

6 October 2015

FORMER GERMAN WORLD CUP WINNER WARNS CLUBS TO INVEST IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, NOT JUST RELY ON BUYING STARS

Stars including Lothar Matthäus, Frank Rijkaard and Clarence Seedorf outline views on youth development, the business of football, what it takes to succeed and more

Former players were speaking at the Aspire Academy Global Summit on Football Performance and Science and ASPIRE4SPORT gala dinner

At a prestigious gala dinner last night to celebrate the 2015 Aspire Academy Global Summit on Football Performance and Science in Berlin, some of the world's greatest footballing names exchanged opinions on different approaches to youth development adopted around the world.

In front of an audience of distinguished coaching and performance experts, Lothar Matthäus, World Footballer of the Year, former Captain of Germany and World Cup winner discussed a broad range of issues with stars Frank Rijkaard, Clarence Seedorf and Johan Cruyff including youth development, identifying young talent and the level of investment in the game.

Describing the differences in youth development between the German and English game in Germany, Matthäus said: "Young players in Germany get the chance to play. In England money is spent to bring players from outside, but in Germany we build players. It's different, in England as the young English players find it difficult to play for the big clubs. But at German clubs it's possible (for them)."

He also shared some compelling views on the vital difference talent on the one hand, and hard won success achieved through commitment and dedication. Describing what it takes to succeed, he said: "You can see it, yes. But you never know what's going to happen ten years later. When you work in football and are involved in the game for a long time you can see the talent, but it's not just that - power and discipline are important alongside talent. You have to work every day, enjoy and love the sport. That brings the rest."

Matthäus was one of four global legends of the game honoured on stage at event that closed the first day of the Aspire Academy Global Summit on Football Performance and Science. Director General of the Aspire Academy, Ivan Bravo, Vice President of the Aspire Zone Foundation Tariq Al-Naama and Qatar's Ambassador to Germany, Abdulrahman bin Mohammed Al Khulafi thanked Rijkaard, Matthäus, Seedorf and Johan Cruyff on stage for supporting the Aspire Global Summit.

Other highlights from the stars' discussion included FC Barcelona and Dutch legend Frank Rijkaard sharing his perspective on the controversial clash with Rudi Völler in the 1990 World Cup and the contrition he feels now: "The tournament in '90 has haunted me all of my life. Things happen in sport - success and bad moments. If I could go back and cancel the whole situation I would. I wish it had never happened, but that's life and the emotion that you have in football."

In addition, AC Milan favourite and the only player to win the Champions League as a player with three separate clubs, Clarence Seedorf described his commitment to his role as UEFA Ambassador by saying: "The business of football is going well but what is lacking at the moment is values. There is a responsibility to change and to show the young how we behave, by leading by example. I'm seeing events like today's (Aspire Academy Global Summit) all wanting to improve and add positive things to football."

During the first day, several of the game's greatest players and managers shared the benefit of their experience and participated in Star Chats with groups of coaching professionals and technical experts.

Former German international Stefan Effenberg shared perspectives on playing in the Middle East and Borussia Dortmund Manager Thomas Tuchel who described the virtue of humility in the face of defeat when describing his side's 5 - 1 defeat to Bayern Munich last weekend.

During the second day, legendary Dutch footballer and manager Johan Cruyff shared his thoughts on youth development and his philosophy for bringing young players into the game during a wide-ranging discussion with Barcelona based football writer Graham Hunter.

He said: "When we were young you had to play in the street and young people can't do that anymore. The surface was bad and if you fell down you would hurt yourself, so you learnt not to fall over. For small players they quickly understand they've got to be technically better than the others, if they are too slow the bigger players will knock them over. These sorts of things help players think.

"The problem today is that a lot of coaches think for the players. You have to put something in front of the players that they have to think about. As soon as you do something you don't know how to do or aren't capable of, you get better. For example, if you're right footed learn to play with the left, you will make mistakes but you will learn.

"Youth Development is one of the most important things, because there is a relationship with the fans (and players) because they don't just see them play in the first team, but supporters have watched them at all levels and have a relationship with them. Even if he doesn't make it as a player then you've got an ambassador for life for the club and that's what it is all about. You need to enjoy yourself. Everyone wants to win, but there are 20 clubs and only one champion."

Also today, Mexico legend Jorge Campos, Argentina's Juan Sebastian Veron and Spaniard Gaizka Mendieta joined Jawid Bunyadi, Managing Director of World Sport Company and Rodrigo Lopez, CEO of GWM to announce that the first ever World Legends Cup will be held in Mexico in 2017.

