' also needs to look beyond the superficial evidence of 'star performances'. Specialists in the development of Olympic athletes often stress the importance of not focusing exclusively on the youngsters who dominate their competitions, sometimes with ease. The stars of the future, they maintain, are often the athletes who occupy the lower steps on the podium but who have a raging desire to reach the top. The theory can also be applied to football, where talent alone is not enough to guarantee success at the highest levels of the sport. Desire, hunger for success, motivation, intelligence, emotional intelligence, work ethic and a winning mentality are components that coaches need to develop.

The coach, of course, has to be equipped to do this. Hence the importance of proper coach education in projects aimed at bridging gaps. Today's top coach is required to carry a heavy tool box containing not only extensive footballing experience but also in-depth understanding of aspects such as nutrition,

hydration, medical support, injury prevention, psychological training and match analysis, in addition to communication skills and the ability to lead a team-behind-the-team which might include coaches specialised in position-specific training, such as the art of goalscoring.

As Andy Roxburgh commented at the conclusion of the conference, "the Vision and Mission statement has underlined AFC's clear ambitions to see its teams and players succeed on the biggest stages and our coaches represent a key area of focus and investment towards achieving those goals. Along with enabling member associations to improve their competencies, the conference was beneficial in gathering feedback and finding solutions to better prepare our teams and players for the future." He also quoted an old proverb: "if you are facing in the right direction, all you need to do is keep walking".



Takefusa Kubo - Japan's young talent



WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ASIA: THE STATE OF PLAY



Mind the Gap!

Speaking on the side lines of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Jordan 2018, Guam Women's National Team Head Coach Belinda Wilson, 2016 AFC Women's Coach of the Year Chan Yuen-ting and AFC Executive Committee Member and Chairperson of the AFC Women's Football Committee Moya Dodd gave their insights of how they see and evaluate Asian women's football at the moment.

Our expert panel offered their views on what should be the teams' and Member Associations' focus in terms of women's football development, and they also had some suggestions for improvement to make sure the infamous gap between the top level and the rest keeps getting smaller. And how does the top stay at the top? How can the third-tier teams in Asia reach the next AFC Women's Asian Cup and have a chance to qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup?



AFC Women's Asian Cup 2018: Japan vs Australia

1 HOW DO YOU RATE THE TOP ASIAN WOMEN'S TEAMS?

Belinda Wilson: There's a big difference between the top level and the next level. I think Asia's top teams are not only influenced by the individual players they have got but we have a big gap between the different levels of coaching across Asia. And you can see that when the teams are playing.

Chan Yuen-ting: I think some aspects of the women's game in Asia are getting better. And emerging teams like Jordan or Philippines have shown ability. If they were better tactically they could reach better results, because they really have some good players. What I can see as the trend is that the teams are concentrating on defence more than before. The defending and also the set plays make the difference.

Moya Dodd: Overall, Asian teams are among the best national teams in the world. But they still need to improve because they are not yet consistently the best. Consistency is required and that comes with the overall women's football development strategy that competitions form part of.

2 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF THE TEAMS OUTSIDE ASIA'S TOP GROUP?

Belinda: It goes back to coach education and its quality, quality of domestic competition, is there a pathway for women's football, and if not, why. And the player programmes and the long-term player development model, does it exist, is it put in place within the Member Association. If you've got quality coaches, you'll have quality players. If your coaches are not up to the standard, then the players will never reach their full potential.

Ting: And also, some of the teams are not looking at the long term. There is no fast forward button where you do something now and the results come instantly. By competing at the top level, teams like Jordan, Philippines, and Vietnam can gain experience and bring it back for many years to come.

Belinda: Others need to learn from the story of Japan after the 2007 World Cup: changes were made within the Association for women's football, and in 2011 they were World Cup winners. And since then, the youth teams have been better than the senior teams. The Japan FA is more focused on the youth development than on the senior team because the youth development product is the top team. So they're bringing a new generation of players in but they've started with the young players. And I think smaller associations start older, so they're doing a top-down approach instead of a bottom-up approach. But the smaller ones have to do both. Bottom-up is long term, top-down is short term.

