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Interview with Pall Hagbert Gudlaugsson, former National Team Coach of Faroe Islands, 1988-1993

FotB: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

HG: My name is Pall Hagbert Gudlaugsson. I was born on Iceland, I was raised in Vestmann island and I started my football there at the age of 9. I played for IBV. I also started my coaching - at 16- on the Vestmannisland, where I coached 14 year olds.

FotB: You have been Faroe Islands National Team Coach. How was that?

HG: I enjoyed it, it was a privilege, I was lucky enough to coach some of the best players the Faroes have ever had.

FotB: In your first game in the European Championship qualifiers you met Austria and won 1-0 in Landskrona, Sweden. Can you tell us little about the game?

HG: it was very hard at the start, because we did not have any facilities to use, such as a home ground, but fortunately we had Torleif Sigurdsson and Borge Hansen and Jens Erik, visionaries, and they lifted the football to a whole new level. In all honestly, they were very positive to work for. For all of us it turned out to be the most important event in Faroese sport history, in every sense of the word, and that we won was just a bonus for all the hard work we had done for years, prior to the game.



FotB: What is your best memory from coaching?

HG: I have so many, but to win the double as a player here with Gi, and later to win the double as coach as well with Gi, and also to play in the final with U19 in the Lyngby cup was great. Also to win two gold medals as coach for the Faroe Islands in the Island Games, first with the senior team at home and then with a mixed under 23 team in Aland. It's difficult to put one above the other, at present my team here has played 18 games and won 17 and 1 draw, and there are only 9 left, so that in it elf might become a record I hope. 4 more wins and it is in the bag.

FotB: Can you describe what happened on the islands after you beat Austria? There seems to have been quite a reception.

HG: It was a celebration like I have never witnessed before, all over the place for weeks, it was the same after the game against Northern Ireland, people went to the streets to celebrate, like winning the World Cup I suppose.

FotB: What teams have you coached and played in?

HG: IBV, Tyr, Gi, IF, Eb, Eb/streymur, B36, B68, Hb, Ki, Tb, FC Leiftur, and Fc Keflavik, and Devonshire Colt Bermuda.

FotB: Would you like to be an National Team Coach again?

HG: Why not.

FotB: Any special National team?

HG: Yes Germany. I like their mentality and work rate.

FotB: In the European Championship qualifiers 2014/2015 it is Gibraltar's first time in the European Championship qualifiers. What do you think of them?

HG: I think they will do well, they seem to be preparing well, there was a big difference, when they played Faroes, the Faroes were much better, but they might be ok if they start well, then they might get the backup they will need, I know the people here lifted us up, when we started,

FotB: There are currently two teams from Iceland and one team from the Faeroer in the 3rd prelim round of the EL, how would you explain their success?

HG: All of these teams have done well, and I think it comes very much down to all 3 teams having been in this tournament for a long time and are experienced in them, and they have not changed their teams a lot, the majority of their squad is used to these games, but for Faroes it is great that Vikingur is still in it as well as for the Icelandic teams.

FotB: Is it true that many Faeroer footballers are also keen handball players?

HG: No that used to be the case.

FotB: How do Faeroer players cope with the windy conditions, is it something they especially train on?

HG: The players train in all kinds of weather all year round outside, so they get used to different conditions, wind, rain etc.



Interview with Keyo Ghattson, president of Skåneland

FotB: Could you tell us something about the history of Skåne?

HG: Skåneland is a historical and cultural region. Skåneland was part of Denmark for almost 700 years. Historically Skåneland consisted of the four provinces Skåne (Scania), Halland, Blekinge and the island of Bornholm. When Danish kings were referring to "my Scanian men" all of the people in Skåneland were included. Skåneland was annexed by Sweden 1658. Scanian guerilla fighters fought the Swedish army in Skåneland. Bornholm was able to brake free. During the 60 years following annexation of Skåneland, the population of Skåneland drastically diminished, as a result of the mass executions, refugee movement to Denmark, starvation and illness. These days Skåne, Halland and Blekinge belong to Sweden. Bornholm belongs to Denmark.



FotB: Why does Skåneland need a team of its own?

HG: Many Scanians still have a Scanian identity. Local football supporters want to see Scanian players play for a Scanian national team.

FotB: Do you have regular friendlies, and against who?

HG: We only play matches against other regional or minority teams.

FotB: Since the area is rather big, there are probably quite some professionals around, are they included in the team?

HG: Several players in the Scanian national team have played in the highest divisions in Sweden or Denmark. Skåneland have many good football players. Famous football players like Henrik Larsson (Celtic FC, Manchester United, FC Barcelona), Patrik Andersson (Bayern München, FC Barcelona) and Fredrik Ljungberg (Arsenal FC) are of Scanian descent.

FotB: Is there any contact with the Swedish and Danish FA?

HG: We had contact with the Swedish FA initially. The Swedish FA tried to sabotage what we do so we have no contact with them anymore.

FotB: Do you play your home games in Sweden or Denmark?

HG: We have only played matches on the Swedish side. We were supposed to play a friendly match on the island of Bornholm last year but it never happened because the other team canceled on us.

FotB: Is there a fanbase for Skåneland?

HG: There is a fanbase. When local football clubs like Malmö FF or Helsingborgs IF play matches the supporters are waving Scanian flags. You don't see a single Swedish flag among the Scanian supporters.

FotB: Does the Skåne identity limit itself to football?

HG: Scanian identity has nothing to do with football. It's just a way of expressing that identity.

FotB: What are the ambitions of the Skåneland FA?

