



Raise THE GAME



JANUARY 2022
ISSUE NO. 1

THE OFFICIAL ONLINE MAGAZINE
OF THE MALTA FA TECHNICAL CENTRE

FROM THE EDITOR

I am pleased to introduce the first edition of Raise The Game – the official online magazine of the Malta FA Technical Centre, exclusively free for all licensed and registered coaches. This magazine, which will be published on a biannual basis, aims to bring the Technical Centre closer to our ever-growing football community.

In parallel with continuous professional development sessions, keeping ourselves updated with the latest trends, insights and research studies has become of paramount importance in the modern game. In 2021, the Malta FA created the Centre for Football Research and Development, thus opening its doors for researchers studying the local game with the ultimate objective being to further widen the knowledge, expertise and research focusing on Maltese football.

To this end, this magazine is also intended as a practical educational tool for coaches. Selected studies conducted in various areas of domestic football are presented through short and flowing articles for all technicians to read.

As you virtually flip through the pages of this online magazine, you will find not only academic research but also interviews and other features that provide a deeper insight into the ongoing work of the Technical Centre. The three studies featured in this first magazine are:

- The Coach-Created Motivational Climate in Professional Football (Woods, 2020)
- An Overview of Injuries in Senior Women's Football in Malta (Mercieca et al., 2020)
- A Scouting Model – Using data and statistics to scout players for the Malta National Team (Sheridan, 2021)

I hope you find the articles and information presented in this first edition of Raise The Game useful and insightful. I take the opportunity to wish you all a happy and prosperous New Year full of footballing excitement.

Karl Attard

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INTERVIEW

we want the technical centre to be accessible to all coaches as they are our first point-of-reference - Mangia

The development of the football player is at the heart of the vision of the Technical Centre which has strengthened its commitment to serve as an open hub for football coaches working in Maltese football. In this interview with **Keuin Azzopardi**, Deus Mangia, the Head Coach of the National Teams who is responsible for the Technical Centre, speaks about the coach education programme, current and future projects, and the ongoing efforts to pursue effective collaboration with the local clubs and their coaches...

In addition to your role as Head Coach of the National Teams, you have also been responsible for the technical sector of the Malta FA since January 2020. What is the approach adopted by the Technical Centre vis-a-vis coach education?

The philosophy is centred around the open-doors concept because we want the Technical Centre to be open and accessible to all the coaches who are essentially our first point-of-reference. This is also intrinsically linked with our coach education approach which is inspired by our willingness to collaborate and communicate, through coach education, our unified philosophy for the national teams.

I'm pleased that many coaches, especially at youth level, have come forward, asking for more information also through meetings, to attain a better understanding of how we are working and how we are implementing our approach for every individual player. I think this is a very positive thing.

Looking back on the work done within the technical sector in the last two years, are you pleased with the progress achieved so far, also keeping in mind the difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic?

It is no secret that COVID-19 has created a lot of issues for most of the past two years, also considering that the last two domestic seasons have not been concluded. When you are focusing on football development and working on new projects, this causes problems as it disrupts the entire development process, especially as far as the national youth teams are concerned. This also applies to the coaching courses because you can't stick to the original plans with the situation leaving us with no option but to switch most of the sessions online.

Nevertheless, I am not the type to complain or look for excuses. Dedication and perseverance are key attributes, especially in difficult circumstances, and I believe that we have managed to implement many interesting ideas.



"MALTA IS THE FIRST COUNTRY IN EUROPE TO ORGANISE THE UEFA B AND C COMBINED COURSE WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF UEFA WHO MAY USE THIS AS A PILOT PROJECT AND PROPOSE IT TO OTHER MEDIUM-TO-SMALL NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ON A EUROPEAN SCALE"

The Technical Centre staff have worked very well, embarking on a host of important projects focused on the development of the football player together with other initiatives and specific coaching courses. We have introduced new courses such as the Match Analyst Course, and the UEFA B and C Combined Course. Malta is the first country in Europe to organise the UEFA B and C Combined Course with the full support of UEFA who may use this as a pilot project and propose it to other medium-to-small National Associations on a European scale.

It is pertinent to point out that we are halfway through our four-year plan and this is also the right moment to make an analytical review of the situation. We have improved our knowledge and understanding of the situation in the youth sector, both →

at structural and management level, and this is the time to put forward another proposal, from the Technical Centre's point-of-view, to move to the next level.

Is the Technical Centre living up to its promise to become an open hub for coaches? What are your plans for the coming year?

The ideas we had were also impacted by the COVID-19 situation. You establish a meeting schedule and suddenly everything is blocked because of COVID. However, at youth level, many clubs have been in regular contact with our coaches and the Technical Co-ordinator to understand the philosophy behind our work.

COVID-permitting, my objective from this month is to hold more meetings with coaches, especially those working with Premier League clubs, and also visit training sessions. The January-March period enables us to do these things as otherwise, between September and November, you are always under pressure due to the congested international windows. We are also planning to organise a series of meetings to discuss certain topics and explain what we have in mind in order to receive feedback from the coaches.

Since day one of your work as head of the technical sector of the Malta FA, you emphasised the importance of placing the development of every single football player at the heart of every project...

We have always put the football player at the centre of our work. Everything is focused on the development and growth of the player and this is also reflected in the way we are programming the coaching courses to emphasise this concept with all the coaches. This priority is at the heart of all the projects we are undertaking as well as those that are still in the pipeline. It is clear that the coach is an essential component of this process and therefore we want to make sure that they receive the correct information which is then transferred to the players. →

“EVERYTHING IS FOCUSED ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PLAYER AND THIS IS ALSO REFLECTED IN THE WAY WE ARE PROGRAMMING THE COURSES TO EMPHASISE THIS CONCEPT WITH ALL THE COACHES”





What are the main projects and initiatives undertaken by the Malta FA Technical Centre over the past two years?

First and foremost, we have modified the content of some of the coaching courses organised by the Technical Centre. At present, we are focusing on this, based on our three-year coach education plan which is very intensive.

There are other ongoing projects which are more of a technical nature, mostly concerning the players of the national teams, including the Elite Players Performance Project (EPPP), formerly known as Elite Players Development Project. The name has been adapted to better reflect the project's objectives as, in addition to the training sessions in the gym and the outdoor sessions for the goalkeepers, we have also introduced specific programmes about the nutritional aspect together with opportunities for the participating players to attend mental performance sessions, using the resources we have at the Technical Centre.

Another important project is the National Teams Clinic because this enables us to closely monitor

the players in the national teams' set-up, from the A squad to the youths, when they have physical issues.

Tied with this interview is the work related to the recently-established Centre For Football Research within the Technical Centre. This gives us another platform aimed at enhancing our level of communication and knowledge-sharing with the coaches. Originating from the Centre For Football Research initiative is the idea of introducing this online magazine which will provide a detailed insight into the work of the Technical Centre but not only that. The aim is to publish research studies on different aspects of football and also articles presenting the main points of the dissertations submitted by candidates of our coaching courses. I believe in the benefits of making these studies available to all the coaches registered with the Technical Centre. →

The Technical Centre is also striving to reach out more to the clubs and improve collaboration with the clubs and their coaches...

The aim is to intensify this aspect. As far as the senior and U-21 national squads are concerned, the Elite Players Performance Project is structured around the commitments of the clubs in the domestic football competitions. This means that the individual programmes devised for every player forming part of this pool are designed according to their weekly schedules at club level.

"AT YOUTH LEVEL, WE HAVE ESTABLISHED A GOOD COLLABORATION WITH THE COACHES BUT WE WILL NEED THE ASSISTANCE AND CO-OPERATION OF EVERYONE, BEGINNING FROM JANUARY, ESPECIALLY FOR THE PLAYERS BORN IN 2004 AND 2005 AS THIS AGE-GROUP WILL BE FACING THE CHALLENGE OF COMPETING IN THE 2023 UEFA UNDER-19 CHAMPIONSHIP, TO BE HELD IN MALTA"

With regard to the national teams, it's very important for us to have the players reporting for training a few days before the start of the international window. At this moment in time, this practice is still essential for us as is the continuation of our work with the national youth selections. The national A represents the immediate but the U-19, U-18, U-17, U-16 and U-15 teams are the future of the national team.

At youth level, we have established a good collaboration with the coaches but we will need the assistance and co-operation of everyone, beginning from January, especially for the players born in 2004 and 2005 as this age-group will be facing the onerous challenge of competing in the 2023 UEFA Under-19 Championship, to be held in Malta.

Starting from this month, we intend to organise a series of meetings to discuss our plans for this age-group and strive for an effective collaboration, especially with the clubs who have players in this specific category. ■



CENTRE FOR FOOTBALL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2021, the Malta Football Association established the Centre for Football Research and Development within its Technical Centre. The main objective of this initiative is to encourage and inspire students and researchers to carry out football-related studies with the Malta FA, thereby contributing towards the growth of Maltese football.

Through this Centre, the Association is opening its doors to students reading for a degree at any level, supporting their efforts to undertake research in one of the seven areas (but not limited to) identified by the MFA Technical Centre. These include:

- 1. Technical Area**
- 2. Performance Area**
- 3. Match Analysis**
- 4. Football Medicine**
- 5. Coach Education**
- 6. Women's Football**
- 7. Grassroots / Futsal / Beach Soccer**

If a research proposal satisfies the criteria set out in the Malta FA's project, the Technical Centre commits itself to assist researchers in various ways such as providing data and other material relevant for the research.

Additionally, in an effort to aid coaches in their continuous professional development, certain studies completed through this Centre together with others will be summarised and featured in this magazine.

Over the past year, several meetings were held with local and international academic institutions, including MCAST, the University of Malta, Learning Works and Liverpool John Moores University to discuss research partnerships and other matters.

In addition, a study pertaining to goal scoring in the Maltese Premier League has been conducted in partnership with MCAST. National Teams coaches Charles Sciberras and Karl Attard, together with researchers and senior lecturers Dr Renzo Kerr Cumbo and Dr Matthew Muscat Inglott, collaborated on an academic paper which is now at pre-publication stage.

