

Managing and coaching B (U23) football team

Igor Tolić



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Competition in Croatia



- 2. HNL (2. Croatian football league) - second tier of Croatian football
- Promotion to 1. HNL
- Highly competitive league of 18 teams, 34 rounds
- Average age in the league is 24 years
- 3 B (U23) teams in the league
 - GNK Dinamo B, HNK Hajduk B and NK Osijek B
- Max. 4 players age between 21 - 23 in B team
- Average age in B (U23) teams - 20 years

B (U23 team) as significant value generator



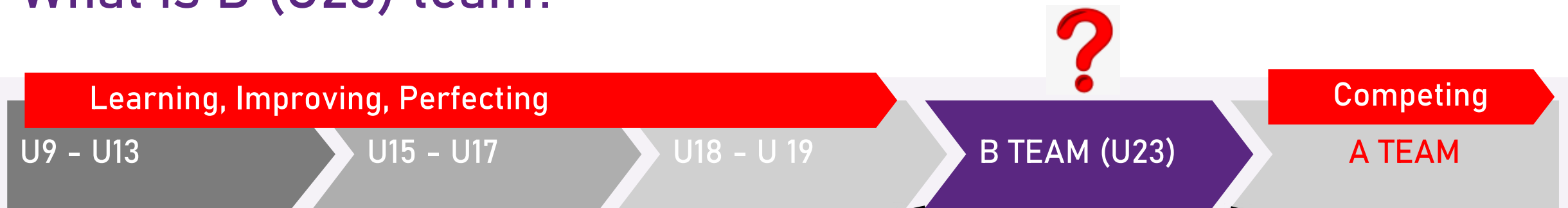
For Croatian national teams

- Croatia U19 – 17/22 players are playing for B teams
- Croatia U21 – 14/22 players played significant time in B teams

For clubs

- Over 50 mil € of income for 1. HNL teams in last 2 years
- Players like:
 - Olmo and Gvardiol RB Leipzig,
 - Šutalo Atalanta BC,
 - Palaversa Man City,
 - Bradarić LOSC Lille

What is B (U23) team?



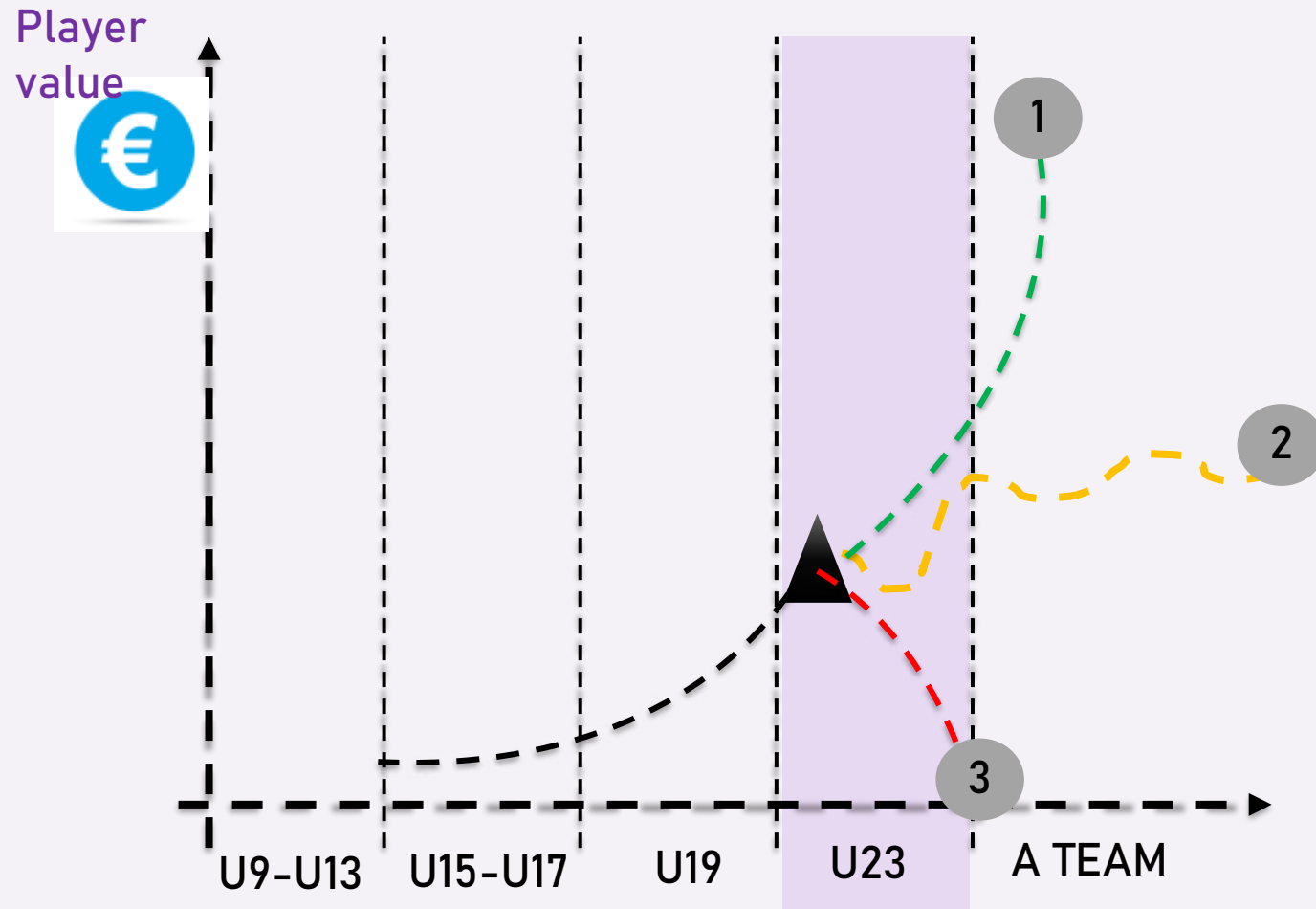
- Group of players age 18-23
- Too old for Academy, too young for A Team
- Floating between A team and the Academy
- End of academy period and entering highly competitive senior environment
- What is next for the players?

