

# The Youth Development Model in Belgium



**Michel SABLON**

**Technical  
Director**

Royal Belgian FA  
FA of Singapore

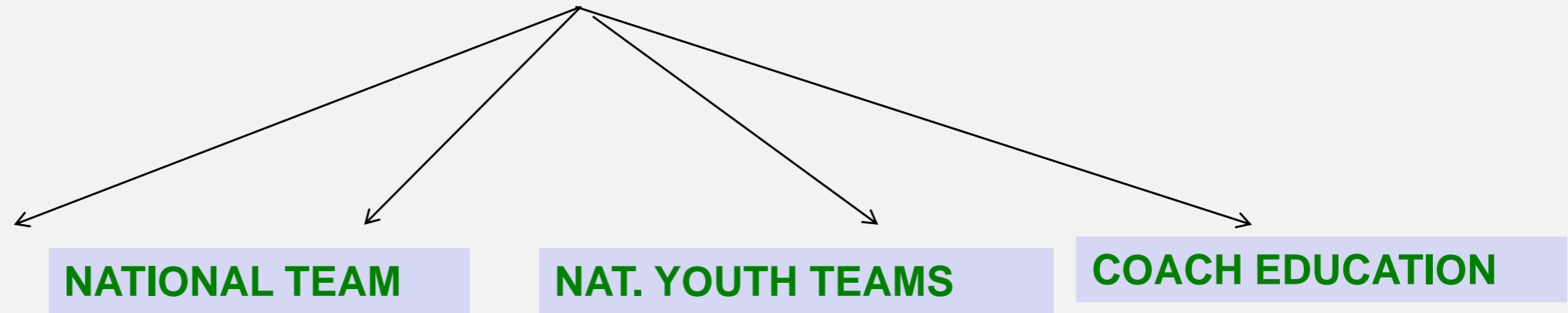


# The Diagnosis



Drawing up the balance after EURO 2000

## SCRATCHING JUDGEMENT !!



- To many older players and foreigners.
- No youth input

Eliminated in First Round of EURO 2000

UEFA Ranking -17yr & -19yrs between 25 - 30

Old fashioned  
No Regulations



# Development of a New Vision

Need for a **DEEP – SEATED VISION** based on a holistic approach !!



Where are we now ?

What do we want to achieve ?

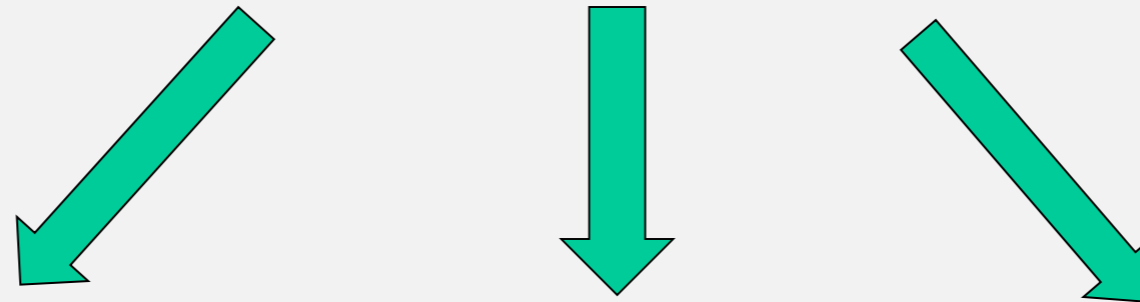
If you don't know where you are going to , you will end up somewhere else !

**“Vision without action is a dream.  
Action without vision is simply passing the time.  
Action with vision is making a positive difference !”**

J.Barker



# Mission Statement



**Enhance  
youth development**

**Improve the  
development of  
Clubs Elite Youth  
+  
*Nat. Youth Teams***

**Coach Education**

**Mission Statement : The Belgian FA is implementing a long term youth education program with focus on the individual development of the player , managed by high qualified coaches with appropriate UEFA – licenses at all levels.**



# Strategic Plan for Youth Development

## 1. Analysis of the current competition formats



Do the competitions come up to the expectations of the stakeholders ?

*(players, coaches, parents , referees, clubs , school authorities, tc.)*



Scientific study by a university on actual competitions and proposal for new competitions formats based on the requirements of all stakeholders.



Working group youth coaches making football SWOT analysis



Decision making process: Dpt. Regulations - National and regional leagues

-

Technical Committee - Exco (final approval) !!



# Strategic Plan for Youth Development

2. Analysis of the physical efforts in youth age-categories in accordance with the age-related physical abilities.

(= Measuring )



Are the actual competition games in harmony with the physical abilities of the children in the different age groups.

( = Comparing ! )



Scientific study with 2 universities + report on the different types & intensities of efforts.



Filtering by a working group of youth coaches and specialists on Physical Education + Evaluation + Recommendations



Decision making process : Dpt. Regulations-National and regional leagues-

Technical Committee - Exco (final approval) !!



# Strategic Plan for Youth Development

## 3. Analysis of the formats of the games

“ Do the current playing systems enhance the players’ technical and tactical skills “



Scientific study with a university on the different types of **small sided games**

2 <> 2 - 5 <> 5 - 7 <> 7 - 8 <> 8 - 9 <> 9 - 11 <> 11



Recording & analysing 1500 hours of games in the different types +  
Comparison with leading countries for youth development in Europe



Conclusions discussed in working groups composed of Youth Coaches



Decision making process : Dpt. Regulations-National and regional leagues -  
Technical Committee - Exco (final approval) !!