For further information, one may send an email to Karl Attard, the Co-ordinator of the Centre For Football Research and Development, on karl.attard@mfa.com.mt

Karl Attard (second left), the Co-ordinator of the Centre For Football Research and Development, and Dawn Aquilina (left), the Malta FA Strategy Officer, discussed research and academic opportunities during a meeting with Colum Cronin, Course Leader of the MSc programme at Liverpool John Moores University, and Bernice Sant, representing Learning Works.





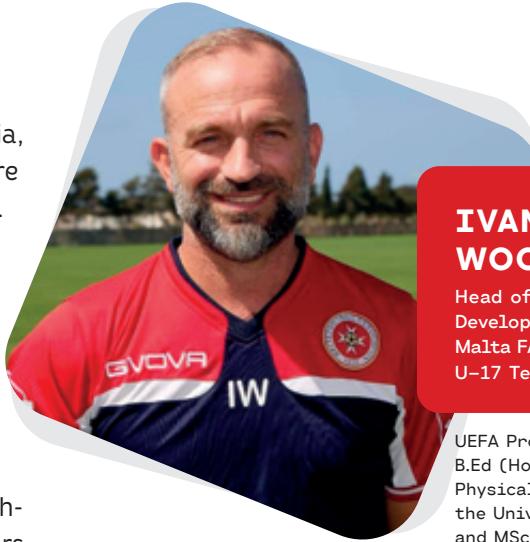
The coach-created motivational climate in professional football

The purpose of this study was to explore how three Italian professional coaches who have coached at the highest level of European football, namely Serie A in Italy, look to motivate their players.

The ages of the three participants, Devis Mangia, Domenico Di Carlo and Mario Beretta, were between 46 and 61 years ($M = 54.3$, $SD = 6.24$).

They were selected based on their extensive knowledge and experience of the area being investigated.

At the time this study was conducted, Devis Mangia, Domenico Di Carlo and Mario Beretta had a combined total of 74 years of professional coaching experience at 40 clubs (two of which were national teams). Individually, their coaching experience ranged between 16 and 38 years ($M = 24.6$, $SD = 9.56$). Furthermore, to aid the recollection of their experiences, the



IVAN WOODS

Head of Grassroots Development with the Malta FA and National U-17 Team Coach

UEFA Pro Licence holder, B.Ed (Hons) graduate in Physical Education from the University of Malta and MSc in Performance Coaching from Stirling University, Scotland

chosen coaches had to satisfy the criteria of being directly involved in coaching over the past five years.

Specific attention was given to the type of motivational climate the coach tries to create as well as the importance of the relationship between the player and coach, and the subsequent effect on motivational levels. Therefore, the study sought to provide further insight into the importance of the player-coach relationship, building on the findings of previous work regarding Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The findings of the study indicate that even at the highest levels of professional football, where competition and the quest to survive and thrive is prevalent, coaches look to create a mastery motivational climate.

"When your team loses, and you punish them for losing, it's like you are saying that they did it on purpose... The coach cannot think this way."

"...you [the coach] cannot change your behaviour based on the result obtained. But, there are defeats and there are other types of defeats. If the team performs, tries hard but loses... ok, back to training, we continue to work, no problem. We analyse what went wrong, the mistakes we committed and we go again. But, on the other hand, if there are mistakes related to attitude... then the situation is completely different. In such situations, I can adopt a different approach, behaviour-wise."

Devis Mangia



DEVIS MANGIA

Malta National Team Coach; Former Italy U-21 coach who also led Palermo in Serie A

Maximising competition by getting the players to wilfully engage in it, was identified as a powerful tool in maintaining the players' intrinsic motivation. Emphasising team unity and cohesion, respect for team-mates, being humble and selfless, and sacrificing one's ego whilst working towards a common goal, were all identified as a means to achieve this.

"...it is critical to ensure that your players understand that their attitude, their mentality, the sense of respect, the readiness to come to training every day and always giving their best, are essential requisites. When this is in order, then you don't need to spend time correcting the attitude but you can focus on the technical and tactical issues of the team."

Domenico Di Carlo

Considering the above, the coaches taking part in the study also explained how they lay greater emphasis on effort above everything else. When coaches put emphasis on the process rather than the outcome, players become more courageous and are less afraid to make mistakes. And when mistakes are inevitably made, the coaches' reactions are a telling factor that reveals how they are truly feeling. During difficult times, coaches need to be even closer to their players. Apart from providing positive, non-controlling competence feedback, setbacks need to be viewed as opportunities to develop. Providing clear, consistent messages and tackling issues early were highlighted as a means to ensure effective feedback which would also improve player confidence and satisfy the players' basic psychological needs of competence and relatedness.

The importance of a strong player-coach connection built on mutual trust and respect was an underpinning theme throughout the study. Trust and respect need to be earned by the coach primarily by showing that he is a trustworthy person.

"...he [the coach] must show respect for his players. The coach cannot, in any way, deceive his players. The coach cannot say he is going to do something and then does the complete opposite. If that happens, then all the trust and respect that the coach would have gained through his technical and



**MARIO
BERETTA**

Italian coach who led Chievo, Parma, Siena, Lecce, Brescia and Cesena in Serie A

tactical knowledge would be compromised in the eyes of the players because of this negative impact on the relationship."

Mario Beretta

The coach's ability to demonstrate genuine care for the players, being honest, show empathy, and take the time to get to know the person behind the player, are among the important factors for enhancing the player-coach connection.

"The coach needs to have the presence of mind to understand who is he speaking to. That can only be achieved by getting to know your players...during training, casual interactions with the players, speaking to other coaches who have coached that player to gain a better understanding of who he is as an individual and what makes him tick. You need to get to know as much as you can as every player is unique and different from the other".

Domenico Di Carlo



At the same time, the coaches in the study strongly recommended the importance of keeping a professional relationship with the players and setting clear boundaries. **Mario Beretta** suggests that coaches should look to build a “professional relationship” with their players “built on respect, honesty, education and being a good person” rather than try to be “best of buddies” with them.

Providing the players with choice and initiative-taking opportunities was identified as an effective way to increase the player’s perception of autonomy. However, in this context, the coaches in this study demonstrated a more coach-centred approach. In an attempt to gain more credibility and acceptance by their players, the coaches looked to assert their knowledge of the game as previous literature has shown that this is an effective method to lessen the players’ need to feel autonomous.

DOMENICO DI CARLO

Italian coach who led Parma, Chievo, Sampdoria, Livorno and Cesena in Serie A

Finally, an authoritative rather than an authoritarian coaching style was suggested as the predominant approach coaches should adopt. In order to be successful, the coach must have a sound understanding as to which approach will work best in specific situations. **Devis Mangia** reiterated this point when he recalled what Arrigo Sacchi once told him:

“...the difference between a normal coach and a different-level coach is the sensibility of the coach. The ability to feel when the player needs something instead of something else... I believe this is true for a coach to be successful.”

In addition, not only must the coach understand the emotional state of his players, but also, and equally important, he must be able to understand his own emotions. Triggers such as stress and pressure may push the coach towards a more authoritarian coaching style and therefore coaches must be increasingly aware of how they actually behave as well as improve their understanding of the circumstances under which they are more likely to become more authoritarian than authoritative.

“...the coach must keep a balance. He cannot get carried away or over-excited when things are going well or get depressed and demotivated when the going gets tough. He must have great emotional equilibrium and be able to maintain more or less the same approach in training, irrespective of the results being obtained.”

Mario Beretta

It must be said that monitoring the extent of controlling, authoritarian behaviours that a coach exhibits is easier said than done. Smith and Smoll (1996) demonstrated how coaches have very limited awareness of the frequency of their engagement in particular forms of behaviour as low and even non-significant correlations were found between the coaches’ self-reports and those of observers. As noted above, coaches need to acquire an increased awareness of how they actually behave as well as understand the circumstances under which they are more likely to become more authoritarian than authoritative. ■



AN OVERVIEW OF INJURIES IN SENIOR WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN MALTA



FELICIENNE MERCIECA

Swimming and
Running Coach,
presently working as
a personal trainer.

32-year-old graduated
in BSc (Hons) in Sport,
Exercise and Health from
MCAST and currently
studying MSc in Strength
and Conditioning
(Twickenham).

Co-authors: Renzo Kerr Cumbo and Dylan Seychell

The physiological demands of football increase the risk of injury. These injuries pose a significant burden which is very much influenced by the population at risk and consequently has an impact on the player, as well as the coach, technical and medical staff, the club, the Association and the game itself. Despite the significant increase in participation and the well-known injury risks, research on women football players is very limited since most studies still focus largely on injuries sustained by men. This void is without any doubt reflected in the Maltese scene up to date.



This article aims to provide a clear picture of the actual number of injuries, the most common injuries, what causes them, and the most common playing position likely to suffer injuries. This study also looks at the correlation between the number of injuries and specific characteristics of footballers.

The total population of women participating in the local women's league during season 2018/2019 was 120 players. Nine players were excluded from the study as they were still under 16, bringing the total of potential participants to 111. One of the clubs dropped out of the league during the season under review.

With the assistance of the respective club coaches, questionnaires were completed by some of the players whose replies were still relevant since the focus was retrospectively on the 2018/2019 season. →



FIGURE 3.1

Number of players participating within each club.

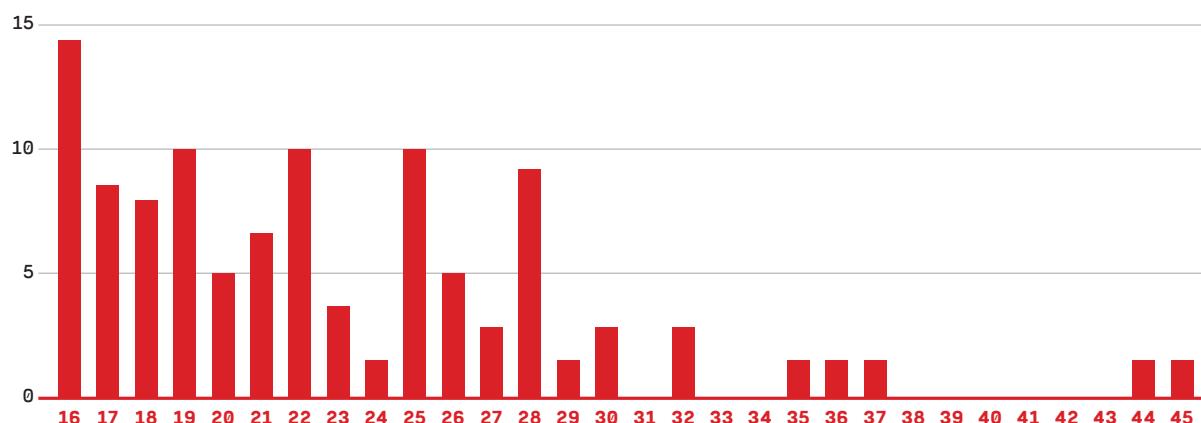


FIGURE 3.2

Age of players.

