



From the desk of the Technical Director – No. 7

A weekly column series from Steve Payne, Technical Director and Game Development Manager for Football Federation Tasmania.

Last week I attended a Skill Acquisition Trainers Course in Glenwood, NSW.

With me was Nick Lapolla, a well known former player in Tasmania.

Nick has been selected as Tasmania's Skill Acquisition Trainer and will be working with elite players, particularly in the eight to 12 years old age group.

There are two parts to the course – the second takes place next year – after which Nick will take up his duties.

The course was led by Alfred Galustian.

Football Federation Australia has placed high importance on the skill acquisition part of its new national curriculum and Galustian is widely recognised as one of the world's leading technical coaches.

A former player with Wimbledon, Galustian has worked with the French, English and Japanese football federations, as well as clubs like Bayern Munich, AC Milan, Auxerre, Newcastle United and Arsenal.

A global soccer ambassador for the Special Olympics, Galustian is the co-founder and International Director of Coerver Coaching.

To describe him as a student of football would not do him justice. Bubbling with enthusiasm, he is constantly adding to his own knowledge of the beautiful game. A coach must never stop learning, he says.

Skill acquisition officers will be appointed across the nation as an integral part of the new FFA national curriculum, which is aimed at improving the quality of the nation's players and making them a formidable presence on the world stage.

Using a series of innovative practices, Galustian demonstrated how they can be used during training to improve the technique of elite players and help prepare them for the rigors and increasing speed of the modern game.

Having good technique is one thing; the capability of using it successfully on demand during a game is another. Alf detailed how players can be competitively put under intensive pressure during training to improve technique and decision making at speed.

He was also able to show how players can keep an extra card up their sleeve, ready to deal it when the situation demands, so as to keep an opponent constantly guessing.

Alf used classroom lectures and indoor and outdoor practical work to present the course, constantly seeking the input of coaches and triggering debate.

Also on hand were National Technical Director Han Berger, Assistant National Technical Director Alistair Edwards and National Coach Education Manager Kelly Cross.

Among coaches taking part were Milan Jankovic, a former international midfield player who starred for Red Star Belgrade and Real Madrid and Spencer Prior, who played for Leicester City, Manchester City, Norwich City, Derby County, Southend and Cardiff City.

Of note: Trials for state male and female Under 13 (born 1997) teams take place in the north on Saturday in Devonport. Trials for the same age group in the south are set for Nov. 14 in Hobart.

Initial trials for Under 14 (born 1996) males, north and south, are being arranged for Nov. 15 in Launceston.

Tryouts for the Under 15 (born 1995) male and female state teams, north and south, are scheduled for Nov. 22 in at KGV in Hobart. Players interested in trying out for Under 15 male and female state teams, please call Tom Clamp on 62 733 299 to register your interest.

In 2010, state teams will train twice a week and play at weekends under the FFT banner in a suitably competitive league. The state teams will also take part in the national championships, the dates depending on the age group.

Backed by the best coaching and competition, the players will be given every opportunity to pursue Football Federation Australia's official advanced player pathway, the curriculum for which is being set in place.

The plan is to have state teams in full training by early January at the latest.