Moya: We need to have good quality national leagues to provide strong and consistent club football. And the MAs need to have a consistent programme for elite youth, with good youth development coaches.



AFC Women's Asian Cup 2018: Jordan vs Thailand



AFC Women's Asian Cup 2018: Philippines vs China PR



AFC Women's Asian Cup 2018: Japan thanking the crowd after their cup win

3

HOW CAN THE WOMEN'S GAME, BOTH AT CLUB AND NATIONAL TEAM LEVEL, GENERATE MORE INTEREST IN ITS COMPETITIONS?

Ting: That's difficult in Hong Kong. But it could be much better marketed and promoted, especially with TV and live broadcasting. We need to raise the image of women's football in the country. I think it's different in other countries like Australia and Japan, and China is now developing a lot because of the Government's policy.

Belinda: This is a tough one. The bottom-up, top-down approach is important for how to drive it. It's a combination of many things: in Australia, a lot of work has been done by the member associations, our state body and now grassroots associations, on participation, creating opportunities, access and allowing women and girls to play. And the FFA has developed the W League, which is a nationally run competition, and they've created the opportunity to at least have one game on free to air TV. So we've got a little bit more exposure, and we have a lot more through social media.

But I think the biggest thing in the last eighteen months has been our Matildas, the Australian team. The success they've had in international football, accommodating with the women's league, US and overseas top international players coming to our league. We have exposure in other countries which has forced the FFA to create another stream to watch football outside Australia.

From the club perspective, the PFA has had a lot of influence, because now the players have a voice through the PFA, with good representation. The standards have been lifted to a more professional level. So players are now classed as professional athletes, not amateur athletes playing in a professional environment. The FFA is regulating clubs to create more professional environments and now the players can train seven days a week without having to run off to work and miss training because of work or school. The product becomes better because they're spending more time

in training, it becomes more attractive to the fan and the spectator and to the sponsors. And obviously this helps to create female football role models. Now a 5-6-year-old girl who's seen the famous back flip wants to be the next Sam Kerr. And all this is what's changed the game in Australia.

Moya: Clubs and federations need to give greater priority to investing in the quality of the teams and promote the competition using all their channels and means, including cross-promotion with the men's game. Also, the issue of commercial and media rights sales is crucial for growing the potential in women's football. This should be done by assessing whether value is maximised by co-selling with men's football or selling separately. Rights across various rights categories, especially in digital rights, need to be looked at and evaluated. Distribution of the matches on the biggest platforms in the media needs to be maximised, for example "use it or lose it" and social media.

4

WHAT ARE THE PRIORITIES FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN ASIA?

Belinda: Coach education. For me it's step one. The other one is access. Access to opportunities from a coaching perspective, access to competitions... access to player development programmes. In Guam at the moment our female players don't have access to competitions unless they want to play mixed football so it's up to the governing body to create that access for a young girl who wants to play with her friends. Creating role models within the game, and understanding the cultural settings as well is key.

We've had many foreign coaches in Asia but they haven't always adapted to the culture and the game they're in but they have brought their own attitude and thinking. As a coach, you need to adapt to the environment and to the culture that you're in so that you get the best performances. And that's how you grow the game, when you're working with the culture. Women's football faces different challenges in South East Asia, South Asia, West Asia, East Asia, everyone has a reason why they can't play, or a reason why they can't coach and they're very different from one another. It's about understanding the culture and saying "right, from that cultural perspective, how can we help you."

Ting: I am an example of being lucky in that I can work with high standard football. But I know that there are many good quality female coaches who don't have the chance and the opportunities to work at a higher level. Coach education is also about the experience that we want to get.



Moya: Commercially, to promote clubs and leagues to attract major new investment. And technically, I think there should be two clear priorities: coaching and participation. Coach education and coach development and recruitment practices need to be improved, especially for female coaches who generally stay in the women's game. We need to provide a better return on that investment.

