

## Demographic analysis of professional football club coaches

Drs Raffaele Poli, Loic Ravenel and Roger Besson

### 1. Introduction

The 73rd edition of the CIES Football Observatory Monthly Report analyses the characteristics of coaches from 1,866 teams from 126 leagues in 89 countries worldwide. The study focuses on the coaches' age, their tenure duration since their entry into office up until the 1st March 2022, their origin (national/expatriate) and their sporting biography (former professional player or not).

The analysis also compares the characteristics of coaches with those of players trained. For ongoing competitions, only players fielded during the season were included. For forthcoming competitions, we considered all the players in the squad.

Figure 1: study sample, season 2021/22 or 2022, status as of 01/03/2021 (\*number of coaches)

<b>AFC</b>	<b>260*</b>	LPF (PAN)	12	Czech Liga (CZE)	16	First League (MNE)	10
A-League (AUS)	12	Primera División (SLV)	12	FNL (CZE/2)	16	Eredivisie (NED)	18
Premier League (HKG)	8	MLS (USA)	27	Superliga (DEN)	12	Eerste Divisie (NED/2)	20
Liga 1 (IDN)	18	USL Championship (USA/2)	24	1st Division (DEN/2)	12	Premiership (NIR)	11
Ind. Super League (IND/1a)	11	<b>CONMEBOL</b>	<b>259</b>	Premier League (ENG)	20	Eliteserien (NOR)	19
I-League (IND/1b)	13	Superliga (ARG)	27	Championship (ENG/2)	24	1. Division (NOR/2)	16
Pers. Gulf Pro League (IRN)	16	Primera Nacional (ARG/2)	36	La Liga (ESP)	20	Ekstraklasa (POL)	18
J1 League (JPN)	18	Primera División (BOL)	16	Segunda División (ESP/2)	22	I Liga (POL/2)	19
J2 League (JPN/2)	22	Brasileirão (BRA)	17	Meistriliiga (EST)	9	Primeira Liga (POR)	18
K League 1 (KOR)	12	Série B (BRA/2)	19	Veikkausliiga (FIN)	12	Segunda Liga (POR/2)	18
K League 2 (KOR/2)	11	Primera División (CHI)	16	Ykkönen (FIN/2)	11	Liga I (ROM)	16
Pro League (KSA)	16	Primera B (CHI/2)	16	Ligue 1 (FRA)	20	Liga II (ROM/2)	20
Premier League (LIB)	12	Primera A (COL)	19	Ligue 2 (FRA/2)	20	Premier League (RUS)	15
Super League (MAS)	12	Primera B (COL/2)	15	Meistaradeildin (FRO)	10	FNL (RUS/2)	19
Stars League (QAT)	12	Liga Pro (ECU)	16	Erovnuli Liga (GEO)	10	Premiership (SCO)	12
Premier League (SIN)	8	Division Profesional (PAR)	12	Bundesliga (GER)	18	Championship (SCO/2)	10
Thai League 1 (THA)	17	Primera División (PER)	18	2. Bundesliga (GER/2)	17	Campionato (SMR)	15
Arabian Gulf League (UAE)	14	Primera División (URU)	16	Super League 1 (GRE)	13	Super Liga (SRB)	16
Super League (UZB)	15	Primera División (VEN)	16	NB I (HUN)	12	Prva Liga (SRB/2)	15
V.League 1 (VIE)	13	<b>UEFA</b>	<b>1133</b>	NB II (HUN/2)	20	Super League (SUI)	10
<b>CAF</b>	<b>61</b>	Superliga (ALB)	9	Premier Division (IRL)	10	Challenge League (SUI/2)	10
Ligue 1 (ALG)	16	Premier League (ARM)	9	Úrvalsdeild (ISL)	12	Super Liga (SVK)	12
PSL (RSA)	15	Bundesliga (AUT)	12	Ligat ha'Al (ISR)	14	2. Liga (SVK/2)	16
1st Division (RSA/2)	15	2. Liga (AUT/2)	16	Liga Leumit (ISR/2)	14	1. SNL (SVN)	10
Ligue 1 (TUN)	15	Premyer Liqa (AZE)	8	Serie A (ITA)	20	2. SNL (SVN/2)	14
<b>CONCACAF</b>	<b>165</b>	Pro League (BEL)	17	Serie B (ITA/2)	20	Allsvenskan (SWE)	18
Primera División (CRC)	12	1B Pro League (BEL/2)	8	Premier League (KAZ)	14	Superettan (SWE/2)	16
Liga Nacional (GUA)	12	Premijer Liga (BIH)	13	A Lyga (LTU)	10	Süper Lig (TUR)	19
Liga Nacional (HON)	10	Premier League (BLR)	16	National Division (LUX)	16	1. Lig (TUR/2)	19
Premier League (JAM)	11	First League (BUL)	14	Virsliga (LVA)	8	Premier League (UKR)	16
Liga MX (MEX)	17	1. HNL (CRO)	10	Divizia Națională (MDA)	8	Persha Liga (UKR/2)	15
Ascenso MX (MEX/2)	18	2. HNL (CRO/2)	16	First League (MKD)	12	Premier League (WAL)	11
Primera División (NCA)	10	1. Division (CYP)	9	Premier League (MLT)	13	<b>Total</b>	<b>1878</b>

