



FOOTBALL FEDERATION
TASMANIA

FROM THE DESK OF THE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

21 MAY, 2010

Football Federation Australia's national curriculum road show came to Hobart on Monday.

More than 50 coaches from across the island attended the event at Football Federation Tasmania headquarters, Grove Road, Glenorchy.

The evening began with a one-hour theory session, followed by a 90-minute practical demonstration using Tasmanian Institute of Sport players.

The presenter was Alistair Edwards, FFA Assistant National Technical Director, who, along with National Technical Director Han Berger, are taking the road show nationwide.

Edwards, a former Socceroo, played professionally in Australia, Scotland, England and Malaysia before embarking on a successful coaching career.

His presentation concentrated on the national curriculum's four building blocks. The blocks form the framework for coaches working on player development and are based on worldwide research on how different countries develop players.

Edwards explained the stages of development from the discovery phase at age five to nine; skill acquisition phase from nine to 13, game training phase from 13 to 16 and performance phase from 16 to 20.

Small sided football is emphasised age 5 to 11, leading to competition age 12 to 20.

The discovery phase is no 'coaching,' but creating a learning environment; the skill acquisition phase is providing the necessary technical tools to play the game at the highest level; the game training phase focuses on applying those functional skills and the performance phase is aimed at perfecting the game training components.

Edwards said this is the overall framework and "yes" that's all there is to it, along with a good measure of "patience, determination, discipline, persuasiveness and perseverance."

Out on the field he presented a number of game realistic practices.

During the theory session, Edwards mentioned the on-going appointments of Skills Acquisition Trainers around Australia, all of whom will have completed a special two-part course.

Kurt Reynolds, FFT northern development officer, has completed the course.

I have completed part one and will take the second component later this year.

The skill acquisition specialists will work in FFA centres of excellence. With at least two sessions a week, the centres will develop our very best young players, male and female, starting at around age seven or eight.

The players attending the centres will remain at their clubs until they become eligible for selection into the full-time competitive State programme at the under 13 level.

The centres, there will be one in the south of Tasmania and one in the north, will be free of charge to those players who are watched, scouted and invited in.

More news on the opening of the centres in Tasmania can be expected this winter.

In other news, after consultation it has been decided to withdraw the State Under 14 Male team from the Under 16 Division One and have them continue on a train and play basis against older teams.

The reason for the move is to ensure this squad has the best possible player development scenario by competing against the toughest possible competition on a regular weekly basis.

Those who attended the road show will recall that an FFA pre-requisite for players on its advanced player pathway is for the best to be constantly training with and playing against the best.

Just last Saturday this team beat a northern Under 18 team 3-1.

Similar consideration was given to moving the State Under 13 Male team to a higher division than the present Under 15. After consultation with FFA, it was determined that the physical and mental maturity level would be too large a gap to bridge, especially as some of the team members are still only 12 years old.

Finally, I ran a session for the Launceston United Women's Premier team on Wednesday.

There were 17 players taking part and having begun with 45 minutes of technical work, I moved to the main part of the session, in which the theme was passing away from pressure and switching the play.

As with the United men's team the previous week, this was an opportunity to show club staff the methodology of coaching required by FFA.

The ladies, some of whom are very new to football, were enthusiastic, attentive and took on board what I was demonstrating very quickly. It was a great evening and one player was even Canadian, Sabrina, from Trois-Rivieres, Quebec.

Always nice to meet a fellow Canadian on my travels and there are not too many in Tasmania.