****

9B17M154

From Crisis TO WORLD CHAMPIONS: LESSONS FROM GERMAN FOOTBALL

Holger Ernst, Peter M. Bican, and Carsten C. Guderian wrote this case solely to provide material for class discussion. The authors do not intend to illustrate either effective or ineffective handling of a managerial situation. The authors may have disguised certain names and other identifying information to protect confidentiality.

*This publication may not be transmitted, photocopied, digitized, or otherwise reproduced in any form or by any means without the permission of the copyright holder. Reproduction of this material is not covered under authorization by any reproduction rights organization. To order copies or request permission to reproduce materials, contact Ivey Publishing, Ivey Business School, Western University, London, Ontario, Canada, N6G 0N1; (t) 519.661.3208; (e)* [*cases@ivey.ca*](mailto:cases@ivey.ca)*;* [*www.iveycases.com*](http://www.iveycases.com)*.*

Copyright © 2017, Richard Ivey School of Business Foundation Version: 2017-10-20

On July 28, 2014, in Frankfurt, Germany, Dietrich Weise and Ulf Schott, who had developed, installed, and headed Germany’s football[[1]](#endnote-2) youth development program, met at the headquarters of the Deutscher Fussball-Bund e.V. (DFB)—the German Football Association. Two weeks had passed since the 2014 Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)[[2]](#endnote-3) World Cup[[3]](#endnote-4) final in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The two men recapitulated the German national squad’s performance in the 2014 tournament. “Now that we are world champions, how do we ensure that we will remain at the top?” asked Schott. He continued, “I think we have to look back and learn from the past to not make the same mistakes as in the 1990s.” “The situation in German football was not as promising some 15 to 20 years ago,” recalled Weise. “Remember all those losses and the *Rumpelfussball* [stumbling football]?” added Schott. Which measures were undertaken by the DFB at that time to reshape the organization and reinvent itself for future challenges? How had the crisis been overcome and competitors left behind? Which barriers existed, and how had the DFB dealt with resistance to change? What can others, particularly corporate managers, learn from the 2014 FIFA world champions? Finally, how can the success of German football be maintained?

Phase 1: ConceptUalization of the youth development program

The DFB, founded in 1900, was the governing body of German football and the largest sports association globally.[[4]](#endnote-5) About 6.9 million members were organized into 25,500 clubs, with approximately 165,000 registered teams within 21 regional chapters in 2016.[[5]](#endnote-6) The biggest achievements were its four FIFA World Cup and three Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) European Championship victories.[[6]](#endnote-7) These titles had societal impact way beyond sports; in particular, the 1954 title was frequently interpreted as the actual foundation of post-war West Germany[[7]](#endnote-8) and a new collective national identity.[[8]](#endnote-9)

After the German reunification,[[9]](#endnote-10) the DFB national squad’s performance exceeded all expectations. Germany won the 1990 FIFA World Cup, became runner-up in the 1992 UEFA European Championship, and won it in 1996. Franz Beckenbauer, Germany’s head coach, claimed that, “Germany would be unbeatable for years,” but the reality would prove to be different.[[10]](#endnote-11) In the 1994 and 1998 World Cups, Germany was eliminated in the quarter finals—the worst World Cup performance by the national squad. “And then—rock-bottom! In the 2000 UEFA European Championship, only a single goal was scored, and Germany endured humiliating group-stage elimination. The media and public yearned for structural changes,” recalled Schott. “Our team consisted of iconic star players, but they were already beyond their career peak,” remembered Weise. Schott summarized, “The tactics and team play were rustic, non-technical, and plain—simply uninspiring football. Egidius Braun, DFB president from 1992 to 2001, was embarrassed by the Rumpelfussball and it being attributed to DFB, so he approached you: ‘Mr. Weise, we have to do something to revive German football!’”

The DFB and the German government had bid to host the 2006 FIFA World Cup.[[11]](#endnote-12) “This event, a World Cup on home turf, would be a one-off event and generate major media coverage, both domestically and abroad,” elaborated Schott. “Braun feared embarrassment. We knew that only a competitive team would make the event a success. Our aim was to play not only successful football, but also attractively,” recalled Weise. Furthermore, political conditions in Europe had changed; for example, the so-called Bosman ruling allowed Western European football clubs to hire foreign players (e.g., from the former Soviet Union), at relatively low cost. “The football transfer market was subject to profound structural changes,” remembered Wolfgang Niersbach, the DFB president from 2012 to 2015.