HG: We hope one day a Scanian team will compete in an international non-FIFA tournament. At some point we would also like to host a non-FIFA tournament. When the N.F.-Board split into two organizations it had a very bad effect on the non-FIFA scene. Many FAs were loyal with one organization or the other. We got caught in the middle. It made it harder to find teams that wanted to come to Skåneland to play friendly matches. This made us take a step back. We want to invite other regional or minority teams to Skåneland to play friendly matches.

Sweden act like Skåneland has always been part of Sweden. The Swedish school books don't tell the true history of Skåneland. Both the Sami and Assyrian national teams are able to play matches and tournaments without any interference of the Swedish FA. When we Scanians try to do the same thing the Swedish FA tries to sabotage what we do. Scanians does not get discriminated in Sweden as long as they suppress their Scanian identity. Scanians that maintain a Scanian identity risk losing their jobs, not get promoted or being shunned by family and friends.

VIVA World Cup trophy



Florent Costa and Jean-Luc Kit at the new N.F.-Board Office



Catalonia: Football with its own identity

With its own identity, Catalan football has become a space in the annals of football. Inherited from the Dutch School- Rinus Michels, Johan Cruyff, Louis Van Gaal, Frank Rijkaard, etc - The gameplay of this region led to Spain won the World Cup - paradoxically playing the final against his old master Netherlands - and today is a reference for all those who want the beauty game.

Catalonia has its own life in Spain . While the legends of this region nourish the selection of Spain , this does not stop at least once a year the best players in the Mediterranean area to meet and play friendly matches against top-level opponents before year's end. December has become the football month of the region. Including Argentina Diego Maradona was battered by Catalonia, 4-2 in 2009. Of course, with more Catalan and proud than ever packed stadium Catalans.

The climate fostered by its Mediterranean location , together with a wonderful cultural life , make this region a bohemian area and aroused passions. Coupled with the songs of Joan Manuel Serrat, the dutch Johan Cruyff , one of the best players and most influential technicians in the history of world football, is one of the personalities who has professed his love for Catalonia. It is no coincidence that later became the Technical Director of the selection, which ran for three years, until 2013 , where he left office Gerard Lopez. "Being coach of Catalunya has been my way of thanking the country and its people everything they have done for me ," said his departure.

The difficult task of taking the reins of the Catalan Football Federation has Andreu Subies , who holds a structure in which more than 10,000 young people do sports life in different categories and tournaments. And besides FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol, the two best known Catalan clubs are very many teams in the region at different levels and categories.

It is a football life marked by a well supported identity that is not necessarily the same as the rest of Spain . It has a language , style and a capacity that is recognized worldwide him . So every time it rings the anthem of Catalonia, either in December or not , millions , not only Catalans, but people in the world who fall in love.

Done by: Agustín Rodríguez



Interview with Matteo Bianchini, Sport Director and co-coach of Seborga FA

FotB: Can you tell us a little bit about yourself?

MB: I'm Matteo Bianchini, 34 years old, sports director and co-coach of Football Federation of Principality of Seborga. I'm from Sanremo (north-west of Italy, near Seborga) but I live for a great part of the year in Assisi, the town famous for Saint Francis (Central Italy, not far to Rome). I work as collaborator in the monthly review 'Perugia Free Press' but when I return to home I help my family in their agricultural and floricultural activities.

About sport I'm one of directors of AWF Arma-Sanremo, a waterball club born in 1998. Waterball is a not recognized sport similar to water polo. I'm also the coach of the waterball national team of Labaj-RdF which is a micronation (near Seborga) dedicated to the little druidical village of Bajardo, the Capital town. We created also a football national team of Labaj-RdF affiliated to NF Board but now this work is in pause because Labaj-RdF asked to Tera Brigasca (an important local linguistic area) an alliance to create a common national team and we are waiting for the answer.

During this pause we received an offer of collaboration from the Principality of Seborga by their french Consul Mr. Marcel Mentil. We accepted with great enthusiasm and gratitude and three of us (Claudio Gazzano, Linda Chittolini and me) became members of FCPS (Football Federation of Principality of Seborga) and now we collaborate with the Consul Mentil and his family in the football activities of Principality. It's a great honour because Seborga is very different from our micronation, Seborga has a fantastic tradition, a centuries-old history and it's correctly considered like a real State: it means a greater responsibility.

FotB: Have you played any friendly games this year?

MB: We played only a match in our history. The 10 august 2014 Seborga vs Sealand 2-3 in Ospedaletti (town near Seborga). In 2015 it's possible we'll play a match in may.

FotB: What team will you maybe meet in may?

MB: It's not a national team. It's a little club of Bergamo (town famous for Atalanta, team who plays in Serie A italian championship). The President of this little team is a great friend of the Principality of Seborga.

FotB: Are all the players from Seborga or are them also from near by villages?

MB: At the moment the greatest part of players arrive by Ospedaletti Calcio, a little italian local team near Seborga. There are also some players from Seborga but the population is too little for create a complete team.

FotB: How is it to be the Sport Director and Co-coach for Seborga FA?

MB: It's really a great honour! Seborga is very fascinating and I remember since I was a child the great charisma of the Prince Giorgio I and his battle for the independence.

FotB: What is your best National Team memory?

MB: The day of the first match. The anthems before the game and the big heart of our players. We finished the first time losing 0-3 but in the second half we made 2 goals and arrived near to equalize. Congratulations to our first coach Fabrizio Gatti for the character that was able to convey to the palyers.



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The expression "non-FIFA" is a general term usually used by the Media in order to name the football played outside FIFA. It is not employed with a negative meaning like "against-FIFA" or "anti-FIFA", but on the contrary it is complementary with FIFA in the universal football scene