Of the 111 available players, 11 did not respond, thus the sample was made up of 100 players (83% of the total population) which resulted in a confidence level of 99% with an interval of 4.08.

INJURIES IN MALTA WOMEN'S FOOTBALL DURING THE 2018/2019 SEASON

During the 2018/2019 season, 63% (63 players) of Malta-based female football players who played in the seniors' league, suffered an injury while the remaining 37% were not injured.

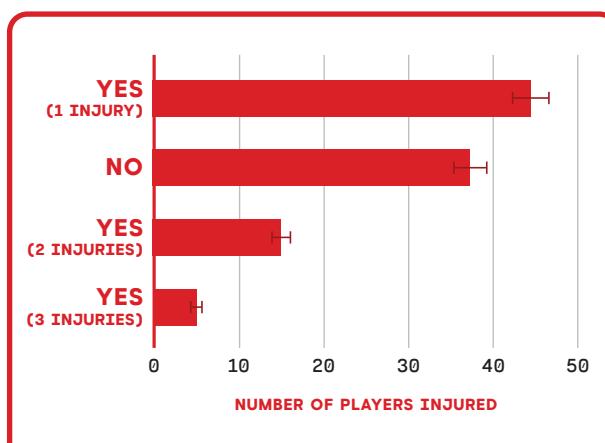


FIGURE 4.1

Players injured during the 2018/2019 season.

PLAYING POSITION

This high injury prevalence among strikers is also supported by various studies. While our study was in line with international studies in relation to the high injury prevalence among attacking players (strikers), it differs significantly when it comes to midfielders.

This study, in fact, argues that there may be various factors as to why, in senior women's football in Malta, the midfielders were those who suffered fewer injuries, including the style of play, the intensity and the involvement of midfielders in the game played in Malta.

BODY PARTS

Results show that the body part most affected by injuries was the knee, accounting for 35.3% of the injuries reported, followed by the ankle (34.1%), groin (7%), thigh and foot (4.7%), the calf, elbow and wrist (2.6%) and chest, glutes, lower leg, neck, upper back and ribs (1%).

POSITION	PARTICIPANTS	INJURED	PERCENTAGE
GOALKEEPERS	11	8	63.64%
DEFENDERS	36	22	61.11%
MIDFIELDERS AND/OR DEFENDERS	5	3	60.00%
MIDFIELDERS	27	15	55.56%
MIDFIELDERS AND/OR STRIKERS	12	8	66.67%
STRIKERS	9	8	88.89%
	100	64	

FIGURE 4.2

Rate of injuries per position.

This high percentage of knee and ankle injuries is corroborated by literature which also states that injuries in the ankles are very common, irrespective of gender. On the other hand, literature also confirms that knee injuries are the most common among female players. Indeed, such injuries may be attributed to female physiological traits specifically hormones, anatomy, neuromuscular activation, femoral notch and core stability. →

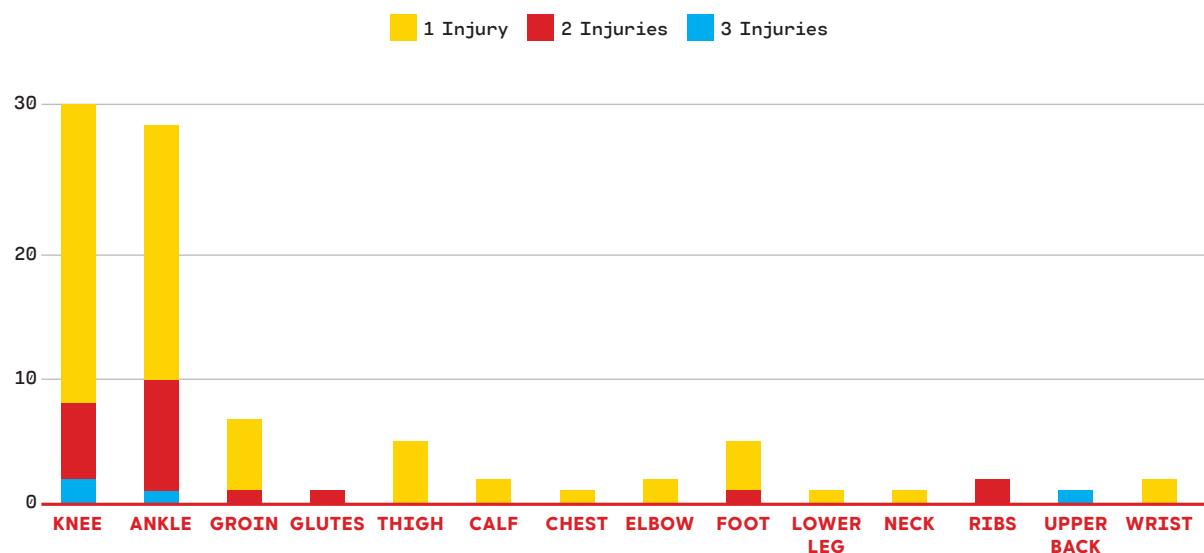


FIGURE 4.3

The body parts injured vs number of injuries.

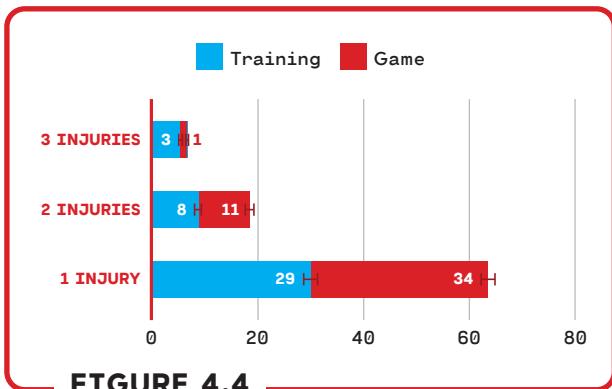


FIGURE 4.4

Incidence of injury in training and in games.

INJURY INCIDENCE

From a total of 86 injuries, the majority (53.5%; n = 46) occurred during games whilst the remaining 46.5% (n = 40) happened during training sessions. Among the players who reported one injury during the entire season (n = 63), 53.97% (n = 34), they were injured during a match, while the remaining 46.03% (n = 29) were injured during training sessions. The same applied for players who reported two injuries (n = 19), the majority of whom (57.89%; n = 11) suffered injuries during the match, as opposed to the 42.11% (n = 8) who reported injuries during training sessions. However, when taking into consideration players suffering from three injuries, only one participant was injured during a match while the other three were injured during training.

TYPES OF INJURIES

Ligament sprain resulted as the most common (60.47%; n = 52) of all injuries. That was followed by muscle strains (20.93%; n = 18), fractures (5.81%; n = 5), and contusions and dislocations (2.33%; n = 2). The remaining types of injuries, including shin splints, burns, chronic injury inflammation, lateral meniscus tears, patellar tendinopathy, posterior tibial tendonitis and golfers' elbow all scored the same percentage of 1.16% (n = 1), meaning that these were all just as frequent.

The uneven surface and/or the unnatural, demanding movements might be the main contributing factor to the considerable number of ankle injuries sustained by local football players.

MECHANISM OF INJURY

Contact with the ground while landing ranked as the most common mechanism of injury at 45.35% (n = 39). *Collision with another player* (31.40%; n = 27), *contact with the ball* (10.47%; n = 9), *overextension* of specific muscles while playing (6.89%; n = 6) and a *sudden change of movement* (4.65%; n = 4) represented the remaining mechanisms of injury (Figure 4.5).

Inappropriate landing increases the risk of injury as lower extremity strength, balance, range of motion and motor learning technique of landing all play a crucial role.

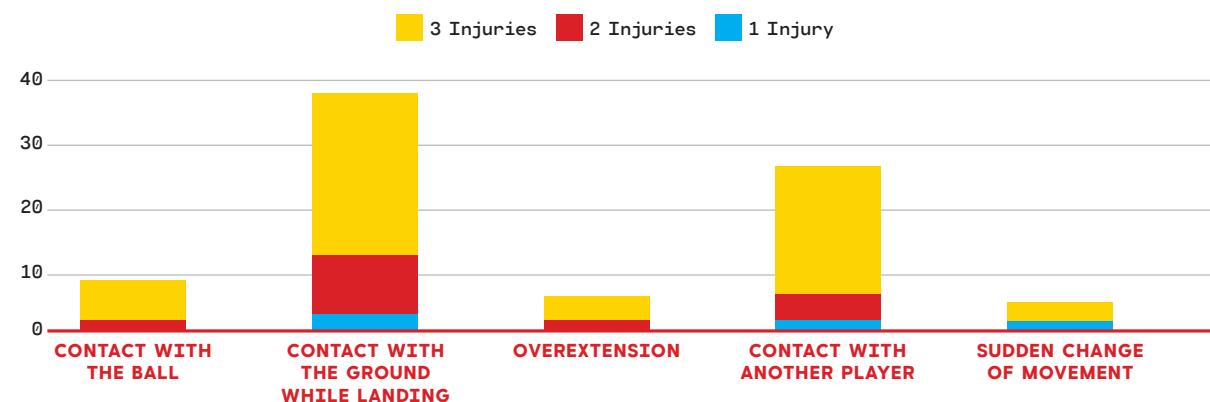


FIGURE 4.5

Mechanism of injury.