The DFB board discussed options for improving the national squad’s quality. “Braun knew of Weise’s meticulous style of work, his focus, and love for details, and this is exactly what we needed,” recalled former DFB president Egidius Braun’s former Chief-of-Staff Manuel Neukirchner. Schott added:

Can you imagine this today? At that time, no central youth development program existed at [the] DFB level. Surprisingly, it was not deemed important enough; it had no priority and no lobby. Officially, youth development was a big issue in mission and press statements, but, in reality, it was purely a verbal commitment. No financial, human, or other resources were dedicated to the development of talented players. There was no systematic plan and no unified approach. Training opportunities and intensities varied from region to region. As a young player, you were scouted in some regions and could consider yourself lucky, whilst equally promising talents in other regions were never scouted, let alone promoted.

The lack of both attractiveness and success in the national squad’s performances and the prospective hosting of the 2006 FIFA World Cup were the key drivers in initiating change. A unified youth development program was to be implemented as the cornerstone of the transformational process. Who should lead this program? “So you were hired, Dietrich,” said Schott. “I have no idea why I was chosen,” laughed Weise. Schott explained:

Well, at that time, you were the only German coach who had won both major youth trophies—the U20 World Champion and U18 European Champion titles. You had 10 years of experience as a Bundesliga coach, and you were head coach of Liechtenstein’s national squad, thereby demonstrating that you can initiate and foster change even in less favourable, resource-restricted conditions, i.e., a small population with only a few promising players. Who would have been a better fit than you?

Dietrich Weise

As a young football player, Weise had once been embarrassed by one of his coaches, who had forced him—with his teammates present— to take a chair, lift it up high, and run around the others to gain strength. This humiliating experience shaped him: “If ever in charge, I will not make others look ridiculous.” Weise was the youngest person ever to hold a licence to coach in Thuringia, at that time part of East Germany. As a refugee in West Germany, he started his career as a football coach at the Bundesliga club, Kaiserslautern, where he served as an assistant to Hungarian star head coach Gyula Lóránt. Lóránt had been extremely successful, both as a player and as a coach in Hungary—the dominating force in world football in the 1950s—and portrayed a strong sense of arrogance when dealing with players, regardless of their maturity. Weise recalled, “I learnt a lot from him, but particularly what I would not do. When training others, I will try to avoid being bigoted. I will rather watch what others do, and decide for myself what I should and also what I shouldn’t adopt.”

Weise remained open-minded, and always challenged himself to remain innovative: “Looking at modern goalkeepers and their kicks that almost land in the opponent’s penalty boxes, I wonder whether this can only be due to modern equipment or whether our training back in the 1970s and 1980s was suboptimal.”

Lóránt enabled Weise to test his new ideas with young talents.

For example, I figured out that it wasn’t of much help to go for a long run after heavy defeats. Players’ moods won’t improve through additional punishment, so I took them to train with the ball the next day and rather postponed the fitness session by a day or two—unlike Lóránt. Motivating players is as important as tactics and fitness. More mature players noticed all of this and informed Lóránt that they would also like to try some of the new things I tested out.

Eventually, Weise replaced Lóránt as Kaiserslautern head coach, and he later became head coach at Frankfurt and Düsseldorf. Throughout his Bundesliga spell, Weise was passionate about lifting young talents to the Bundesliga teams, shaping generations of famous players. Weise further commented:

Another important aspect is fairness. In the 1972 German Cup Final with Kaiserslautern, some of our opponent’s most talented players had been banned and would miss the final. Being favourites, they requested an exception. The bosses in Kaiserslautern were afraid of our fans, leaving the decision to me. I wanted them to play; I wanted to win against the best squad. We lost 5-0.

Before serving as Bundesliga head coach, Weise was trained as an accountant. “As head coach, I continued to take extensive notes on every training session and all games I observed,” Weise recalled. He was often spotted at matches, even of lower level teams. “Football was always first; my family came second,” he explained. “I needed to see all players that we were opting to sign. It is much better to communicate with these prospective players and their families and friends to get a comprehensive picture about them yourself, rather than relying on others’ impressions.”

To his surprise, Hermann Neuberger, the DFB’s president from 1975 until 1992, approached Weise to become the DFB’s youth coach:

At the time, Neuberger was presiding over DFB’s regional chapter. He regularly saw me scouting. For him, it was totally unheard of that a Bundesliga coach from a famous club would personally scout lower class teams—in his spare time! This impressed him so much that he got back to me when he became the DFB’s president.

