

HR AND TALENT DEVELOPMENT IN SPORTS SUMMIT

12-13 MARCH 2026

BERLIN, GERMANY



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SPEAKER LINE-UP



Rebecca Nuttall
Chief Executive Officer
Haverfordwest
County AFC



Jason Webber
Senior Equality, Diversity,
Inclusion & Sustainability Manager
Football Association
of Wales



Cindy Johnson-Tufi
Chief Legal, HR and
Corporate Officer
Toulouse Football Club



Nermin Bašić
Technical Director
TS Galaxy FC



Shona Bell
Chief People Officer
Scottish Rugby Union



Tibor Volford
Head of Academy Recruitment
FK TSC Backa Topola



George Karseras
Founder and Director
Team Up



Denis Šorli
Chief Operational Officer
NK Osijek



John Alder
Head of Player Development
Welsh Rugby Union



Damian Irvine
Chief Executive Officer
Ebbsfleet United
Football Club



Heidi Holopainen
Human Resources Director
Suomen Palloliitto
– Football Association
of Finland



Anastassiya Dlala
Director of Administration & HR
International
Boxing Association



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We are pleased to announce the launch of the **HR and Talent Development in Sports Summit**, that will take place on the **12th-13th of March 2026** in **Berlin, Germany**. This global event focuses on strategic talent development in sports, athlete career transition programs, high-performance team building, diversity and inclusion in sports organizations, mental health and wellbeing initiatives, and the integration of HR tech and data analytics to drive measurable results. From shaping winning cultures in professional clubs to designing tailored upskilling programs for young athletes, the summit will showcase the most forward-thinking approaches in the industry. This industry event will bring together senior HR leaders, talent management executives, people strategy innovators, learning and development directors, workforce planning specialists, and organizational development experts to explore cutting-edge approaches to building future-ready teams and implementing sustainable people practices. Join us to connect with the industry, learn, network, and get inspired by game-changing success stories and powerful insights from the world of sports HR!

Key Practical Learning Points

- Transforming Sports Talent Management with Data-Driven Strategies to Unlock Peak Athlete and Staff Performance
- Designing Athlete Career Transition Pathways That Ensure Success Beyond the Competitive Years
- Building Winning Cultures by Applying Neuroscience, Behavioral Insights, and Modern Leadership Models
- Embedding Diversity and Inclusion Into Governance, Recruitment, and Daily Operations of Sports Organizations
- Implementing Ai-Powered HR Technologies and Predictive Analytics to Make Smarter, Faster People Decisions
- Enhancing Mental Health and Wellbeing Through Science-Based Recovery, Resilience Training, and Proactive Care
- Developing Targeted Skills for Emerging Roles in Sports Technology, Fan Engagement, and Commercial Growth
- Aligning HR Strategies with Esg Principles to Drive Sustainable, Future-Ready Sports Organizations
- Sharing Powerful Case Studies from Elite Sports Bodies with Proven, Measurable Results

Take a Look at Our Events



Who Should Attend

The summit will gather CHROs, CLOs, VPs, Heads, Chiefs, Presidents, CEOs, Directors, Managers, Coaches, and other senior specialists from sports industry with expertise in:

- Talent & People Management
- Athlete Career Development & Transition
- Performance Management & High-Performance Coaching
- Education & Training Programs
- Human Resources in Organizations
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Leadership Development in Elite Teams
- Wellbeing, Mental Health & Resilience Programs
- HR Technology & Data Analytics
- Employee & Athlete Engagement Innovation
- Organizational Culture & Effectiveness
- Continuous Improvement & Operations Excellence
- People & Culture Strategy
- & Others!



X 15+ Industry Case Studies



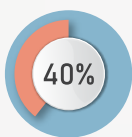
X 20+ Hours of Networking:

forge new professional contacts during numerous networking breaks between sessions & during the special Networking Dinner on Day 1

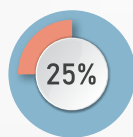


X 100+ Pages of the Post-Summit Materials
documentation package available upon demand*

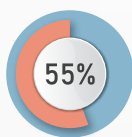
Did You Know?



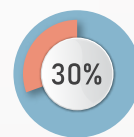
Over **40%** of athletes leave sport without a clear career transition plan, increasing risks of financial and wellbeing challenges.



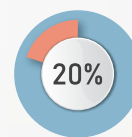
Clubs with structured dual-career programs report **25%** higher athlete retention and performance outcomes.



More than **55%** of sports organizations identify mental health and wellbeing as their top HR challenge.



Diverse leadership teams in sport are **30%** more likely to achieve sustainable success.