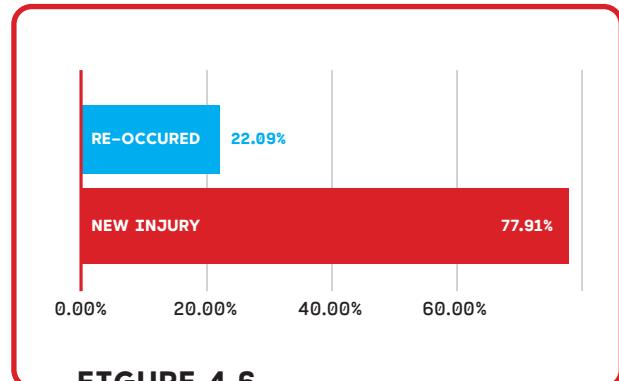
CORRELATION BETWEEN AGE, MASS AND NUMBER OF INJURIES

Results show that the number of injuries decrease with higher age and mass. While this may sound strange, one may argue that with a very young average age, female football players in Malta are not yet being prepared to endure the tough demands of the game. This may indicate the need for more hypertrophy and strength training to prepare the younger players.

RECURRING INJURIES

Figure 4.6 illustrates the discrepancy between the total number of recurring injuries and those of new onset.

In Malta, participation of women in football is on the increase, across all age-groups, starting from a young age to the senior leagues. Recently, more women players have grasped the opportunity to move abroad in order to follow a professional career.



New injury vs recurring injury.

While this is extremely encouraging, there is definitely room for further improvement. This is evident when it comes to injuries occurring both during games and training sessions. Injuries in football can considerably impact the clubs, sometimes being the sole factor, that determines a win or a loss. In addition, injuries incur a lot of expenses both for the players themselves as well as the clubs, not to mention the physical and psychological hardships for the players. ■

For further reading one may view the full article on
<https://journal.mcast.edu.mt/resources/html/article/details?id=210783>



A scouting MODEL

USING DATA AND STATISTICS TO SCOUT PLAYERS FOR THE MALTA NATIONAL TEAM



**LIAM
SHERIDAN**

Match Analyst
for the Malta U-21
National Team

Sports Science graduate
from the University of
Salford with theoretical
and practical knowledge
in Performance Analysis

The aim of this thesis was to develop a scouting model using data and statistics to identify the players most suited to play in the 1-3-4-3 system used by the national team despite playing in a different system for their respective clubs. In part, the thesis will explain the philosophy of the national team and the characteristics required of the players to play within the team's system. Each playing position will be clearly identified, along with the subset of attributes necessary for a player to play to the best of their ability within that position. These attributes are then translated into measurable metrics that can be calculated and observed objectively

as statistics. The statistics will be provided by SICS, a video analysis company, that collected detailed statistics of the Italian Serie A. The data used for this thesis will be focused on the players who figured in the 2019/2020 Serie A campaign.

INTRODUCTION

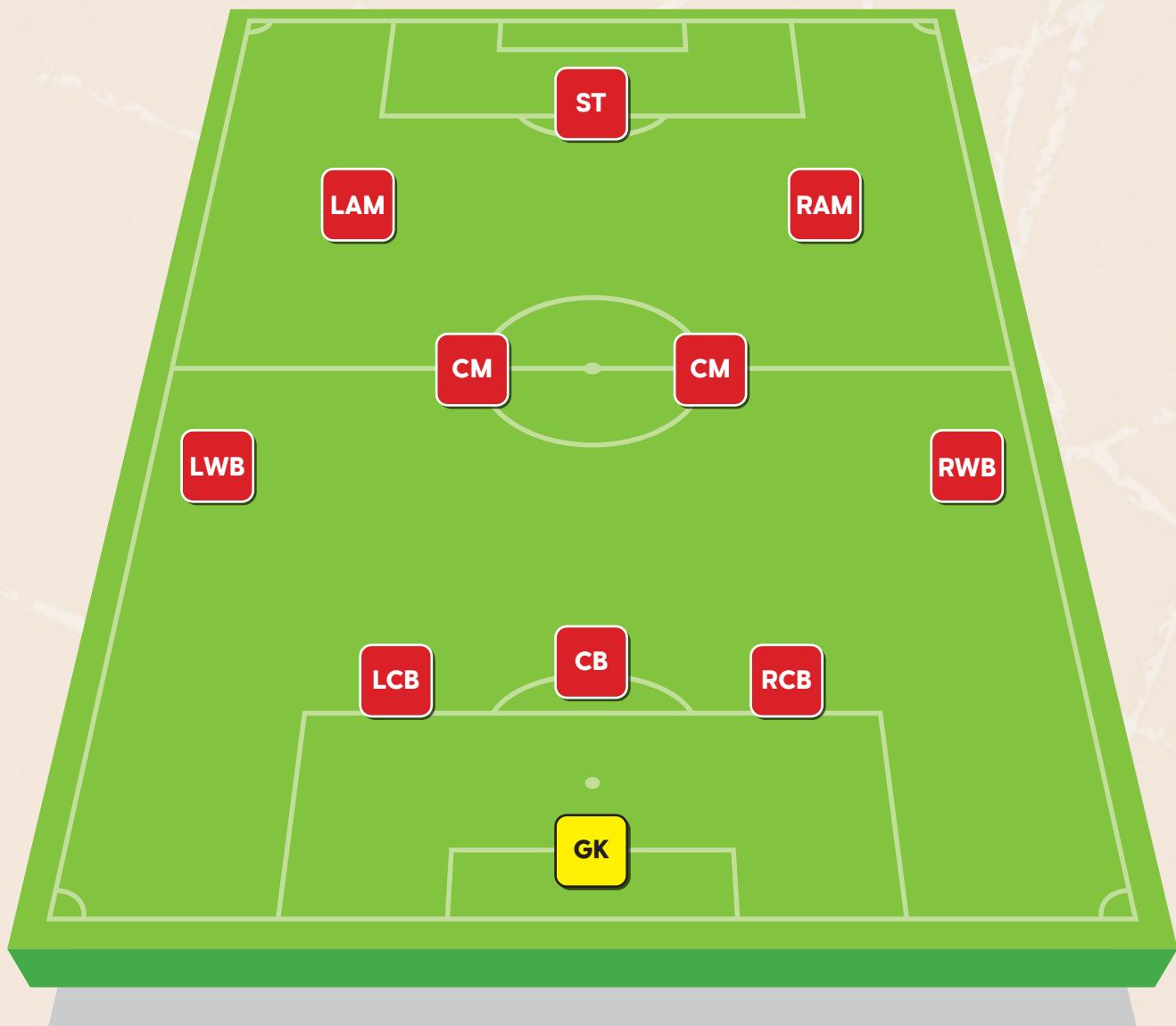
In order to know the type and calibre of player needed for the Maltese national team, we must first understand the type of football played by the team, the system/systems being used, and the philosophy of football implemented by head coach Deuis Mangia.

The system takes inspiration from 'Total football', a style of football that employs an adaptable system with players being able to play several roles. Crucially, total football emphasises the utilisation of space to its fullest, meaning the players playing within this type of system must have great spatial awareness. In the Maltese national team's philosophy, 11 players must be in active positions, in both phases of play (i.e. with and without the ball). The players must be positive in possession, always looking to receive the ball and having the awareness to be in their correct positions. The team must be quick to react in trying to win the ball back once possession is lost. The team must remain compact and connected, in both phases of play. →

The team mostly sets up in a **1-3-4-3 / 1-3-4-2-1** in possession and a **1-5-4-1** block out of possession.

FIGURE 1

Positions of 3-4-3 / 3-4-2-1 system



PLAYERS

When evaluating a player, it is especially important to consider the four main facets of a player's profile: physical, technical, tactical, and psychological. For

the purpose of this study, the technical/tactical attributes of a player will be the main priority. A key element of the scouting and player selection process is to recognise which characteristics best distinguish each position and role within the system. →



GOALKEEPERS (GK)

Very good game understanding, able to work with the defensive line, both in and out of the box. Very good technically, both with hands and feet. Has great self-confidence when defending his penalty area, acting as a 'sweeper keeper', and is very commanding during crossing situations.

CENTRE-BACK (CB)

Very quick and explosive. Able to defend against an opponent in a 1v1 situation, with good mental and physical strength. High levels of anticipation, has the ability to play forward, and the awareness to move up in order to keep the team short and compact. Has the ability to cover the space in behind. Good header of the ball, strong in aerial duels. Good personality, high self-confidence, and great ability during the build-up phase.



RIGHT/LEFT CENTRE-BACK (RCB/LCB)

Athletic running capacity, explosive power, ability to play out wide. Self-confidence and good ability during the build-up phase, and able to play from the back when necessary. Aggressive, with high levels of anticipation. Intelligent when on the ball. Capable of reading preventive marking situations, with the ability to cover space behind. Good header of the ball, strong in aerial duels.

WING-BACK (WB)

Exhibits a high level of stamina and natural fitness, powerful runner with the willingness to run for long distances. Capable of finding and creating numerical advantages with and without the ball in wide or central areas. Good ability to pass, cross, and finish.





CENTRAL MIDFIELDER (CM)

Required to have a good level of stamina and natural fitness, preferably with a dynamic element to his game. Tactically intelligent in both phases of the game, and can make forward runs into the box. Great ability to play the ball around and play forward. Good ability in winning the ball back and being productive and efficient in positive transitions.

RIGHT/LEFT ATTACKING MIDFIELDER (RAM/LAM)

Very good level of technical ability, and explosive in 1v1 situations. Ability to play in wide areas and in between the lines, and able to attack the space behind the defenders. Good teamwork. Displays the willingness to put in the extra effort, especially in the out-of-possession phase.



STRIKER (ST)

Good mobility, and able to lengthen the team with off-the-ball movements, but also knows how and when to come short. Great physicality, strong but able to attack the space too. Strong header of the ball.