First launched at ASPIRE4SPORT in Paris in 2014, it was confirmed in Berlin today that the tournament will be held in four different cities in Mexico, across four different stadiums and include 12 teams from the around the world. These are: Germany, England, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, USA, Brazil, Argentina, Japan, South Africa and the hosts Mexico.

Bringing together some of the game's greatest names, the two week tournament will be played out in four groups of three, with the top two from each group proceeding to the knock-out phase. Each game will be 60 minutes long, split into two halves of 30 minutes. Countries will field full 11-a-side teams with all of the legends involved aged between 35 and 45-years-old to ensure a competitive edge.

Charity will be at the heart of the World Legends Cup and former Spain international Mendieta explained that this was a core reason for his involvement, along with the opportunity of getting his boots back and playing again. "It's a great opportunity to get footballers again on the pitch," he said. "A unique opportunity to play in a tournament like the World Cup which has a variety of countries. The relationships between the players goes beyond the pitch.

"A significant part of the project is the charity aspect and giving back to society. Part of the World Cup is ensuring that it leaves a legacy wherever it's being held and we will work hard to make sure that happens here too.

"It's an honour to be a part of this project and I hope to play. I have been in planning meetings for over a year about this and it is great to finally make it happen and be able to say that it's going to happen. Thanks go to Mexico for helping us make this a real thing and we look forward to welcoming everyone to Mexico."

Set to be broadcast around the globe, the World Legends Cup will be held every two years and discussions are already underway with potential host cities for 2019 and 2021. The full list of players and exact dates of the tournament will be announced in Central America before the end of the year.

The quality participants and attendees at the Aspire Academy Global Summit on Football Performance and Science reflects Qatar's growing influence and importance on the global sports stage and Aspire Academy's success in gathering together the world's top sports leaders to help improve football around the World.

A series of announcements on Monday further highlighted the growing profile and importance of the event as a fixture in the sports industry event calendar. These included:

- An announcement by Victoriano Melero, President of the **French Football Federation (FFF)** and Mansoor Al Ansari, General Secretary of the **Qatar Football Association (QFA)** who discussed closer cooperation between both organisations in terms of youth development, training techniques and technical research.
- A new partnership signed between Spanish football club **Cultural y Deportiva Leonesa** and global youth and sports charity **Save the Dream** to agree a series of key principles and commitments to promote the values of sport in local schools, and host activities designed to empower young people and the local community.
- A new agreement between **Aspire Academy** and the **International Centre for Sport Security (ICSS)** to empower young athletes through the values of sport and to improve access to sport for young children.

Also taking place during the two days is the **ASPIRE4SPORT** Exhibition, a business-to-business exhibition designed to create a wide range of networking opportunities for European and Qatari sports industry professionals. A large number of Qatari and Middle Eastern government organisations and companies attended the event to meet representatives from across Europe's leading sports business sectors including construction, sports medicine, logistics, event management, communication and technology

The two days brought together 198 European businesses, with Monday staging 242 B2B meetings and Tuesday seeing 427 held. There were 19 exhibitors from Qatar and 64 Qatari institutions present across the event.

This year's event in Berlin was held after Aspire Academy hosted the first edition in Paris in 2014. During that event, a worldwide platform called 'Aspire in the World Fellows' was launched, creating a unique community of football experts to share their knowledge and work together in order to improve football. More than 150 leading youth coaches and performance specialists involved with the programme are in Berlin to share knowledge and expertise from around the world, develop recommendations for training methodologies and support the management of young footballers to enhance their psychological and physical performance.

With some of the biggest names in football and leaders from the sports industry in attendance, the event provides the ideal setting for decision makers to meet, share ideas and approaches that pave the way for future collaboration.

The event closes today with a final workshop and wrapping-up of the topics covered over the last 48 hours.

- Ends -

Notes to editors

Programme information:

The full programme for the event can be seen at: www.aspire4sport.com

Location:

Westhafen Event & Convention Center | Westhafenstr. 1 | D-13353 Berlin

About Aspire Academy:

Since opening its doors in 2004, Aspire Academy for Sports Excellence has become one of the foremost national sports academies in the world. Working as part of the Aspire Zone Foundation - an international sport destination - Aspire Academy is at the heart of a sporting revolution currently taking place in Qatar and around the region. The Academy is conceiving, promoting and implementing game-changing excellence in sports training and elite athlete development that is enabling an entire generation of talented, disciplined and committed individuals, both Qataris and internationals to pursue their sports dreams. Together with the other members of the Aspire Zone Foundation (Aspire Logistics and ASPETAR Qatar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital), the Aspire Academy is developing sports champions, promoting healthy lifestyles and galvanizing the sports economy of today, and the future.

www.aspire.qa