



SIR TREVOR BROOKING CBE

Reflection is natural at the turning of the calendar year. Those involved in coaching at all levels of the game have a chance to review their own and their team's progress, as well as plotting the inevitable challenges that lie ahead.

In my own review of the year the word 'success' features throughout. From our qualification for next year's World Cup in South Africa, to our Women's U19s side's success in the European Championship; 2009 has been a year of progress for all of our national teams.

Our 5-1 victory over Croatia at Wembley in September capped a fine campaign for the Men's Senior team, ensuring qualification for the Finals with two games to spare. We can all now look forward to 2010 with real optimism.

Hope Powell's Women's team and Stuart Pearce's Men's U21 side set the precedent for all of our development teams, reaching the Finals of their respective European tournaments. It is 24 years since our Women's side have appeared in a European Final and the series of victories over Russia, Finland and Holland show the progress and development of our Women's squad. The terrific run to the Final against Germany is testament to the hard work of Hope, her backroom staff and all the players. The success of Mo Marley's Women's U19 side, who made history with their success at the European Championship in Belarus, further underlines the good health of our Female game.

It was Germany, again, who were our opponents in the Final of the Men's U21 European Championships back in June. Although things didn't go our way in the Final, playing in every round of the tournament will ensure Stuart Pearce's players and staff come back richer in experience, armed with the knowledge of what is necessary to succeed in tournament football in the future.

Success and our Men's development teams have gone hand in hand in 2009; the U19s reaching the European Finals in Ukraine and our U16s winning both the Montaigu and Nordic tournaments were amongst the highlights. However, the hard work in developing young players for the future game must continue, so many thanks to all club coaches for their contributions in developing young players for our national sides.

Preparing a generation of young players who are capable of excelling at the top level of the game is a long-term project. Our research across all the elite age groups shows the game is getting quicker, defences are more congested and compact, and creativity and imagination are essential in the final third in order to score. We need a body of coaches working with young players, both in the grassroots and elite game, who understand the changing game and have the vision to create practices which challenge our young players accordingly.

The new FA Youth Awards: Module One 'Developing the Environment' and Module Two 'Developing the Practice' aim to help coaches do just that. Understanding how our young players learn the game; the environment necessary for learning to happen; and the benefits of different types of practice are all covered in these two modules. (Practice types and their benefits are covered in this issue's feature (see page 16-19)). The feedback received from both modules has been excellent and with Module Three forthcoming, it is an exciting period for youth coaching in this country.

Coaching 1million children as part of The FA Tesco Skills Programme is further evidence of success in our development of youth coaching. The ninety coaches who are working throughout the country continue to support the grassroots game in schools, charter standard clubs and FA Skills Centres; giving all children in the 5-11 age range an opportunity to have a positive experience of learning to play the game.

Looking ahead to 2010 we must continue to build on our successes. The prestige and exposure that comes with the World Cup Finals will help us attract more people to enjoy our national game. Whether it is drawing more young players into our teams or volunteers into our clubs, the opportunities that come with the showpiece in South Africa are not to be missed.

Outlining our vision on the development of youth football is also imminent. Our team of national coaches have been working hard on producing a coaching resource and technical guide to support all those working with young players. We believe this will prove to be an invaluable document as we continue to strive to improve the standards of coaching at every level of the game.

Which leaves me to say a big 'thank-you' to you all for your invaluable contributions to the development of coaching in this country. The enthusiasm and endeavour of all the coaches and volunteers I see never ceases to amaze me. Whether it is with your U7s team once a week on the local park, or those working in coaching full time, your contribution is essential to our vision.

All the best for the New Year, keep up the good work and here's to a successful 2010.

Sir Trevor Brooking CBE
Director of Football Development
The FA