The above characteristics must then be translated into measurable metrics i.e. a list of attributes that can be calculated and evaluated objectively via data collection and statistics. The rationale for using measurable metrics was to combine national assessments of players with individual players statistics. More importantly, however, using measurable metrics enhances the potential to find the best players

suited to play in the Malta 3-4-3 system, despite playing in a different system for their clubs. Seen in Table 1 is a list of measurable metrics for each position. In order to use statistics to find the best player for a particular position, the attributes were weighted according to priority. This helped prioritise the most desirable attributes for a particular position, and gave the player's ability a total value. →

TABLE 1

Player characteristics as measurable metrics

GK	CB	LCB	RCB	WB	CM	AM	ST
PASSING (SHORT & LONG)	AERIAL DUELS	AERIAL DUELS		INTERCEPTIONS	AERIAL DUELS	PRESURES	SHOTS
PASSES RECEIVED	INTERCEPTIONS	INTERCEPTIONS		PRESURES	TACKLES	TACKLES	GOALS
KEY PASSES ¹	TACKLES	TACKLES		AERIAL DUELS	INTERCEPTIONS	INTERCEPTIONS	ASSISTS
INTERCEPTIONS	FOULS	FOULS		PASSES	PRESURES	PASSES	SUCCESSFUL ASSISTS ³
SAVES	PRESURES	PRESURES		KEY PASSES ¹	PASSES	SWITCH PLAY	ASSISTS RECEIVED
ONE V ONES	RECOVERIES	RECOVERIES		KEY PASSES RECEIVED	KEY PASSES ¹	KEY PASSES ¹	KEY PASSES ¹
HANDLING (CROSSES & SET PIECES)	PASSES	PASSES		SWITCH PLAY	SWITCH PLAY	KEY PASSES RECEIVED	KEY PASSES RECEIVED
	KEY PASSES ¹	KEY PASSES ¹		CROSSES	SHOTS	ACTION AFTER RECEIVING KEY PASS	ACTION AFTER RECEIVING KEY PASS
	SWITCH PLAY	SWITCH PLAY		ASSISTS ²	GOALS	ASSISTS ²	ACTION AFTER RECEIVING ASSIST
	OFFENSIVE HEADERS	ATTACKING HEADERS		OFFENSIVE 1V1S	POSSESSION UNDER PRESSURE	SUCCESSFUL ASSISTS ³	OFFENSIVE HEADERS
	GOALS	RUNS WITH THE BALL/DRIBBLES		DEFENSIVE 1V1S	OFFENSIVE RUNS	POSSESSION UNDER PRESSURE	OFFENSIVE 1V1S
		GOALS		OFFENSIVE RUNS	PREVENTIVE MARKING	OFFENSIVE 1V1S	ATTACKING RUNS
				TACKLES		OFFENSIVE RUNS	PRESURES
				FOULS			TACKLES
				SHOTS			
				GOALS			

Acc. to SICS definitions:

¹ a pass that provides a significant offensive contribution;² a pass leading to a shot;³ a pass leading to a goal

RESULTS

TABLE 2

SICS metrics per position

	GK	CB	LCB	RCB	WB	CM	AM	ST
PRIORITY 1st	SAVES %	DEFENSIVE 1 VS. 1	KEY PASSES	KEY PASSES	KEY PASSES	SUCCESSFUL DRIBBLES	GOALS	
	CATCHES	SUCCESSFUL PASS %	DEFENSIVE 1 VS. 1	DUELS IN OPPPOSITION HALF	SUCCESSFUL PASSES	SUCCESSFUL ONE-TWO PASS	CONVERSION GOALSCORING OPPORTUNITIES	
	SHORT DISTRIBUTION	SUCCESSFUL TACKLES %	AERIAL DUELS	SUCCESSFUL DRIBBLES	SUCCESSFUL DRIBBLES	GOALS	AERIAL DUELS	
	LONG DISTRIBUTION	AERIAL DUELS	SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS	DUELS	SHOTS OUTSIDE BOX	SHOTS IN BOX	BALL RECOVERIES	
2nd	SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS	SUCCESSFUL INTERVENTIONS	DUELS IN OPPPOSITION HALF	SUCCESSFUL CUT BACKS	GOALS	SHOTS OUTSIDE BOX	SHOTS ON GOAL	

TABLE 3

Attacking midfielder metrics and players in Serie A 2019/20

SUCCESSFUL DRIBBLES	SUCCESSFUL ONE-TWO PASS	GOALS	SHOTS IN BOX	SHOTS OUTSIDE BOX
BOGA	INSIGNE L.	C. RONALDO	C. RONALDO	C. RONALDO
GOMEZ	KULUSEVSKI	JOAO PEDRO	L. MARTINEZ	BERARDI
KULUSEVSKI	CALHANOGLU	ILICIC	JOAO PEDRO	MALINOVSKYI
DE PAUL	DE PAUL	L. MARTINEZ	CHIESA	CALHANOGLU
ILICIC	C. RONALDO	BERARDI	LASAGNA	LUIS ALBERTO
ORSOLINI	NANDEZ	MANCOSU	CORREA	INSIGNE L.
C. RONALDO	JANKTO	CHIESA	INSIGNE L.	ZIELINSKI
DYBALA	MILIN.-SAVIC S.	DYBALA	ORSOLINI	DE PAUL
LUIS ALBERTO	ILICIC	LAPADULA	DYBALA	DYBALA
MALINOVSKYI	ZIELINSKI	BOGA	GERVINHO	GOMEZ
INSIGNE L.	CHIESA	REBIC	PASALIC	CHIESA
CHIESA	DYBALA	LASAGNA	LAPADULA	SANSONE

As seen in Table 4, the three players most recommended to play in the attacking midfielder position were Cristiano Ronaldo (Juventus), Paulo Dybala (Juventus), and Federico Chiesa (Fiorentina). The proximity in total points between the top six players suggests that any of them is suitable to play in the attacking midfielder position. The players chosen to play in the left attacking midfielder and right attacking midfielder role were Dybala and Chiesa, respectively.

TABLE 4

Top 10 Attacking Midfielders in Serie A 2019/20

PLAYERS	TOTAL POINTS
C. RONALDO	135
DYBALA	135
CHIESA	135
ORSOLINI	110
INSIGNE L.	110
ILICIC	110
DE PAUL	85
LUIS ALBERTO	85
MANCOSU	75

Variables other than the first and second priority attributes are taken into account when selecting certain players. For example, with regards to positions such as the wing-backs, attacking midfielders, and side-centre backs, a player's preferred foot is taken into account. Below are the 11 players from the Serie A 2019/2020 season most suited to play for the Maltese national team, based on the data provided by SICS (Figure 2).