In 1987, Weise was asked to train Egypt’s most prestigious football club, Al-Ahly. He took on this risk, and won the national championship and the national cup in 1989. In 1988, for the first and only time, Al-Ahly won the Afro-Asian Cup.[[12]](#endnote-13) Weise also headed the national team of Egypt in 1990, at no charge.

People could not believe that I would leave Germany for a place like Egypt. However, I knew I had reached the top in Germany and was curious to experience something new. Egypt was an incredible challenge, as was Lichtenstein, where I became the first head coach of the national team in 1990. I was intrigued by the idea of extremely ambitious, yet untrained amateur players. Would it be possible to be so creative to transform them—who had been without systematic training all their lives—into a somewhat competitive squad, in a country so small that I could easily scout all active football players in a single afternoon?

It was. Building a national league from scratch, Weise finally made history. In 1995, Lichtenstein achieved a draw (0-0) against Ireland in a qualification match. Having proven he could develop a systematic talent development system in less than favourable conditions, Weise returned to the DFB.

Phase 1: ConceptUalization of the youth development program (continued)

“You then formulated your vision, your mission statement,” continued Schott. Weise replied, “Indeed. Every German talent shall have equal chances to be scouted and promoted, regardless of ethnic background or place of residence. No white spots shall remain on the map.” Even though it sounded simple, it was difficult. Weise and Schott had to develop a system in which every talent was spotted, registered, and frequently scouted so as not to fall through the system’s cracks. Furthermore, when he was appointed in late 1996, Germany had just won the UEFA European Championship, so from the decision-makers’ point of view and in terms of general public opinion, there was no need for pursuing change.

In 1997, Schott, sports manager and former Bundesliga 2 player, was hired to assist Weise as senior project manager.[[13]](#endnote-14) Schott, together with the DFB’s director for team management, education, youth, and schooling, Bernd Pfaff, who had an educational business background, became responsible for the operational and organizational aspects of the youth development program. “At DFB’s headquarters in Frankfurt, we literally sat together. All our offices were co-located . . . President Braun’s, Weise’s, Schott’s, and mine,” remembered Neukirchner. Schott explained, “Dietrich and I, as his assistant, travelled Germany up and down in 1997 and 1998 to analyze the situation and identify best practices in the uncoordinated talent support that differed so much from region to region.”

Jörg Daniel, a former Bundesliga keeper and trained sports scientist, was hired in 1999 and became responsible for the technical content, such as training or tactics. “We became an autonomous team, independent from day-to-day routines and could fully focus on our task,” recalled Daniel. “We all had different functional backgrounds, but sharing the love for football and pertaining to everyone’s expertise, we were able to develop a unique concept to transform the youth development,” Weise summarized. Soon, they recognized that it was necessary to develop a common framework with mandatory guidelines for all regional chapters. Weise stated, “The regional centres and their development were really important. To me, they were the cornerstone of the concept. For example, few training facilities were equipped with a pendulum to train headers. We installed them everywhere: the symbol for change.” Moreover, Schott and Pfaff pushed to involve the professional Bundesliga football league teams (see Exhibit 1).

Phase 2: Development of the youth development program

The initial concept for the youth development program was developed by Weise and Schott and relied on two integrated pillars: (1) the creation of 121 regional centres within the DFB’s regional chapters, with 242 honorary (unpaid) coaches, for an estimated investment of approximately €2.7 million,[[14]](#endnote-15) and (2) the mandatory foundation of youth academies at professional clubs. Schott claimed:

The key to a successful football system—from grassroots to professional sports—with all those parents taking their kids to training and games, volunteering to be coaches, drivers, or taking care of food, like baking a cake for the team, is to keep the dream of becoming a professional player and star of the national squad alive as long as possible. The two pillars constitute an integrated system. Youth academies would be lost without large-scale talent scouting and regional centres to complement them.

Weise presented his regional centres concept on April 8, 1998 (see Exhibit 2). “It was a centralized system, sharing the same requirements for all centres. Regardless of regional differences, similar standards in training and development were guaranteed,” remembered Daniel. Schott explained, “As a rule of thumb, no talent should travel more than 25 kilometres to the nearest regional centre. With all of our coaches and the geographical dispersion, we manage to scout 600,000 youngsters per age group annually. Thus, we can select the most promising talents for additional training.”

Regional centres were not designed for talented youth players from the professional clubs’ academies but rather for all talents on amateur football teams. These players would not yet be considered gifted enough to make it into the youth academies; therefore, they would not receive individual coaching without the regional centres.