## 2. Age

The average age of players in the sample analysed is 48.7 years. The values varied between 41.5 years of age for the United Soccer League (USL) in the United States and 58.6 years of age for the Algerian top division. At UEFA level, the extreme values were measured in the Finnish second division (41.7 years of age) and the French Ligue 1 (54.3 years of age).

A positive and significant statistical correlation ( $R^2=22.9\%$ ) exists between the average age of coaches and that of players. Generally speaking, the more a league brings together ageing players, the more participating clubs employ experienced coaches, or vice versa.

Figure 2: average age of coaches, by league (01/03/2022)

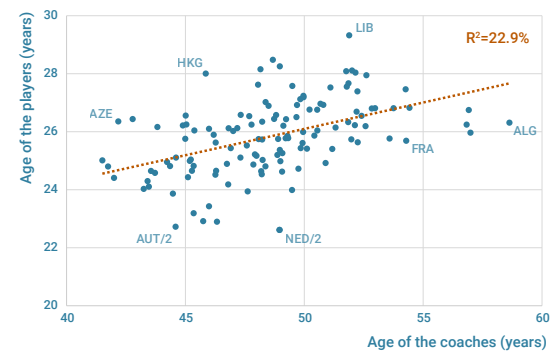
a/ Oldest (years)

	Ligue 1 (ALG)	58.6	<div style="width: 58.6%;"></div>
	Liga Nacional (HON)	57.0	<div style="width: 57.0%;"></div>
	Primeri Division (SLV)	56.9	<div style="width: 56.9%;"></div>
	Ligue 1 (TUN)	56.8	<div style="width: 56.8%;"></div>
	Primera A (COL)	54.4	<div style="width: 54.4%;"></div>
	Ligue 1 (FRA)	54.3	<div style="width: 54.3%;"></div>
	Premier League (JAM)	54.3	<div style="width: 54.3%;"></div>
	1. Lig (TUR/2)	53.8	<div style="width: 53.8%;"></div>
	Ligue 2 (FRA/2)	53.6	<div style="width: 53.6%;"></div>
	Czech Liga (CZE)	53.0	<div style="width: 53.0%;"></div>
	NB I (HUN)	52.8	<div style="width: 52.8%;"></div>
	Primera División (PER)	52.6	<div style="width: 52.6%;"></div>
	Ligat ha'Al (ISR)	52.6	<div style="width: 52.6%;"></div>
	Arabian Gulf League (UAE)	52.4	<div style="width: 52.4%;"></div>
	Championship (SCO/2)	52.3	<div style="width: 52.3%;"></div>

b/ Youngest (years)

	USL Championship (USA/2)	41.5	<div style="width: 41.5%;"></div>
	Ykkönen (FIN/2)	41.8	<div style="width: 41.8%;"></div>
	Veikkausliiga (FIN)	42.0	<div style="width: 42.0%;"></div>
	Premyer Liqa (AZE)	42.2	<div style="width: 42.2%;"></div>
	Premier League (WAL)	42.8	<div style="width: 42.8%;"></div>
	Meistriliiga (EST)	43.3	<div style="width: 43.3%;"></div>
	Prva Liga (SRB/2)	43.4	<div style="width: 43.4%;"></div>
	1. Division (NOR/2)	43.5	<div style="width: 43.5%;"></div>
	Superettan (SWE/2)	43.6	<div style="width: 43.6%;"></div>
	A Lyga (LTU)	43.7	<div style="width: 43.7%;"></div>
	Premier League (ARM)	43.8	<div style="width: 43.8%;"></div>
	1. SNL (SVN)	44.2	<div style="width: 44.2%;"></div>
	Premier League (BLR)	44.4	<div style="width: 44.4%;"></div>
	Premier Division (IRL)	44.5	<div style="width: 44.5%;"></div>
	2. Liga (AUT/2)	44.6	<div style="width: 44.6%;"></div>
















Figure 3: correlation between players' and coaches' average age, by league


















The youngest coach in the sample is Akhil Kothari from the Indian club Kenkre FC. At just 26 years of age, he is also the youngest holder of an A-licence from the AFC. At the other extreme is the Frenchman Roger Lemerre, who has just celebrated his 80th birthday. At the beginning of March, the former coach of the France national A-team was training Etoile Sportive du Sahel, in the Tunisian top division.