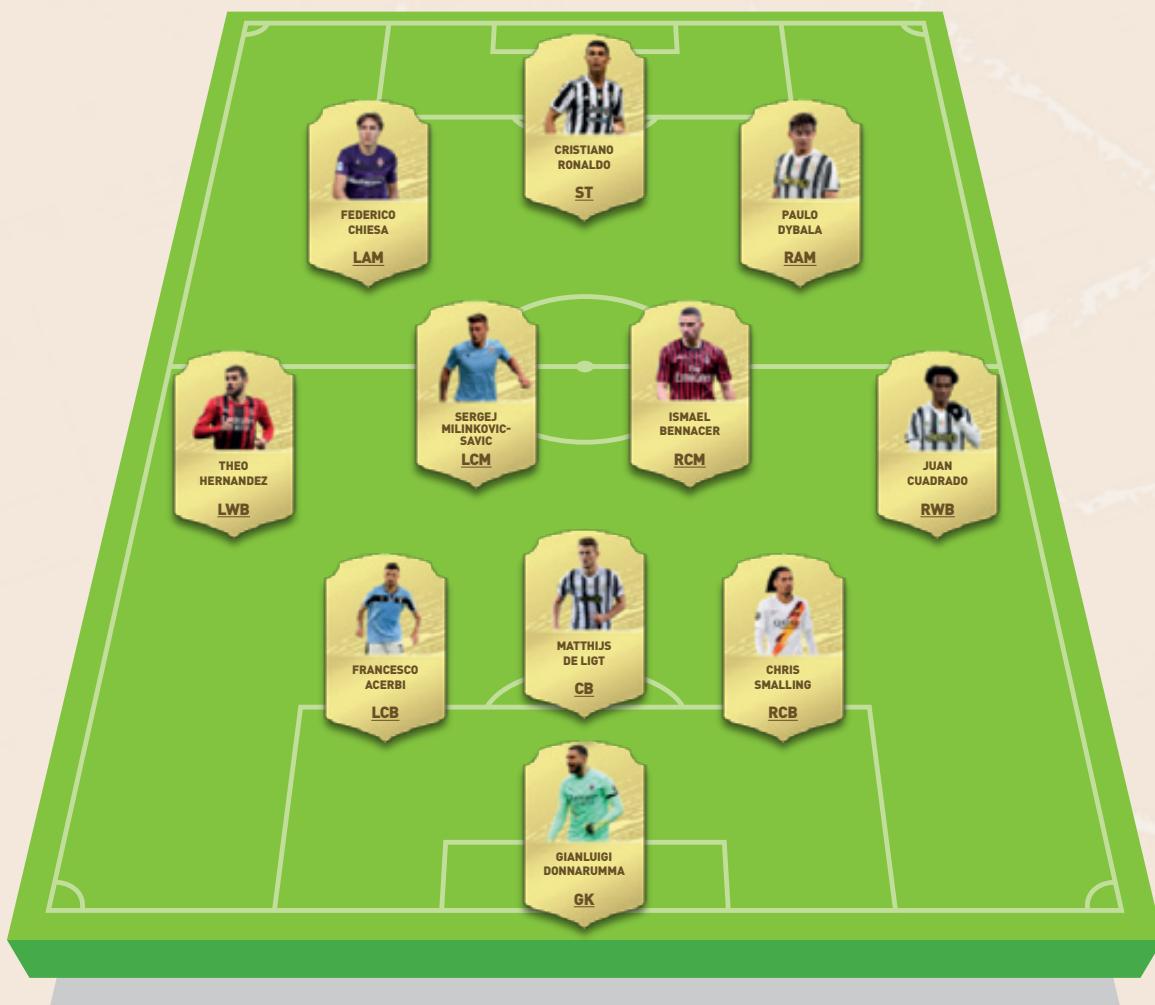
TABLE 5

Top 5 players of each position in Serie A 2019/20

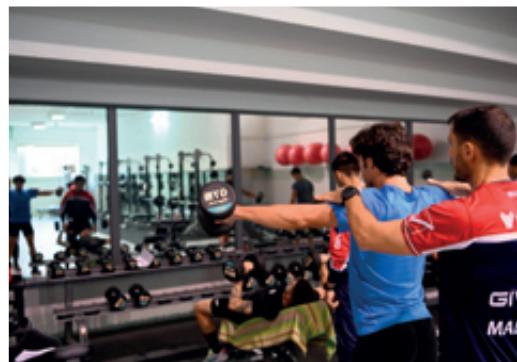
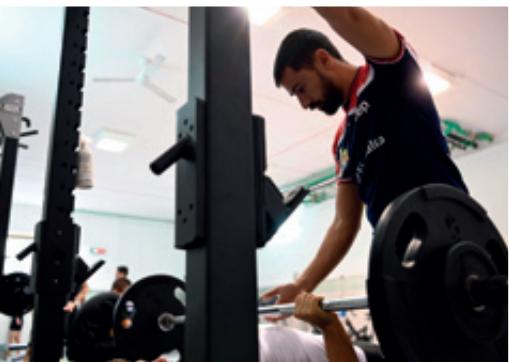
GK	CB	LCB	RCB	WB	CM	AM	ST
BERISHA (SPAL)	SMALLING (ROMA)	ACERBI (LAZIO)		CUADRADO J. (JUVENTUS)	MILIN.-SAVIC S. (LAZIO)	C. RONALDO (JUVENTUS)	C. RONALDO (JUVENTUS)
DONNARUMMA G. (A.C. MILAN)	DE LIGT (JUVENTUS)	DE LIGT (JUVENTUS)		HERNANDEZ (A.C. MILAN)	ZIELINSKI (NAPOLI)	DYBALA (JUVENTUS)	DZEKO (ROMA)
MUSSO (UDINESE)	ACERBI (LAZIO)	DJIMSIKI (ATALANTA)		KULUSEVSKI (PARMA)	BENNACER (A.C. MILAN)	CHIESA (FIORENTINA)	CAPUTO (SASSUOLO)
DRAGOWSKI (FIORENTINA)	MANOLAS (NAPOLI)	SMALLING (ROMA)		LAZOVIC (HELLAS VERONA)	FABIAN RUIZ (NAPOLI)	ORSOLINI (BOLOGNA)	BELOTTI (TORINO)
GABRIEL (LECCE)	MARLON (SASSUOLO)	BRUNO ALVES (PARMA)		ORSOLINI (BOLOGNA)	LOCATELLI (SASSUOLO)	INSIGNE L. (NAPOLI)	ILICIC (ATALANTA)

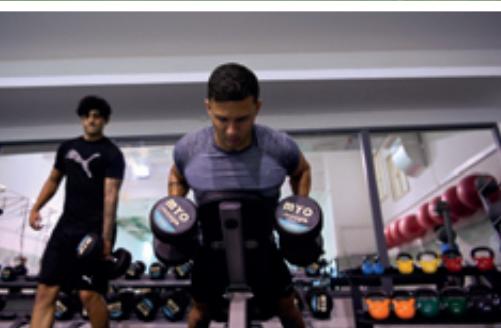
FIGURE 2

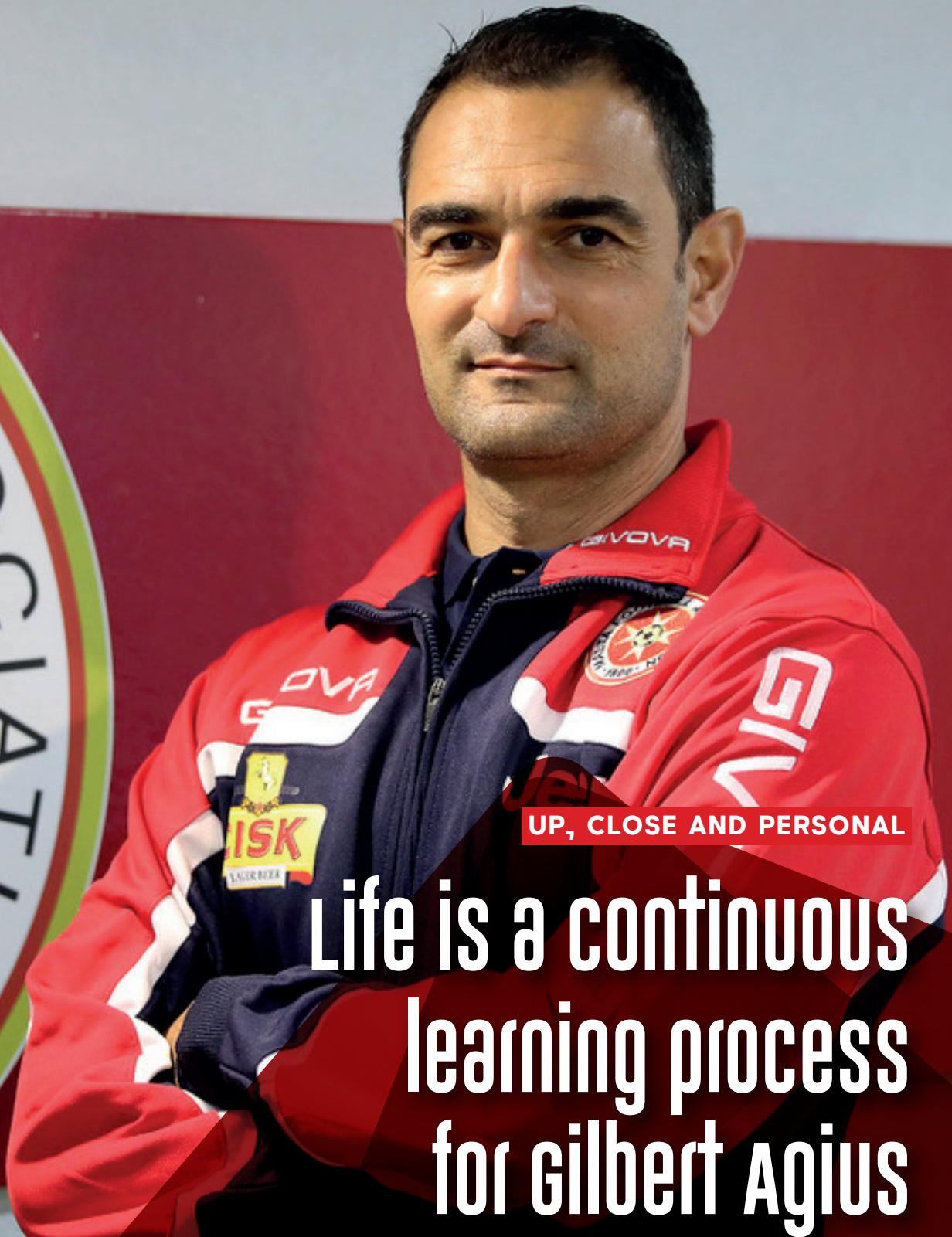
Best XI – players most suitable for 3-4-3 system



all access







UP, CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Life is a continuous learning process for Gilbert Agius

After winning all club and individual honours in Maltese football as well as earning 120 caps for the national team during a remarkable career spanning over 24 years, Gilbert Agius has been making a name for himself as a football coach. Since March, the former Malta captain has been a key member of the Malta FA's technical sector after being appointed coach of the national under-21 team. In this interview with **Kevin Azzopardi**, Agius, 47, speaks about his passion for football, his willingness to share his experience and knowledge with young players, and his motivation to keep evolving as a coach.



“WHEN I WAS YOUNG, I ALWAYS ASPIRED TO PLAY FOR THE NATIONAL TEAM AND I'M PROUD TO HAVE MADE 120 APPEARANCES FOR MY COUNTRY. NEEDLESS TO SAY, THERE WERE DIFFICULT MOMENTS BECAUSE WE ARE A SMALL COUNTRY BUT I WAS ALSO INVOLVED IN SOME MEMORABLE GAMES AND COMPETITIONS, LIKE WHEN WE BEAT HUNGARY (2-1) AND DREW WITH TURKEY (2-2) AT HOME”

Football has been a big part of your life from a very young age. What enticed you to the Beautiful Game?

You are born with it. From a very young age, I always remember myself playing football, with my brother and my friends, on the streets of Valletta. Naturally, the influence of my father, who was a footballer himself and we used to follow him as a family, was also a contributing factor.

You have had a long and very successful career as a football player. Looking back, what were the highest points and other unforgettable moments from your career both at club and international level...

I enjoyed a long career, having made my senior debut for Valletta at the age of 16 and continued playing for the club until I was 38, apart from a short stint with Pisa in Italy. At the very start and towards the end of my career, I had spells with two Gozitan clubs – Victoria Hotspurs and Xewkija Tigers.

I've also had the privilege of playing 120 matches for the national team, and I think the domestic honours

I've won are indicative of a very satisfactory career. I don't really like to single out a particular season or honour because I prefer to look at my career in a holistic manner with all the ups and downs.

Of course, there are some very special moments. I mean winning the MFA Footballer of the Year award three times is a nice achievement like all the trophies I've won with the only Maltese club I've played for in my career.

There are also those one-off competitions that have been held only once so far, like the Centenary Cup and the National League 100th Anniversary Cup. I was fortunate enough to form part of a strong team that managed to win these prestigious honours. It is these moments that contribute towards a positive career.

With the national team, you are always carrying the responsibility of representing a nation. When I was young, I always aspired to play for the national team and I'm proud to have made 120 appearances for my country. Needless to say, there were difficult moments because we are a small country but I was also involved in some memorable games and competitions, like when we beat Hungary (2-1) and drew with Turkey (2-2) at home. It was that period when we obtained five points in a qualifying competition, →



the best tally ever by the national team which has been equalled in the recently-concluded 2022 World Cup qualifying round.

Who have been the most influential persons in your career as a player?

Apart from my father, who had the biggest influence, you learn from many coaches. I have worked with several coaches, learning something from all of them because I have always believed in taking positive things from everyone, especially coaches and players, both those who are part of

your team as well as opposing players. I also had my international idols but the most important thing for me is to try and learn from everyone.

How important is the support of your family?

Working in football, especially here in Malta, requires a lot of sacrifice and this affects not only the player or coach but the entire family because our life revolves around the game of football. If you don't have this support, if the people around you don't understand and appreciate the sacrifices involved, it is difficult to advance in your career.

Working under so many coaches with different ideas and philosophies must have had an impact on your own formation as a coach...