# Strategic Plan for Youth Development

## RESULTS OF ANALYSES

= Composing Global Youth Development Plan



### Discussion in Plenary Group :

- Team of experts ( 19 ) : Nat. Coaches, Professional Coaches, University Professors
- Instructors Coach Education ( 18 )
- Instructors Topsport centres ( 3 )
- Regional Coaches ( 5 )
- Academies ( 20 )
- Individual youth educators ( 11 )
- Directors of Youth



Subjects divided into sections + conclusions to compose the  
Final Youth Development plan



Verification by the group leaders → FINAL VERSION



Decision making process : Dpt. Regulations-National and  
regional league s-  
Technical Committee - Exco (final approval) !!

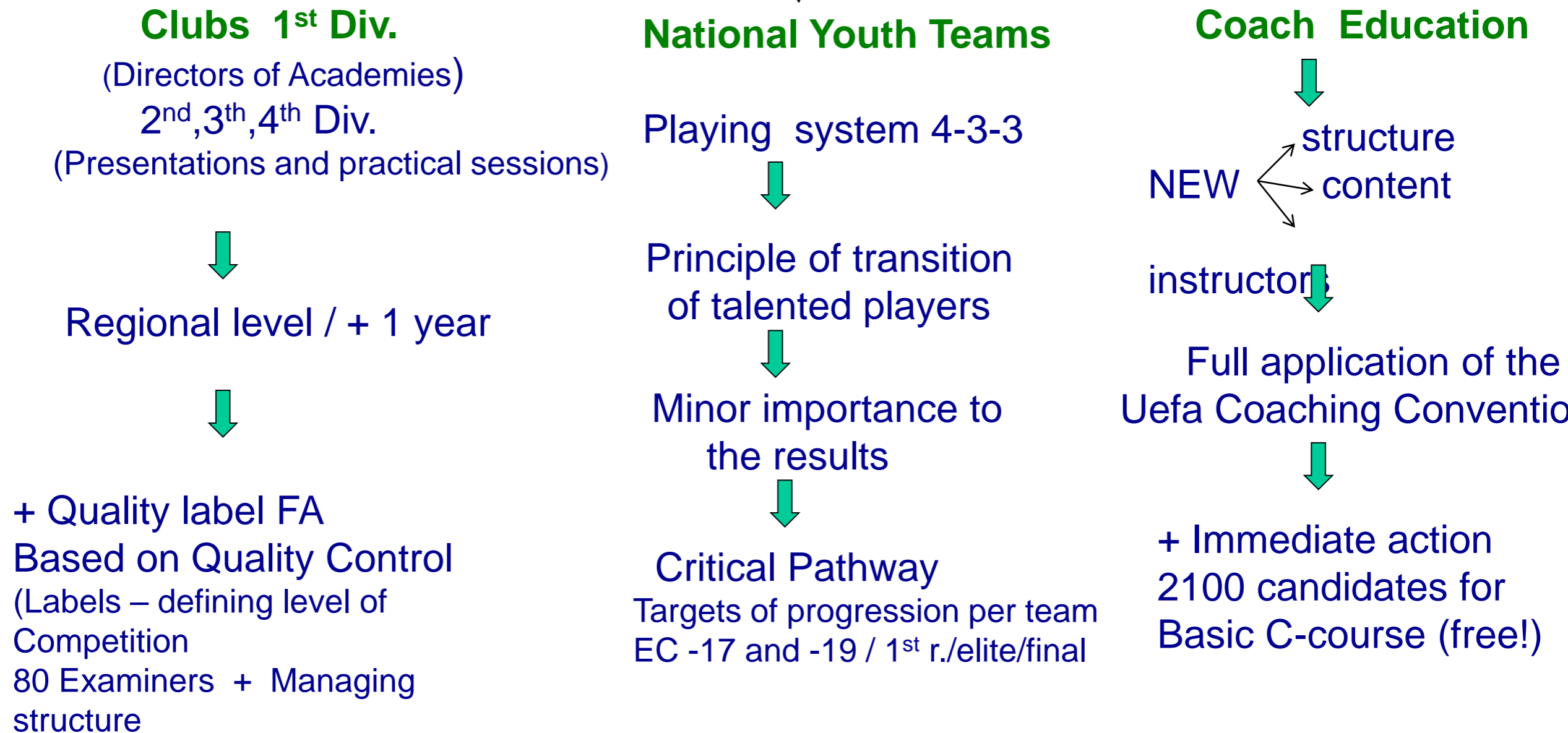




# And now ???

Youth Development Plan approved with (minor ? ) modifications

## IMPLEMENTATION





# Conclusions

- No copy paste
- Vision should be long term based + immediate decisions
- Full support from FA and Management needed





# Results

- National youth teams -17 and -19 in Top 10 UEFA
- High number of talented players in Top Competitions
- National Team = 1<sup>st</sup> in FIFA world ranking
- National Youth Teams : a lot of young talents

**“ When everything is going smoothly, the danger is behind the corner !”**





# From Elite Youth to international level



**Dries Mertens (PSV °87)**



**Thibaut Courtois ( °92)**



**Moussa Dembele (°87)**



**Steven Defour (°88)**



**Axel Witsel (°89)**



***“THE REAL DIFFICULTY LIES NOT IN DEVELOPING NEW IDEAS BUT IN ESCAPING FROM THE OLD ONES “***

*John M. Keynes*



**THANK YOU**