To develop the regional centres, France, as the recent winner of the 1998 World Cup, served as the role model.[[15]](#endnote-16) “We didn’t simply want to copy the French Football Association but aimed to avoid some of the French mistakes,” remembered Schott. Weise and Schott believed that the two most prominent faults were the French concentration on a few regional hubs—this restricted the range of the youth development system and exchange with clubs in distant proximity from the hubs—and the introduction of boarding schools, as talents would have to be separated from their social environment. “The regional centres were a success right from the start,” recalled DFB vice-president for youth football and DFB board member, Dr. Hans-Dieter Drewitz. “My time at the regional centre gave my career a great boost,” said professional footballer and 2014 FIFA World Cup Winner André Schürrle.[[16]](#endnote-17) Drewitz recalled, “However, the program faced resistance in the regional chapters, too. Many volunteers had dedicated lots of time, energy, and passion to train talents at their own expense, and suddenly DFB came and kind of imposed changes on them. They were disappointed. Some even said, look, I did all of this, and now I am swept out.”

Youth academies among the professional Bundesliga clubs rudimentarily existed prior to 1996. They were, however, not yet a result of organized planning. “Purely based on gut feelings, they depended on local conditions, [and on] the involvement and commitment of the respective clubs,” summarized Michael Skibbe, former national squad co-head coach. Germany’s poor 1998 FIFA World Cup performance accelerated the process. The need for change became apparent among officials, the media, and the general public. Andreas Rettig, general manager of SC Freiburg at the time, remembered, “By turning the existence of such academies into a mandatory criterion for clubs to obtain their Bundesliga participation licence, more academies were founded, and a certain baseline quality level for the education of the top talents was ensured” (see Exhibit 3).

“We faced heavy opposition from some of the clubs. To them, the DFB outsourced a huge burden of the development cost,” remembered Schott. In addition, imposing a talent management system raised concerns by some club general managers who felt that DFB would interfere with their independent work and responsibilities. “We had to convince the Bundesliga 1 and 2 clubs about the importance of a more standardized talent development via the youth academies,” recalled Rettig.

Some Bundesliga representatives believed that these regional centres were redundant, as any player who was not deemed good enough to attend a youth academy would not be talented enough to ever make it into the Bundesliga, let alone the national squad. However, Schott and Weise identified that young players’ career development paths were far from linear, but rather advanced in waves. “These waves depend on the talents’ physical and mental development stages, their socio-economic backgrounds, and proximities to families and friends,” summarized Weise.[[17]](#endnote-18) The men identified three career paths. Schott explained:

First, there were players that were always above average in their football skills and development levels. They were identified as top amongst their peer group and usually transferred into youth academies at a young age. Mario Götze is a typical example for this career path. Second, there were players who, while gifted, were not amongst the top talents of their age group, like André Schürrle. Without our system, these talents would fall through the cracks of youth development. The reason is that these players are unlikely to make it into youth academies and would not be further developed without any additional training from regional centres. In England, for example, these players are forced to end their professional sports careers even nowadays. If you do not make it to the youth academy of a premier league team at the age of 15, you are out. Forever. Third, there were also those players that were accepted into youth academies but stagnated. These can be transferred to the regional centres and, if they make another step forward, return to youth academies at later stages of their career.

“I think it was good for me [to train in a regional centre and play for my home team],” remembered Schürrle.[[18]](#endnote-19)

Phase 3: Implementation of the youth development program

The 2000 UEFA European Championship boosted the momentum for change. The disastrous performance of the German team shocked the nation. The public was impatient; change was urgently needed. Thus, the crisis induced public pressure and became an enabler for the implementation of the youth development program. The newly elected president of the DFB, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, became a fierce proponent and leading facilitator of the youth development program. As his former chief of staff, Jens Lengerke, recalled, “The youth development program became a cornerstone of his agenda. He vigorously defended it against all opponents and obstacles. Herein, we were able to make use of his connections to club representatives whom he still knew from his presidency at Bundesliga club Stuttgart.”

Daniel’s view was that, “To me, Mayer-Vorfelder’s greatest strength was his ability to motivate and listen to experts. As a functional head, you had his full presidential backing in developing a set of alternative options. As the public face, using his presidential, executive power, he was able to push things through. You could really count on him.”

Lengerke explained Mayer-Vorfelder’s style this way:

This was his style of work: He thoroughly enjoyed discussing alternatives, for which he included as many experts as possible, regardless of hierarchies or status. However, if no consensus could be reached, it was evident to him that he, as president, would make the final decision: *Roma locuta, causa finita*; Rome has spoken, the cause is finished.