There is no doubt about that. When you spend so many years playing football, with so many different players and coaches, you are exposed to a multitude of ideas. I've come across many coaches with completely different mentalities and philosophies... coaches who prefer to defend, others who like to attack, coaches who are tactically very good or have excellent man-management skills. All these experiences help you form your own ideas.

On a personal level, I have learnt from many different people, even from those coaches who may not have lived up to expectations in terms of success.

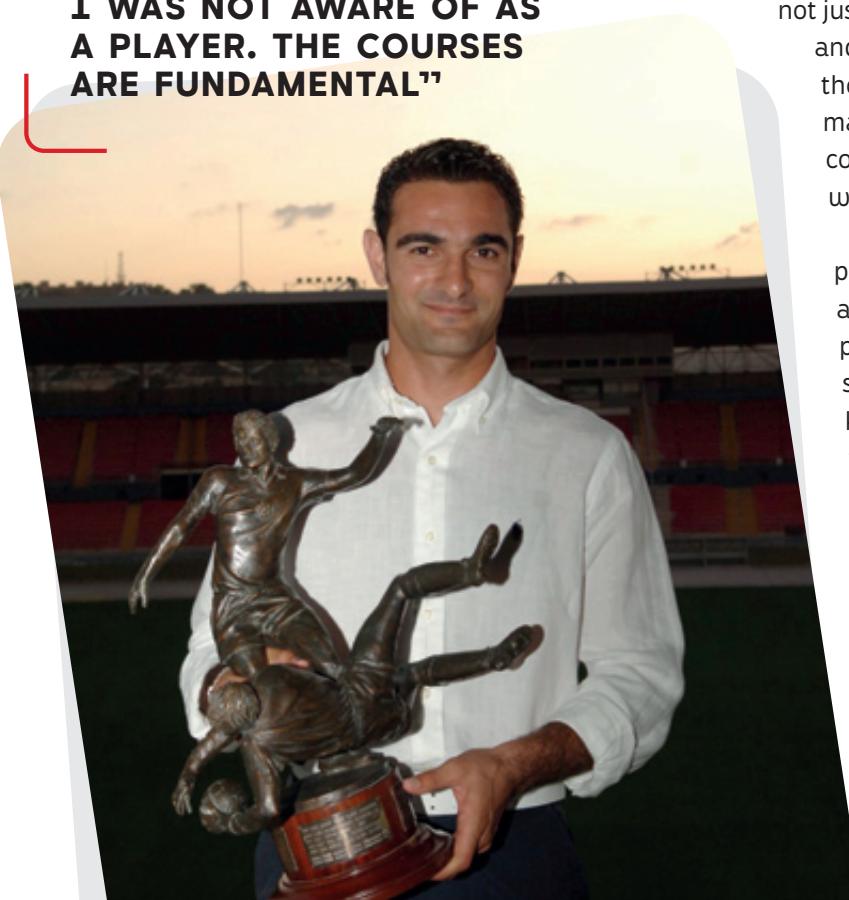
You began to show an interest in coaching while you were still active as a player. Take us through the early stages of your coaching education journey...

If memory serves me right, I must have been 32 years old... it was that period when Valletta FC were going through a rough patch. Dusan Fitzel, who was the national coach at the time, encouraged me to start coaching. I was still playing but Fitzel suggested that I should start doing the coaching courses. I had nothing to lose, I mean football is in my DNA. I remember I commenced the UEFA B →

course and I found it very interesting. I enjoyed doing it and it was a great learning experience for me. My first badge was the UEFA B as I was eligible to follow this course since I had already played over 25 matches for the national team.

After completing the UEFA B course, I immediately applied for the UEFA A but in the meantime I continued my playing career. When I was doing these courses, I began to look at football, even as a player, from a different perspective. This factor may have been a contributing factor in extending my playing career until the age of 38, and eventually until 40 as I spent the last two years playing in Gozo.

"I AM THE KIND OF PERSON WHO NEVER GETS TIRED OF FOOTBALL, I LIKE TO WATCH MATCHES AND STUDY. I SPEND A LOT OF TIME READING ABOUT FOOTBALL TO IMPROVE MY KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING SO MANY NEW THINGS THAT I WAS NOT AWARE OF AS A PLAYER. THE COURSES ARE FUNDAMENTAL"



There was a period when I was still playing and I already had the highest coaching qualification as a player and at times, I was more qualified than the coaches I had. Towards the end of my football career, I began to take greater interest in coaching and when I quit playing, in no time I found myself on the coach's bench.

Was your move into coaching a natural step in view of your long playing career? Also, in addition to your vast experience as a player, how have the coaching courses helped to enhance your coaching knowledge and management skills?

My view is that if you are a former player, if you have played football at a certain level, experienced the dressing room, and lived the moments and rollercoaster of emotions on the football pitch, you have that feel for the game, especially if you have played many matches. However, when I started my coaching badges, I began to understand and discover new things which I had not really paid attention to before.

Being a former player is no guarantee that you will make a good coach because coaching is not just about conducting the training session and preparing the tactical gameplan, there are many other aspects such as man management, leadership, how to conduct yourself, and how to solve issues within the team.

Personally, I believe I am in a better position to understand the players than arguably someone who has had no playing experience but I still had to study a lot to become a coach. I am the kind of person who never gets tired of football, I like to watch matches and study. I spend a lot of time reading about football to improve my knowledge, learning so many new things that I was not aware of as a player. The courses are fundamental. →

Gilbert Agius won the MFA Footballer of the Year award three times during his playing career.

When we did the UEFA Pro Licence, it was a step-up from the A and B courses... it was more intensive and very demanding but I'm pleased that I strive to put into practice all that I've learned from these courses in my daily work as a coach.

You have achieved success as a coach at club level in a relatively short period of time while recently you had the honour of being appointed coach of the Malta Under-21 team. How would you describe your coaching career so far?

During the period when I was assistant coach at Valletta, I was fortunate that the club had a strong team that won several honours. I also had a short spell as first-team coach of Valletta FC and I am glad that the team managed to win the championship that season.

When I was approached to become coach of the Malta Under-21 team, it was a surprise for me as to be honest I never imagined that I would be earmarked by the Malta FA to take up that prestigious position. I am very happy in this role.

I must also say that I've learned a lot during this short period of time. It is a completely different

proposition compared to club coaching. I'm honoured to be working under the guidance of very professional people and I fully support and endorse the playing philosophy for the national teams created by head coach Deuis Mangia which we are also constantly striving to implement with the Under-21 team.

I hope to keep learning so I can help our youngsters understand and adapt to the requirements of the national teams' blueprint. →

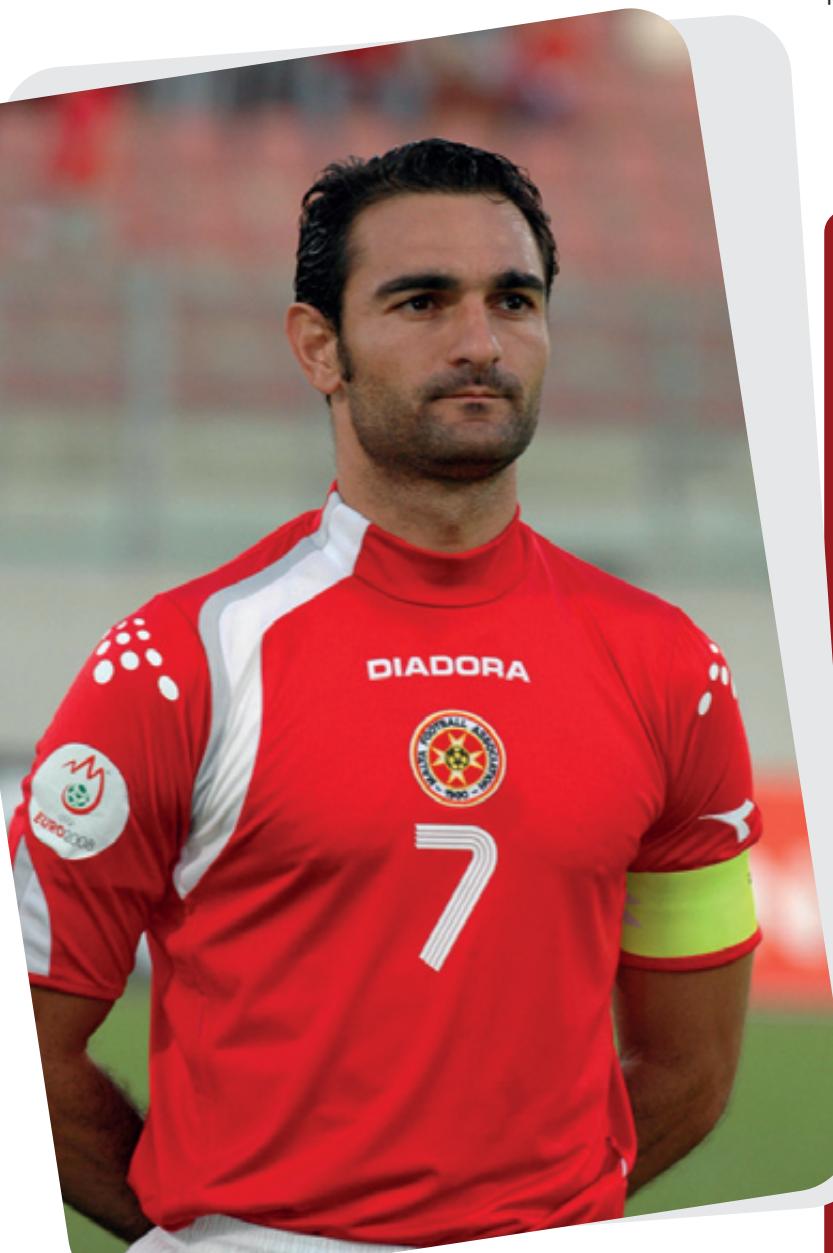
"WHEN I WAS APPROACHED TO BECOME COACH OF THE MALTA UNDER-21 TEAM, IT WAS A SURPRISE FOR ME AS TO BE HONEST I NEVER IMAGINED THAT I WOULD BE EARMARKED BY THE MALTA FA TO TAKE UP THAT PRESTIGIOUS POSITION. I AM VERY HAPPY IN THIS ROLE"

Gilbert Agius and the Malta U-21 squad celebrate the 2-0 win away to Northern Ireland in a UEFA U-21 qualifier played in November.