Also, there should be a focus on educating specialised youth development coaches, and educating their bosses that coaches should not be judged purely on results. The participation base can be broadened through grassroots and futsal, and we need to work strategically to overcome cultural biases against women and girls in the game.

It's also vital to look beyond the national teams and grow clubs and leagues toward professionalism to provide regular quality football for many players.

In terms of governance, we must ensure that women with expertise from the women's game guide every key decision about the women's game. If they are not in place, ensure that men in governance include and empower those women over time.



AFC Women's Asian Cup 2018: Japan vs China PR

5 IF YOU COULD MAKE ONE DECISION THAT WOULD HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON WOMEN'S FOOTBALL, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Belinda: I could have one wish it's to apply the same standards to the women's game as to the men's game. I suppose it comes down to creating the opportunity, creating access, having very similar standards when it comes to environment, coaching, resources, opportunities to play. That'd be it.

Ting: I think if it really was equal between men's and women's football it could make the difference. Like in the Asian Cup tournament, the youth competitions, men get more rest days. This is also a little bit unfair to women's football, just as an example. But this kind of cases happen in women's football. So if this could be evened out we'd have more chance of parity.

Moya: The governance one I mentioned before, because after that we could sort out all the other things too!



DEVELOPING TOMORROW'S COACHES

Quality education comes from quality coaches. Over the past two years, this panel has worked hard, together with our member associations, for the development and improvement of football in Asia.” The words were spoken by AFC general secretary Dato Windsor John as he opened the sixth meeting of the AFC Coach Education Panel in Kuala Lumpur. It kicked-off a week of considerable importance for the future of coaching in Asia. On the following day, representatives of the confederation’s 47 member associations gathered at the same venue for the 2nd AFC Coach Education Conference where, under the banner “Raising Standards”, the event represented a vital step in the implementation of the AFC Coaching Convention.

The Conference provided an ideal scenario to outline the details of the Convention and to spark discussion among the coach education specialists with a view to charting forward progress among member associations. In a nutshell, the AFC Coaching Convention is an endorsement tool which provides guidelines and regulations based on establishing uniform minimum standards of coach education throughout the confederation. Apart from the overt objective of raising standards, the Convention sets out to enhance partnerships between AFC and the member associations within the realm of coach education and, at the same time, create a basis for international recognition of coaching diplomas and, in



Packie Bonner at the AFC Goalkeeper Coaching Tutors' Course, September 2017



A COACHING DIPLOMA IS NO GUARANTEE OF SUCCESS, BUT A CONFIRMATION OF COACHING COMPETENCE.



turn, broaden horizons in terms of promoting more seamless movement of coaches throughout the confederation. AFC-endorsed diplomas will serve as confirmation of professional competence and will therefore consolidate the status of the coaching profession.

The Coach Education Panel, during the meeting which acted as prelude to the main Conference, had discussed in great detail the application process for member associations to join the Convention – a process which is already under way. As from the beginning of 2019, AFC-endorsed diplomas will only be issued to member associations who have signed-



Thomas Schaaf

up to the Convention and whose coach education courses adhere to the Convention guidelines. AFC's responsibility is to offer support and guidance to member associations and then to monitor, control and evaluate the coach education courses that they organise. Member associations are deeply involved in the design of programmes and content in line with the rules, guidelines and minimum standards set out in the Convention. Among the benefits, as AFC technical director Andy Roxburgh pointed out during the conference, is a golden opportunity for member associations to develop their staff coaches and to design coherent development plans and football philosophies.