The formation of the regional centres was expanded. Instead of the initially planned 121 regional centres, 366 were installed across the nation. Twenty-nine full-time coordinator coaches were hired to plan training sessions and cross-regional alignment throughout the entire day, rather than relying on volunteers working around full-time positions in other jobs. “We noticed we cannot make all decisions centrally at the DFB headquarters in Frankfurt but need geographically dispersed coordination,” explained Schott, who took over Weise’s responsibilities after Weise’s retirement in April 2001. Approximately 1,200 part-time coaches (three to four per regional centre, with remuneration of €75 plus €25 expenses per training session) mentored and scouted 25 to 30 clubs each. Weise noted, “Many coaches were experienced former Bundesliga players or professional team coaches. This was deliberate as we wanted to make sure that the training was of high quality. Even more important, talents look up to their idols. They got first-hand experience. Sharing war stories surely enhanced coaches’ credibility.”

Drewitz added, “Nonetheless, the payment of the new coaches was not perceived well at the regional chapters. Volunteers from the old days complained that they had dedicated their own time plus their intrinsic motivation and passion. But now DFB hired new coaches to replace them and even paid them.”

The youth development program costs quadrupled to approximately €10 million. Schott explained:

This was a huge financial investment for a non-profit organization like the DFB, which always had to master strong short-term financial demands and possessed hardly any slack financial resources. Some decision-makers inside the DFB, like the treasury department, questioned the roll-out; they viewed it as an unpredictable risk due to the unprecedented high up-front financial investments.

Drewitz continued:

What added to the cost challenges was the long-time horizon; you cannot craft talented young players in a year or two. You need time. I remember a youth tournament just weeks into the program. We lost a game and luckily managed a draw, not because we were bad, but due to bad luck. It all came together; a player was sent off early on questionable grounds, etc. The press grilled us: “DFB is wasting millions for nothing!” “Their program is a total disaster, so ineffective!” Then we won our third game against our nemesis, the Netherlands. Again, it was just luck; we scored and somehow managed to keep a clean sheet. This time, the press was totally euphoric: “Now, the system is paying off!” “Great return on investment by DFB!”

Further, apart from the results at youth tournaments, there were few metrics in place to measure any improvements of performance. Daniel added, “These had to be developed, too. Training the coaches became part of our work. Michael Skibbe [a German football manager and former national squad head coach] worked on this matter; for example, he sent youth coaches to the football associations of Europe to learn from the best—the Italians for defense tactics or Dutch training for offensive players.”

Schott noted, “Fifty percent of talent drop-outs are due to bad coaches. Thus, we developed four evaluation levels that had to be considered: results, coaches, partners, and regional centres. Moreover, we implemented and continuously updated databases and improved reporting cycles and communication with all stakeholders.”

Not only did Bundesliga 1 and 2 clubs become obliged to install youth academies to obtain the required licence to play in their respective league; third and fourth division teams installed academies, too. Thus, in 2016, a total of 54 youth academies were operating. The program was now also backed by Bundesliga representatives. The financial burden of implementing and executing the program, however, was always covered by the DFB. Only after 2000 did the Bundesliga take over its share.

Going Forward: from concept to routine

In 2002, the youth development program was set up. The DFB’s focus shifted from development and implementation to excellence and quality assurance. The unexpectedly positive results of the 2002 FIFA World Cup, where Germany finished second to Brazil, equipped the transformational process and key decision-makers with time. The results were attributed not to these changes and the youth development program, but rather to mere luck and the stunning performance of two key players: Michael Ballack and the tournament’s most valuable player, Oliver Kahn, the first goalkeeper to win this title. The average age of the national squad was still in the late 20s, with Germany again being the second-oldest team in the competition, just as it was in the UEFA European Championship 2000.

“Unfortunately, the 2002 performance was just a flash in the pan. In 2004, history repeated itself with yet another group-stage elimination in the UEFA European Championship,” recalled Weise. Schott added:

We were lucky the project wasn’t killed here, thanks to the fact that the public debate focused on other issues at that time. Luckily, our youth development program was never discussed, neither among decision-makers nor the press and supporters. But we used the time to ensure the long-term survival of our program. By introducing quality assurance measures, such as a restaurant-like star rating with over 200 indicators conceived by Belgian firm Double Pass, to measure the quality of youth development, we set incentives for clubs not only to fulfill the minimum requirements or any ambitions to bypass the regulations but also to become competitive in terms of their youth development.[[19]](#endnote-20) The better their performance, the more stars they were awarded, which they could use for market positioning, which supported their recruiting.