Use of data-driven HR analytics in elite sport has been shown to cut staff turnover by up to **20%**.

Sources:

IOC Athlete365, 2024

European Commission, 2023

FIFPRO, 2024

McKinsey, 2023

Deloitte Sports Business Group, 2025

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08:30 Check-In and Welcome Coffee ☕

09:00 Opening Address from the Chair

09:10 "Breaking the Ice" Speed Networking Session

Meet your colleagues, exchange business cards and have a maximum number of 1-on-1 talks in a short amount of time! Our Speed Networking session will help you to form those initial relationships early, find out who is facing the same challenges as you and get a nice preview of what a longer conversation could bring!

FUTURE-READY TALENT ARCHITECTURE & HIGH-PERFORMANCE CULTURE

09:50 AVAILABLE SPONSORSHIP SLOT



Next-Gen HR Solutions for High-Performance Teams

High-performance in elite sport depends not only on athletes but also on the structures that support them. This session will explore how cutting-edge HR tools and approaches can help clubs and federations unlock the full potential of their people. From integrating digital platforms that streamline recruitment and workforce planning, to applying analytics for talent development, to fostering cultures of inclusion and resilience, innovative HR solutions are reshaping the way high-performance teams are built and sustained. Participants will gain practical insights into how modern HR practices can accelerate organizational growth, support long-term success, and enhance collaboration across the entire sports ecosystem.

10:30 Case Study: 🔍

Football Associations of the Clubs: The Philosophy and Its Reflections to Organization and HR-Processes

- In the presentation, you will hear how the Football Association of Finland (FAF) has reshaped its organizational and job role structures to align with the strategic goals of Finnish football. Additionally, Heidi will share the measures FAF is implementing to support the development of expertise within football clubs.
- Between 2018 and 2020, FAF underwent the most significant organizational transformation in its 110-year history. Heidi will also reflect on the lessons learned from leading change in the highly passionate world of sports. She will introduce the cultural philosophy of the "Football Association of the Clubs" and provide concrete examples of how it is reflected in HR processes.

Heidi Holopainen
Human Resources Director
Suomen Palloliitto
- Football Association of Finland



11:10 Morning Coffee and Networking Break ☕

11:40 Case Study: 🔍

Culture, Leadership, and Performance: Putting People at the Heart of Development

- How people-first leadership strengthens performance pathways.
- Building holistic support systems for athletes, coaches, and staff.
- Why the future of rugby depends on aligning performance with wellbeing and culture.

John Alder
Head of Player Development
Welsh Rugby Union



12:20 Case Study: 🔍

Building Career Pathways That Prepare Athletes for Life On and Off the Pitch *

Athletes face unique challenges as they transition between academy, professional play, and life beyond sport. This session explores how clubs can design structured career blueprints that balance performance goals with education, wellbeing, and long-term career planning. Drawing on leadership experience at Ebbsfleet United, Damian will share insights into creating sustainable support systems that empower athletes to thrive both during and after their competitive careers.

Damian Irvine
Chief Executive Officer
Ebbsfleet United Football Club



13:00 Business Lunch 🍽️

METHODS, TOOLS AND BEST PRACTICES FOR HR EXCELLENCE IN SPORTS

14:00 Case Study: 🔍

Building Winning Cultures by Applying Neuroscience, Behavioral Insights, and Modern Leadership Models

Behind every successful sports organization is a culture that inspires people to perform at their best. This session shows how modern leadership models, combined with insights from neuroscience and human behavior, can transform the way teams are led and supported. By understanding what truly drives motivation, trust, and resilience, sports leaders can create environments where athletes and staff feel empowered to grow, adapt, and win — both on and off the field. The discussion will highlight practical techniques for embedding these approaches into daily routines, ensuring that culture is not just a concept but a lived experience across the entire organization.

Shona Bell
Chief People Officer
Scottish Rugby Union



George Karseras
Founder and Director
Team Up



14:40 Case Study: 🔍

From Local Roots to Elite Performance: The Rise of a European Football Club Model

- FK TSC Backa Topola club model – the rise of a small club in Europe
- The strategy and vision behind results
- Recruitment strategy on and off the pitch

Tibor Volford
Head of Academy Recruitment
FK TSC Backa Topola



15:20 Afternoon Tea and Networking Break ☕

15:40 Case Study: 🔍

Building a Football Philosophy: Establishing Club Values and Sustainable Systems in a Professional Football Club

- Establishing a clear football identity and long-term vision in challenging circumstances.
- Creating a values-driven club culture: discipline, responsibility, and collective growth.
- Building structures for sustainable success: from youth development to first-team performance.
- Case study from professional football: leading a team to stability, player development, and wider recognition.