It means that member associations might well need to think about adopting a new approach to coach education and a slightly different relationship with AFC as they review

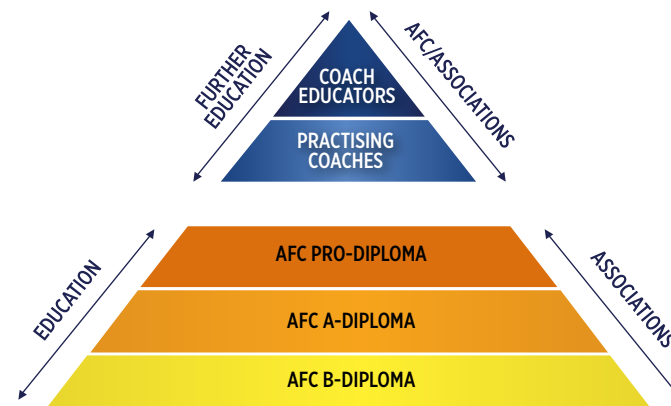
the potential benefits of joining the AFC Coaching Convention. In Kuala Lumpur, the member association representatives were certainly invited to reflect on how best to design a coach education course which aligns with the principles of the Convention.

Among the priorities is the need to create an optimal learning environment – and this starts with the question of numbers. An overcrowded course inevitably results in a drop in quality, especially in terms of the time and resources made available to each student. The word 'student' also raises an important question. Coach education is adult education – very often directed at former players anxious to add to their knowledge of the game in an adult manner rather than in a classroom atmosphere. The worst-case scenario in coach education is a negative learning environment or one where students are drilled rather than educated and encouraged to be self-reliant.



I DID THE COACHING LICENCE AT THE UNIVERSITY IN COLOGNE... I BELIEVE IT WAS A REALLY GOOD EDUCATION, A GOOD DECISION ON HOW TO APPROACH THINGS.

Thomas Schaaf



Top coaches will queue up to emphasise the value – sometimes unexpected – of their coach education process. A prime example is German coach Thomas Schaaf, who decided to go into coaching at 26 while still very active as a player at Werder Bremen. "I did the coaching licence at the university in Cologne", he recalls, "and, at the same time, became coach of the youth team. I believe it was a really good education, a good decision on how to approach things. I believe that it is very important to go through this education phase. As a player, you naturally think that you might know it all, or at least a lot, and that you therefore just need to be able to explain yourself. But you quickly realise that you're missing some key background knowledge that you then obtain in your education. I really enjoyed being so immersed in it. It's important to go through a full education, with the experience you gain and the intensive work you do on all aspects of the game. There's nothing better that can happen to you." A prime objective is to encourage students to feel that nothing better could have happened to them.



Magni Mohr at the AFC Fitness Coaching Tutors' Course 2017

In other words, the Convention encourages a thorough review of the coach education process, with a view to moving away from a tutor-dominated classroom approach heavy on theory and academic content. In a sport where players increasingly want their voices to be heard, student coaches will expect to interact with their tutors; to prioritise the practical aspects of the profession; and to be properly prepared to address the sort of problems that will confront them when they step out into the real world of coaching. 'Proper preparation' for the realities of the profession is more appropriate to the educational process than courses which focus exclusively on assessments and getting the students through exams. As Andy Roxburgh remarked during the conference in Kuala Lumpur, "the coach education process defines coaching competences, then develops them, and finally assesses them." Tuition needs to be based on reality, on concrete experiences and on practical knowledge passed on from tutor to student. As a rule of thumb, modules dominated by theoretical work should not provide more than 50% of course content.

The philosophy underlying the Convention reminds course designers that the aim is to educate the coaches of the future – not of the past. During his presentation at the conference, Andy Roxburgh neatly gave a footballing twist to a quote from the American philosopher and educational reformer John Dewey: "if we teach today as we taught yesterday, we rob our coaches of tomorrow." The statement provides a concise reminder that coach education needs to be forward-thinking and to embrace the importance of continuing professional development (CPD). As Danish sports scientist Magni Mohr had remarked at an earlier AFC course, "it's easy to become old in football". This readily translates into a message that coach education courses cannot afford to be outdated in terms of technology and the purposeful use of all the data currently available to the working coach.