How do you look at the Malta FA Technical Centre's work in the field of coach education in view of the new initiatives, research efforts and the new courses being offered?

If I have the opportunity to do more courses, I will do them although at present there is no higher coaching qualification than the UEFA PRO. My objective is to keep learning and grow as a coach and if there are new courses and seminars I will certainly be interested in pursuing these learning opportunities offered by the Technical Centre.



What are your ambitions as a coach?

At present, I'm fully focused on my role as Under-21 coach and committed to fulfilling my duties and responsibilities in the best way possible. No-one knows what the future holds but my wish is that, one day, I will have the opportunity to experience coaching with a professional club overseas. I understand it's very difficult but you never know.

As I said, I am currently concentrating on my work as Under-21 coach, taking one step at a time. My contract covers the current UEFA Under-21 competition and the next one... this is what I am focusing on while striving to learn from my mentors at the Technical Centre and do my best to guide our up-and-coming talents to improve and eventually make the grade at senior level.

FAVOURITE PLAYER: When I was young, Diego Maradona was my idol. Growing up, I admired Alessandro Del Piero and Zinedine Zidane and, more recently, Lionel Messi.

FAVOURITE COACH: Pep Guardiola and Johann Cruyff. At present, I'm also following the work of Graham Potter, the head coach of Brighton & Hove Albion, and Valdas Dambrauskas, the young coach from Lithuania who is in charge of Hajduk Split.

FAVOURITE FOREIGN CLUB: Arsenal FC

FAVOURITE FOOD: Seafood

FAVOURITE MUSIC: Rock. I like various bands – Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, U2 and Eagles.

FAVOURITE HOLIDAY DESTINATION:
Probably Italy

ICONIC MATCH: Final of the 1982 World Cup when Italy beat Germany 3–1 in Spain. It was the first World Cup final I remember watching as a child. I was only eight. ■



Explaining the vision behind the Regional Hubs project

By Iuan Woods

The overriding objective of the Regional Hubs project is to introduce more young players to the football philosophy and style of play adopted by the Malta FA Technical Centre. Having the country's most promising youngsters train regularly together and adhering to this philosophy from a very young age will give them a headstart as they prepare for the demands of playing for the national teams (starting from the Under-15 bracket).

During the training sessions, we focus not only on the technical and tactical aspects of the game but also on the psychological and physical elements through regular sessions with Dr Bernice Sant (Sports Psychologist) and Dr Dorianne Caruana Bonnici (Nutrition).



SCOUTING PROCESS UNDER-14 (BORN 2008)



- At the start of July 2021, Regional Football Hubs coaches visited all local football nurseries to meet with the coaches and start to get a feel of the talent in the respective age groups. In total, the coaches made 76 visits to youth nurseries.
- Following these initial visits, an email was sent to all the nurseries asking for information about any upcoming matches involving their 2008 players. Based on the replies gathered, the Regional Football Hubs coaches took in a total of 108 matches (as of 10/10/2021).
- At every match, the coaching staff would observe the players, using an evaluation sheet to grade them on a number of criteria, namely – Technique, Insight, Attitude and Speed. Once all the data was collected, the coaching staff met to discuss their evaluation reports leading to the initial call-up of 39 players on the 26th August, 2021.
- As of 31st December, 27 training sessions were held for the U-14s (not including the Sports Psychology and Nutrition sessions). →



■ The combined capacity of players for the U-14 Hub 1 and Hub 2 is 50. The remaining 11 spots were filled in gradually as the coaches are monitoring the IFF Under-14 league to add more players after assessing them during these games. This process of selecting more players will continue throughout the season as the coaches will be watching more matches as well as maintaining regular contact with the club nursery coaches.

UNDER-12 AND UNDER-13 (BORN 2009 AND 2010)

■ The selection process for players born in 2009 and 2010 kicked off at the beginning of October.
■ During an information meeting, every nursery was paired with other nurseries and given a specific date to organise triangular tournaments at a venue of their choice.

- The Regional Football Hubs coaches then started the process of attending these three-team tournaments, which kicked-off on 5th October, 2021, whereby every team is watched by three coaches for approximately 50 minutes.
- An approximate total of 15 mini-tournaments were monitored to conclude phase one of the selection process.
- In the second phase, approximately 150 players (U-12 and U-13) were invited to play a number of games between themselves at the Centenary Stadium. From these matches, 104 players were selected to form the first U-12/13 Regional Hub selection.
- The coaches will continue to follow the local football festivals to ensure the ongoing scouting of the players. Training for the U-12 and U-13 hub players started in November and to date six sessions (per hub) have been held. ■



coach education

MALTA FA TECHNICAL CENTRE

**COACHING COURSES PLANNED
UNTIL SEASON 2023-24**

2021-2022

- **Combined Course UEFA C and UEFA B**
 - Commenced in September 2021
- **UEFA C Course** - February 2022
- **UEFA B Goalkeepers Course** - Commenced in December 2021
- **Football Fitness Coach Course** - January 2022
- **4 Grassroots Leaders Courses (replacing CYF)**
 - Commenced in December 2021
- **Match Analyst Course** - January 2022
- **Continuous Professional Development Sessions**
 - regular

2022-2023

- UEFA ELITE YOUTH A Course
- UEFA B Course
- 2 UEFA C Courses
- Goalkeeper Coach Course Level 1
- Youth Football Fitness Award
- 3 Grassroots Leader Courses
- Continuous Professional Development Sessions

2023-2024

- UEFA A Course
- UEFA B Course
- UEFA C Course
- Goalkeeper Coach Course Level 1
- Football Fitness Coach Course
- Match Analyst Course
- 3 Grassroots Leader Courses
- Continuous Professional Development Sessions

2023-2025

- UEFA PRO Course



Head Coach of National Teams Deuis Mangia

SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM

Head Coach Deuis Mangia
Assistant Coach Dauide Mazzotta
Assistant Coach Guillermo Giacomazzi
Goalkeepers Coach Mario Capece
Fitness Coach Luca Pagani
Fitness Coach Francesco Zanasi
Match Analyst Facundo Styk
Technical Co-ordinator Alessandro Zinnari

UNDER-21 & YOUTH NATIONAL TEAMS

Technical Co-ordinator Alessandro Zinnari

UNDER-21 NATIONAL TEAM

Coach Gilbert Agius
Assistant Coach Francesco Macri
Goalkeepers Coach Charles Sciberras
Fitness Coach Karl Attard
Match Analyst Liam Sheridan

UNDER-18 NATIONAL TEAM

Coach Andrea Tedesco
Assistant Coach Stefano Grima
Goalkeepers Coach Andrew Hogg
Fitness Coach Angelo Petrelli
Match Analyst & Assistant Coach
Giuseppe Di Santo

UNDER-17 NATIONAL TEAM

Coach Iuan Woods
Assistant Coach Andrea Vella
Assistant Coach Herman Bugeja
Goalkeepers Coach Sam Bartolo
Fitness Coach Luca Pagani
Fitness Coach Emerson Farrugia

UNDER-16 NATIONAL TEAM

Coach Andrea Vella
Assistant Coach Herman Bugeja
Assistant Coach Giuseppe Di Santo
Goalkeepers Coach Sam Bartolo
Fitness Coach Angelo Petrelli
Fitness Coach Emerson Farrugia

UNDER-15 NATIONAL TEAM

Coach Francesco Macri
Assistant Coach Carmel Xerri
Goalkeepers Coach Charles Sciberras
Fitness Coach Karl Attard

OUR COACHING TEAM

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Head of Women's Football Pierre Brincat

SENIOR WOMEN'S NATIONAL TEAM

Head Coach Mark Gatt
Assistant Coach Dionne Tonna
Goalkeepers Coach Roger Camilleri
Fitness Coach Gregory Degabriele
Match Analyst Roger Camilleri

UNDER-19 NATIONAL TEAM

Coach Frank Schembri
Assistant Coach Mandy Debono
Goalkeepers Coach Michelle Zahra
Fitness Coach Luke Borg
Match Analyst Roger Camilleri

UNDER-16 NATIONAL TEAM

Coach Kathleen Saliba
Assistant Coach Jeffrey Fenech
Goalkeepers Coach Jason Galea
Fitness Coach Luke Borg

FUTSAL

Head of Futsal Mark Marlow

SENIOR NATIONAL TEAM

Head Coach Zeljko Anicic
Assistant Coach Carlo Scicluna
Goalkeepers Coach Nicholas Farrugia
Fitness Coach Ognjen Milicevic
Match Analyst Keith Borg

UNDER-17 NATIONAL TEAM

Head Coach Carlo Scicluna
Assistant Coach Euerton da Silua
Goalkeepers Coach Nicholas Farrugia

UNDER-16 NATIONAL TEAM

Head Coach Euerton da Silua
Assistant Coach Melvin Borg
Goalkeepers Coach Nicholas Farrugia

INHOBB IL-FUTBOL FOUNDATION

REGIONAL HUBS

Head of Grassroots Development
Iuan Woods
Regional Hubs Co-ordinator
Silvio Vella
Head Coach Vince Galea
Head Coach Renzo Kerr Cumbo
Assistant Coach Stefan Giglio
Assistant Coach Charles Sciberras
Goalkeepers Coach Julian Mallia
Goalkeepers Coach Simon Agius
Fitness Coach Joel Winters
Fitness Coach Kevin Hamza Magro

UNDER-13 GIRLS ACADEMY

Coach Karen Heneghan
Assistant Coach Clint Tabone
Goalkeepers Coach Janice Xuereb
Fitness Coach Luke Borg

UNDER-15 FUTSAL ACADEMY

Head Coach Academy Zeljko Anicic
Team Coordinator Beppe Barone
Lead Coach Mark Zammit
Assistant Coach Carl Azzopardi
Goalkeepers Coach
Alejandro Garcia Melero

UNDER-13 FUTSAL ACADEMY

Head Coach Academy Zeljko Anicic
Team Coordinator Beppe Barone
Lead Coach Zvezdan Vukovic
Assistant Coach Michael Borg
Goalkeepers Coach
Alejandro Garcia Melero



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