What do we do with the human potential?



- “We prepare them to become football players, but we know only 1% will become Premier League players.
- I saw that 67% of people who had a contract at the top clubs between 16-20 don't play football any more at the age of 21. It's absolutely unbelievable.
- “We have a job to do there to keep these people alive. The majority know they will not make it and have to live with this idea, this dream that doesn't happen. That's where the problem lies.”

Potential and Investment



Three possible scenarios

1. Exponential growth

2. Sustainable development

3. A new path in life

Management strategies by Club for B (U23) team



Purpose of the B team	„Back up for A team”	“Academy's Top Product”
Environment	Short term goals and frequent change of expectations	Long term goals, clear expectations
Managing Style	Top-down control	Top-down guidance of bottom-up process
Coaching Style	Players are like robots	Players make decisions guided by clear communication principles
Training style	Training sessions as A team	Improving communication, decision making and execution of decisions
Playing style	Playing principles and sub principles interpreted by A team head coach	Playing principles and sub principles developed in the Academy
Players motivated by:	Fear Greed Social proof Mistake as criterium for rejection and expulsion	Desire to improve Mistake as a learning opportunity No dropouts – everyone has a purpose

Management and coaching principles to follow

1. Overload principle

2. Competence precedes consciousness

3. Reference thinking of a coach

4. Situation coaching

5. Reference coaching

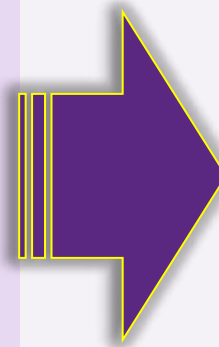
6. Self-regulating player and team



1. Overload principle

What to do

- Overload of football and non-football situations
- Gradual development of overload (step by step)



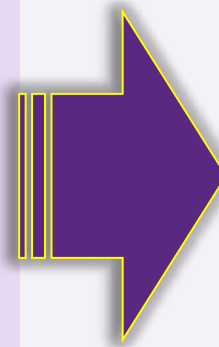
Desired outcome

- Adaptation to new created situations
- Survival of football talent
- Prevention of injuries

2. Competence precedes consciousness

What to do

- Let the players experience first and adapt to the new situation



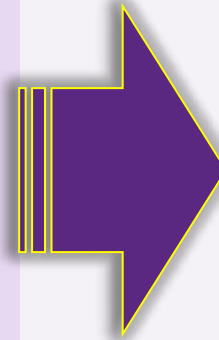
Desired outcome

- Development without conscious thoughts
- Players do not think about the situation, they just solve it

3. Reference thinking of a coach

What to do

- Theorise the 'situation – action' patterns of players
- Criticise your own references for, in and after trainings and games



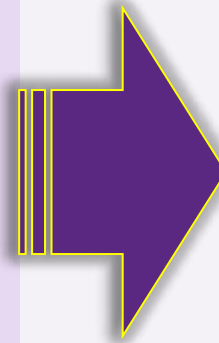
Desired outcome

- Better understanding of 'situation – action' patterns
- Developing football competence

4. Situation coaching

What to do

- Top-down create or use situations to provoke behaviour



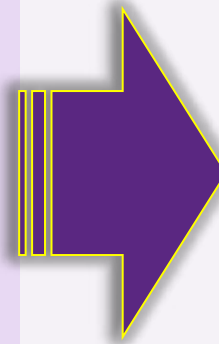
Desired outcome

- (In)competent behavior adaptation in designed situation

5. Reference coaching

What to do

- Asking questions after experiencing situations



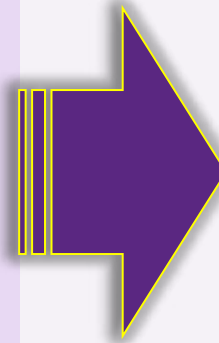
Desired outcome

- Information transferred into player's brain
- Players understanding of their (in)competent behavior

6. Self-regulating player and team

What to do

- Transfer football reference thinking of a coach to the players



Desired outcome

- Player regulating their own behaviour
- Player regulating teammates behaviour
- Self-regulating team will emerge

At the end (or beginning)

1. Football is a player's sport
2. Players are human beings not robots
3. Players make players better
4. Experience is nothing without reflection and evaluation
5. Feedback and critique are crucial for development

Thank you!