Teaching student coaches how to use the tools available to them is only one item on a long educational agenda. They also need to receive guidance in the arts of coaching, teaching and developing players – facets which entail levels of communication skills that the average student may not have acquired during a playing career. Management and leadership abilities are essential ingredients in working relationships with, not only players but also with the coaching, medical and backroom teams, not to mention the links with administrators and boardrooms. Whereas a playing career is essentially about looking after oneself, the coach needs to organise, plan and prepare on behalf of a larger community. This is in addition to the basic requirements of team-building, match analysis and so on. To take these aspects on board, the student coach has to be led into a frame of mind where he or she is genuinely prepared to learn – hence the importance

of the teaching environment and the definition of a competency as "a combination of the knowledge, skills and attitude required to perform a specific task in a particular job".

All this adds up to a more challenging – and rewarding – job description for the coach educator and for the coach education directors responsible for leading teams of staff coaches. Apart from professional qualifications, the tutor needs to earn credibility on the basis of knowledge and experience which translate into the ability to deliver answers to questions and firmness in decision-making. Personality and communication skills are prime requirements for any



Asian Qualifiers: Australia vs Saudi Arabia

educator, along with personal attributes such as humility, emotional intelligence, patience and a strong work ethic. The latter is preferentially allied to a passion for the game which acts as a motivating and inspirational force for the students. A degree of curiosity is another essential asset, in the sense that it sows seeds for the pursuit of continuing professional development, a flexible, creative approach and the ability to embrace change.

The member associations' coach educators, with full backing from the AFC Coach Education Panel, are the key figures in making the AFC Coaching Convention tick. And, as the game changes, technology improves and competition intensifies, it is essential that education progresses, keeps pace and, where possible, stays ahead of the game. Howard Wilkinson, former national team manager, FA technical director and the last native coach to win the league title in England, once said "I believe that teaching is the most important profession in the world. I think that without teachers, without educators, well.... it's self-evident, we'd still be trying to light a fire." The significance of the AFC Coaching Convention can be expressed as an equation: Coaching Convention = better coach education systems = better coach education = better coaches and coaching standards = better players and better teams.



AFC'S COACH'S CODE OF CONDUCT

RESPECT players, fans, opponents, etc

PROTECT football from cheating, violence/doping/match fixing

FIGHT against racism/exploitation

AVOID conflict with match officials

OBSERVE the laws of the game

HANDLE winning/losing with dignity

APPRECIATE great play

ACCEPT responsibility for the Spirit of the Game

EXCHANGE knowledge

PROMOTE the positive aspects of the game

DEFEND the coaching profession

WINNING COACHES



RAVSHAN KHAYDAROV

WINNER: Uzbekistan

COMPETITION:
AFC U23 Championship 2018
(China PR)

[CLICK HERE FOR TOURNAMENT TECHNICAL REPORT](#)



MOHAMMAD NAZEMOSHARIA

WINNER: Islamic Republic of Iran

COMPETITION:
AFC Futsal Championship 2018
(Chinese Taipei)

[CLICK HERE FOR TOURNAMENT TECHNICAL REPORT](#)



ASAKO TAKAKURA

WINNER: Japan

COMPETITION:
AFC Women's Asian Cup 2018
(Jordan)