“You remember, we never published the ranking list. Competition happened automatically, just like we planned it,” smiled Weise.

In 2004, the DFB opted for a shared leadership model with two presidents. Mayer-Vorfelder stayed in office but was now supported by Theo Zwanziger, previously the DFB’s treasurer. As a trained tax inspector and lawyer, Zwanziger’s socialization to the game was through general grassroots football. When appointed to his new office, he vowed to enact two amendments. First, the number of coaches at the regional centres was reduced in favour of increased financial support for the DFB’s regional chapters, i.e., grassroots football at the local football clubs. Thus, he insisted that more talents were able to receive additional training, rather than just the elite that did not make it into the youth academies. Second, Zwanziger favoured regional adaptation to the original one-size-fits-all regional centre approach. The DFB noticed structural differences between regions, so more flexible rules were installed. Schott summarized, “The adaptation ideas were plausible, and not only taking vague but real notice of his concerns, he turned into a proponent of our program. Its core remained unchanged, and the regional adaptation is still in place today. With his successor, Wolfgang Niersbach, the number of coaches surged again.”

An additional quality adjustment was to improve school education complementary to football training, for which the DFB certified elite partner schools. These schools were awarded financial support and an official DFB logo sign, transforming their popularity. Psychological and pedagogical assistance was offered to the talents, as it was beneficial for their development “to be able to talk to someone . . . who can help them with dynamics outside of football.”[[20]](#endnote-21) “How to organize the schooling system to accompany football training was the frequent topic of passionate discussions with DFB president, Mayer-Vorfelder,” explained Lengerke. These adjustments were implemented immediately after the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Germany finished third and—for the first time—played a new style of football that relied less on physical aspects and more on technical and tactical skills. As in the 2002 FIFA World Cup, this was not yet a result of the youth development program. However, the new style of play attracted broad public support for the change process. Again, the performance of the German team ensured dedication and time for this process.

In the 2008 UEFA European Championship, Germany finished as runner-up. In the 2010 FIFA World Cup, Germany played the most attractive style of play according to international media coverage and experts, but lost in the semi-final, ultimately finishing third in the tournament. In 2010, Germany’s style of play was—for the first time—recognized as a direct effect of the youth development program. Eighteen players in the squad were trained within the two pillars of the system. At the 2012 UEFA European Championship, 20 players had originated from the regional centres or youth academies, which increased to 21 players in a squad of 23 members at the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Of these 23 players, seven were below the age of 23 and another seven were below the age of 25.

The final breakthrough of the youth development program—where the structural changes really yielded success—was the 2014 World Cup in Brazil. This realization had taken 18 years from the initial idea and approximately 15 years from its official launch. As Germany became the first European nation to win the World Cup title in the Americas, 82 million Germans closely watched the outcome of the transformational youth development program. The decisive goal in the final was scored by Götze and Schürrle had made the assist: both players had progressed through the youth development system. More precisely, each served as a representative from one of the two pillars. While Götze had been identified early as a talented player and joined Borussia Dortmund’s youth academy at the age of nine, Schürrle had been trained in two regional centres in Germany’s south west before joining Mainz 05’s youth academy at the age of 16. All of the investment paid off on the magic night of July 13, 2014. Götze remembered, “We knew what we had achieved as a team, but to party and to share that with all the fans in Berlin—simply unbelievable.”[[21]](#endnote-22) Schürrle added, “It was the greatest game in my career. . . . It took two to three weeks. . . . Everyone celebrates you, wherever you are, everyone recognizes you; you are World Champion everywhere. . . . But you only realize it a few weeks later—what happens to you as World Champion.”[[22]](#endnote-23)

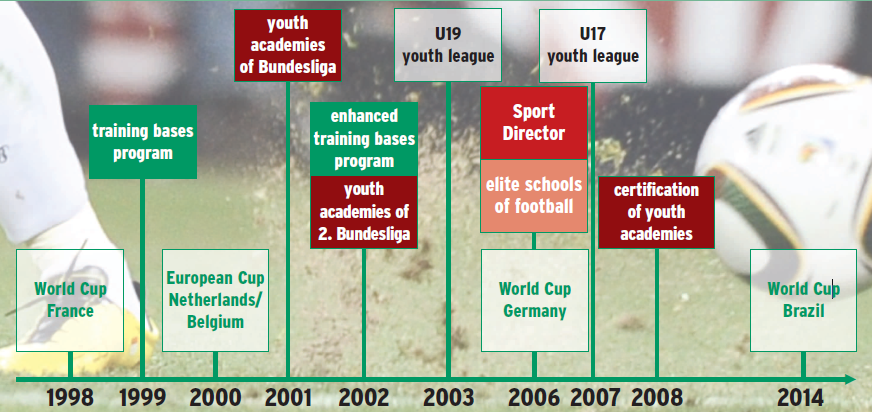
Epilogue

Two weeks later, DFB President Niersbach joined Weise and Schott at the DFB headquarters and commented:

Great job, Dietrich and Ulf. Without your passion, enthusiasm, and teamwork with all other stakeholders, the youth development program would not have been implemented at this scale and speed. You, Dietrich, despite being an established Bundesliga head coach, didn’t mind fully committing yourself to travel the country, developing and implementing the program. Without the youth development program, we would not be world champions today. Look at all the players, how technically-trained and tactically-shaped they are. All of them. This depth in quality of the entire team has never existed before, making all of us Germans so proud.

Schott, who had been a DFB board member and director for youth, league management, coaches, international cooperation, talent promotion, and education since 2012, stated, “Now that we are world champions, the work continues.[[23]](#endnote-24) We cannot sit back and rest on our achievements. The next tournaments are coming fast: 2016 in France and 2018 in Russia. So Wolfgang and Dietrich, what do you think needs to be done?”

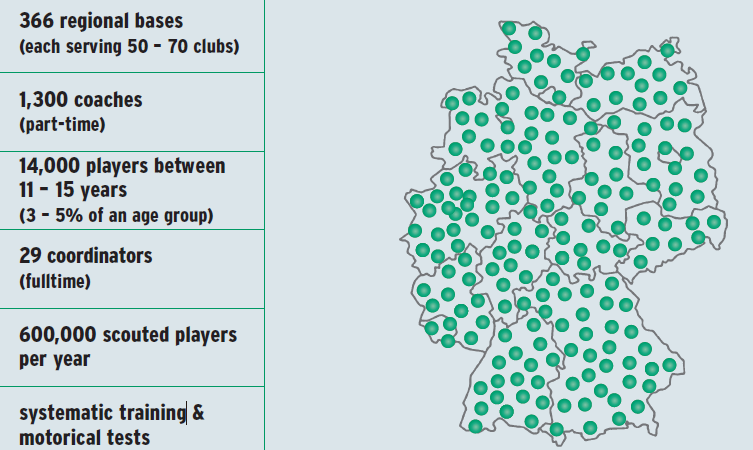
Exhibit 1: Timeline and Process of OrganiZational Change



Note: U19 = under 19; U17 = under 17

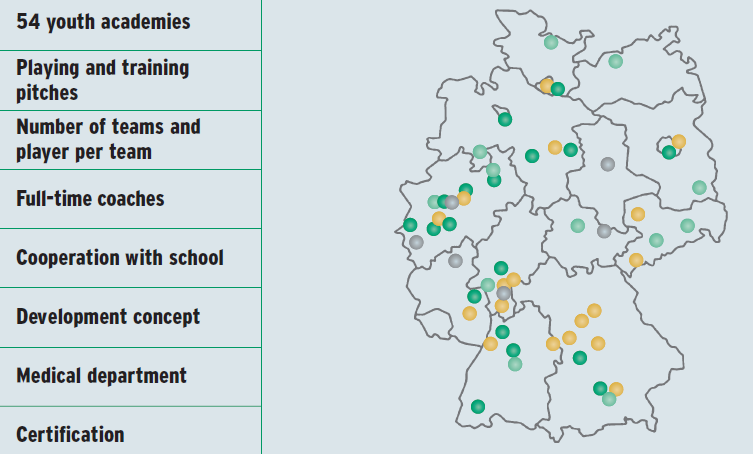
Source: Used with permission from Deutscher Fussball-Bund e.V.

Exhibit 2: Pillar 1—Regional Centres



Source: Used with permission from Deutscher Fussball-Bund e.V.

Exhibit 3: Pillar 2—Youth Academies



Source: Used with permission from Deutscher Fussball-Bund e.V.