Nermin Bašić
Technical Director
TS Galaxy FC



16:20 PANEL DISCUSSION 🗣️

The Future of HR in Sports: Integrating Technology, Talent Strategy, and Organizational Excellence

A forward-looking conversation on how elite clubs, federations, and associations are re-defining HR in sports. The panel will explore how to balance tradition with innovation, how technology and data can enhance people decisions, and how talent pathways and recruitment strategies are evolving to prepare the next generation. The discussion will also highlight the importance of culture, wellbeing, and leadership as drivers of sustainable success in elite sport.

17:00 Chair's Closing Remarks and End of Day One

18:00 Networking Dinner 🍷

* TBC

08:30 Check-In and Welcome Coffee 

09:00 Day Two Opening Remarks from the Chair

ATHLETE LIFECYCLE, TRANSITION & HOLISTIC WELLBEING

09:10 AVAILABLE SPONSORSHIP SLOT



Innovative Approaches to Supporting Athletes Through Every Stage of Their Lifecycle

As the demands on athletes evolve, organizations must adapt their HR, wellbeing, and development strategies to ensure sustainable success. This session highlights innovative tools and frameworks that help clubs and federations provide holistic support – from youth academies to peak performance years, and into post-career transitions. The presentation will show how integrating technology, data-driven insights, and proactive care models can transform athlete pathways and strengthen organizational resilience.

09:50 Case Study: 

Embedding DEI & Sustainability as Strategic Pillars in Sports Organizations

Even at the elite level, true progress in diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability requires that such values be fully integrated—not siloed—within organizational strategy. In this conversation, Jason will share his experience leading DEI initiatives at the FAW and working with broader sports ecosystems. The discussion will surface effective frameworks for embedding DEI into recruitment, governance, operations, performance culture, and community impact, while aligning with ESG goals and ensuring accountability across all levels of sport.

Jason Webber

Senior Equality, Diversity,
Inclusion & Sustainability Manager
Football Association of Wales



10:30 Morning Coffee and Networking Break 

11:00 Case Study: 

Creating Dual-Career Pathways to Support Players On and Off the Pitch

Balancing professional football with personal development is one of the biggest challenges in modern sport. This session explores how clubs can design operational frameworks that allow athletes to pursue education, career training, and personal growth alongside their playing careers. It will highlight practical approaches to building resilient systems that prepare players for both peak performance and life beyond football.

Denis Šorli

Chief Operational Officer
NK Osijek



11:40 Case Study: 

The Complete Athlete Lifecycle – From Youth Development to Post-Career Reinvention *

- Building talent pathways from academies to elite level
- Preparing players for leadership roles after sport
- Ensuring reintegration and sustainable futures

Rebecca Nuttall

Chief Executive Officer
Haverfordwest County AFC



12:20 Case Study: 

HR, Legal, and Governance in Elite Clubs: Balancing Compliance and People Strategy

Elite sports organizations must navigate complex legal and governance frameworks while building a people-first culture. This session explores how HR and legal leaders can work together to create structures that ensure compliance, protect integrity, and at the same time enable innovation, inclusivity, and performance. It will highlight strategies for aligning governance principles with modern HR practices to strengthen resilience and long-term sustainability in elite sport.

Cindy Johnson-Tufts

Chief Legal, HR and Corporate Officer
Toulouse Football Club



13:00 Business Lunch 

14:00 Case Study: 

Empowering Young Sports Professionals

- Lausanne, a hub for discovering young sports talent (university partnerships, internship opportunities)
- Life after sport, with the concrete example of my former colleague, a boxer, who joined our team at our headquarters and left after being elected President of the Federation. It's very inspiring. I would ask for his permission to tell his story. A young boxer also sits on our Board of Directors. How IBA is opening doors to younger generations.
- Continuous development: the IBA Sports Management program, in cooperation with the ISDE, which we launched to support and develop athletes.

Anastasiya Dlala

Director of Administration & HR
International Boxing Association



14:40 Case Study: 

Belonging Beyond Performance: How Inclusion Shapes Athlete Wellbeing and Long-Term Success

Athlete wellbeing is deeply connected to whether individuals feel seen, valued, and supported in their environment. This session explores how building cultures of inclusion directly impacts motivation, resilience, and transitions throughout the athlete lifecycle. Drawing from practical work in equality, diversity, and sustainability, the session will reveal how belonging creates not only healthier athletes, but stronger organizations capable of sustaining long-term success.

Speaker TBC

15:20 Chair's Closing Remarks and End of Summit

* TBC

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- Interactive Focus Sessions
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For registration completed
by **November 21st**

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