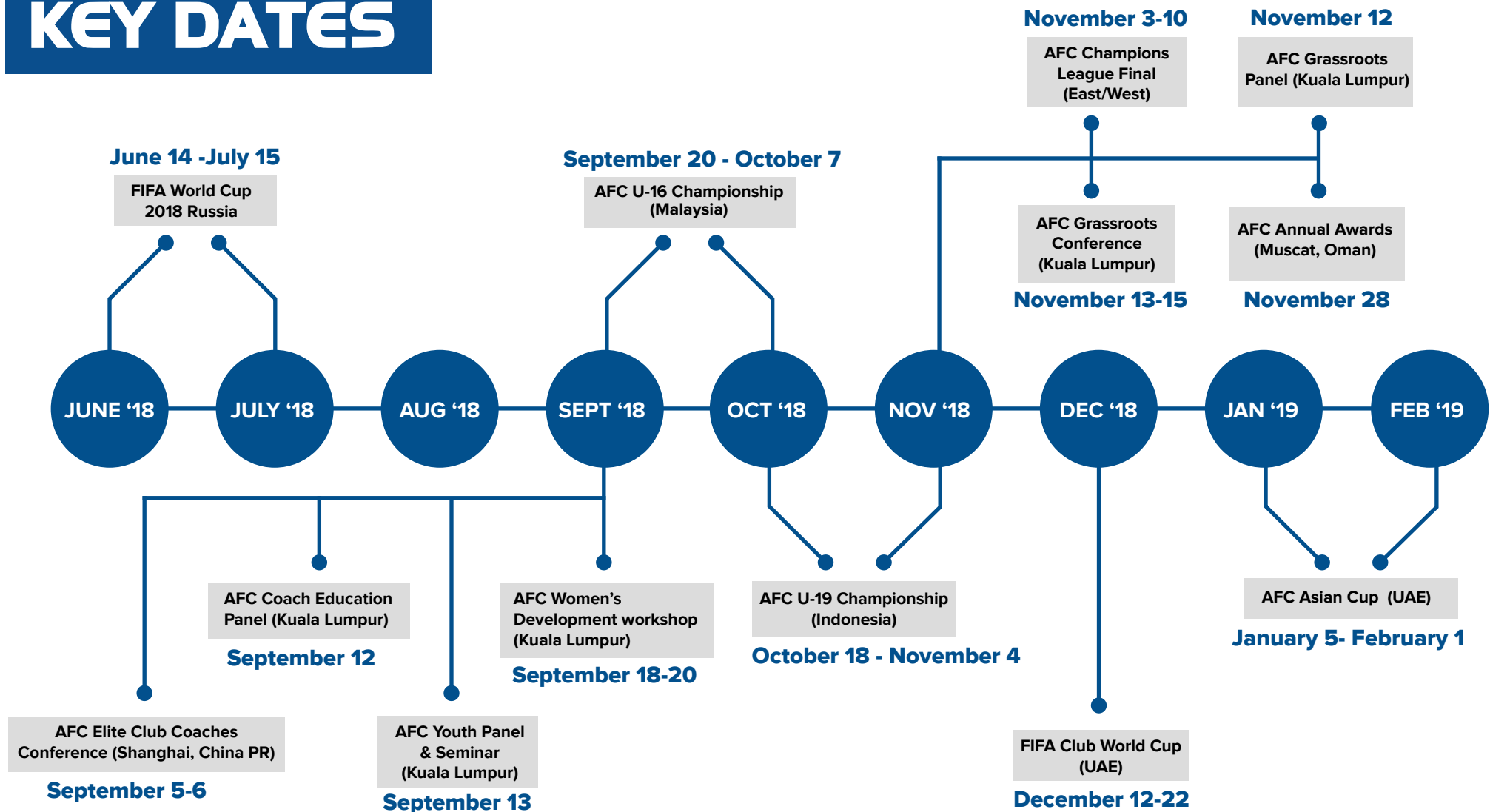


SHAHRZAD MOZAFAR

WINNER: Islamic Republic of Iran

COMPETITION:
AFC Women's Futsal Championship
2018 (Thailand)

KEY DATES





AFC INTERNATIONAL PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Son Heung-Min (KOR)



AFC YOUTH PLAYER OF THE YEAR (MEN)
Lee Seung-woo (KOR)



AFC YOUTH PLAYER OF THE YEAR (WOMEN)
Sung Hwang-Sim (PRK)



AFC DIAMOND OF ASIA
Yousuf Al Serkal (UAE)



AFC WOMEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Samantha Kerr (AUS)



AFC MEN'S PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Omar Khribin (SYR)



AFC DREAM ASIA AWARD
Japan Football Association



AFC COACH OF THE YEAR
Takafumi Hori (JPN)



AFC COACH OF THE YEAR
Asako Takakura (JPN)



AFC FUTSAL PLAYER OF THE YEAR
Aliasghar Hasanazadeh (IRN)



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