Endnotes

1. Football is more commonly known as soccer in North America. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
2. The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is the governing body of international association football. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
3. The FIFA World Cup and the UEFA European Championship tournaments for national squads are held every four years in an overlapping manner. These tournaments are frequently considered to be the most important competitions for the (European) national squads. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
4. For a comprehensive overview, please refer to Wolfgang Niersbach and Rudi Michel, *100 Jahre DFB: Die Geschichte des Deutschen Fussball-Bundes [100 Years of the DFB: The History of the German Football Federation]* (Frankfurt: Sportverlag, 1999). [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
5. “Members: Member Statistics,” Deutscher Fussball-Bund, 2016, accessed February 13, 2016, www.dfb.de/en/about-dfb/members/. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
6. The UEFA was the official governing body of European association football. German teams also won several UEFA European Championship tournaments and medals at the Olympic Games. For a comprehensive overview, please refer to “About DFB: History,” Deutscher Fussball-Bund, 2016, accessed February 13, 2016, www.dfb.de/en/about-dfb/. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
7. After World War II, Germany was divided in West and East Germany. Post-war West Germany refers to West Germany until reunification in 1990. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
8. Arthur Heinrich, “The 1954 Soccer World Cup and the Federal Republic of Germany's Self-discovery,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 46, no. 11 (July 2003): 1491–1505. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
9. Divided since 1945, West and East Germany reunited in 1990 to form the country now referred to as Germany. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
10. “Die Mannschaft [The Team]: Franz Beckenbauer,” Deutscher Fussball-Bund, May 7, 2014, accessed February 13, 2016, www.dfb.de/die-mannschaft/historie/bundestrainer/franz-beckenbauer/?m=1. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
11. “Freshfields-Bericht: Freshfields-Bericht Zum Download Auf DFB.De [Freshfields Report for Download at DFB.De],” Deutscher Fussball-Bund, March 4, 2016, accessed March 24, 2016, www.dfb.de/verbandsservice/verbandsrecht/

    freshfields-bericht/newsetail/?tx\_news\_pi1%5Bnews%5D=141130&cHash=e93fbd77fc2c5d91dbe3e6ca0c399019. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
12. The Afro-Asian Club Championship, sometimes referred to as the Afro-Asian Cup, was the African/Asian equivalent of the UEFA Champions League. These cups were the most prestigious tournaments at continental club level. The winners became eligible to compete for the FIFA Club World Cup. For more information, see “FIFA Club World Cup UAE 2017,” Fifa.com, 2016, accessed April 14, 2016, www.fifa.com/clubworldcup/index.html. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
13. Raphael Honigstein, *Das Reboot: How German Football Reinvented Itself and Conquered the World* (London: Yellow Jersey Press, 2015). [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
14. € = EUR = euro; all currency amounts are in € unless otherwise specified; €1= US$0.85 on August 22, 2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
15. Daniel Gallan, “Creating Champions: How German Ingenuity Won The World Cup,” CONQA Sport, February 4, 2015, accessed February 2, 2016, www.conqasport.com/blog//creating-champions-how-german-ingenuity-won-the-world-cup. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
16. Deutscher Fussball-Bund e.V., Talentförderprogramm [Talent Development Program], DFB Internal Document (Film), Frankfurt, Germany, 2014. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
17. Bettina Grossmann and Martin Lames, “From Talent to Professional Football—Youthism in German Football,” *International Journal of Sports Science & Coaching* 10, no. 6 (December 2015): 1103–1113. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
18. Barbara Mohr, “Ein Weltmeister in London—zu Gast bei André Schürrle [A World Champion in London—Guest at André Schürrle],” Film, DW: Made for Minds, September 9, 2014, accessed August 17, 2016, www.dw.com/de/ein-weltmeister-in-london-zu-gast-bei-andr%C3%A9-sch%C3%BCrrle/av-17910335. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
19. For the Belgian firm Double Pass and its rating systems, please see Raphael Honigstein, op. cit. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
20. Daniel Gallan, op. cit. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
21. “Audi Star Talk mit Mario Götze—Die Sendung + Audi Star Talk with Mario Götze [Audi Star Talk with Mario Götze—the Show + Audi Star Talk with Mario Götze],” YouTube video, 1:10:13, posted by Audi Star Talk, October 22, 2014, accessed September 1, 2016, https://youtu.be/-nNtvHiTp-U. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
22. Barbara Mohr, op cit. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
23. Ulf Schott, in his position as director, was one of six board members. The DFB was an association in which the board acted like the management board. One of his predecessors was Bernd Pfaff; thus, his appointment closed the circle for Schott. For more information on DFB’s structures, see Deutscher Fussball-Bund, J*ahresbericht* [Annual Report] *2013*, October 2013. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)