Figure 4: youngest and oldest coaches (01/03/2022)

a/ Oldest (years)

	Roger Lemerre /Étoile du Sahel (TUN)	80.7	<div style="width: 80.7%;"></div>
	Mircea Lucescu /Dynamo Kyiv (UKR)	76.6	<div style="width: 76.6%;"></div>
	Ljubomir Petrović /Thanh Hóa FC (VIE)	74.8	<div style="width: 74.8%;"></div>
	Roy Hodgson /Watford FC (ENG)	74.6	<div style="width: 74.6%;"></div>
	Julio Comesaña /Independiente Medellín (COL)	74.0	<div style="width: 74.0%;"></div>
	Faouzi Benzarti /US Monastir (TUN)	72.2	<div style="width: 72.2%;"></div>
	Oscar Quintabani /Deportes Quindío (COL/2)	71.7	<div style="width: 71.7%;"></div>
	Nélson Baptista /Kashiwa Reysol (JPN)	71.6	<div style="width: 71.6%;"></div>
	Brian Eastick /Lommel SK (BEL/2)	71.1	<div style="width: 71.1%;"></div>
	José Luis Trejo /Real Estelí FC (NCA)	70.6	<div style="width: 70.6%;"></div>
	Miroslav Koubek /FC Hradec Králové (CZE)	70.5	<div style="width: 70.5%;"></div>
	Bruce Arena /New England (USA)	70.4	<div style="width: 70.4%;"></div>
	Serghei Dubrovin /FC Milsami (MDA)	70.2	<div style="width: 70.2%;"></div>
	Meziane Ighil /WA Tlemcen (ALG)	70.1	<div style="width: 70.1%;"></div>
	Viktor Djalilov /FK Navbahor (UZB)	70.0	<div style="width: 70.0%;"></div>

b/ Youngest (years)

	Akhil Kothari /Kenkre FC (IND/1b)	26.4	<div style="width: 26.4%;"></div>
	Fernando Morato /CD Nacional (POR/2)	26.7	<div style="width: 26.7%;"></div>
	Stiven Sánchez /Real Cartagena (COL/2)	27.6	<div style="width: 27.6%;"></div>
	Aljaž Leskovar /NK Krško (SVN/2)	27.6	<div style="width: 27.6%;"></div>
	Johan Gjønnnes Nilsen /Grorud IL (NOR/2)	27.7	<div style="width: 27.7%;"></div>
	Francesc Bonet /Rajasthan United (IND/1b)	28.8	<div style="width: 28.8%;"></div>
	Yan Law /Aizawl FC (IND/1b)	29.2	<div style="width: 29.2%;"></div>
	Oscar Hiljemark /Aalborg BK (DEN)	29.7	<div style="width: 29.7%;"></div>
	Adrian Barrios /Dep. Nueva Concepción (GUA)	29.8	<div style="width: 29.8%;"></div>
	Gavin Lee /Tampines Rovers (SIN)	29.8	<div style="width: 29.8%;"></div>
	Janne Muhli /PEPO Lappeenranta (FIN/2)	30.7	<div style="width: 30.7%;"></div>
	Fabián Marzuca /CD Santiago Morning (CHI/2)	30.7	<div style="width: 30.7%;"></div>
	Thomas William Dent /IL Stjørdals-Blink (NOR/2)	30.9	<div style="width: 30.9%;"></div>
	Eirik Kjøne /Stabæk Fotball (NOR/2)	31.0	<div style="width: 31.0%;"></div>
	Edward Still /RSC Charleroi (BEL)	31.2	<div style="width: 31.2%;"></div>

### 3. Tenure duration

On the 1st of March 2022, the coaches of the teams taken into account were on average in the job for 451 days. The median value is, however, much lower: 243 days. This difference shows that a small number of coaches in charge of their team for much longer than the usual tenure pull up the average.

For example, in the top-level Argentinean championship, Marcelo Gallardo has been in charge of River Plate since June 2014, i.e. almost 3,000 days. The second longest serving coach, Mauricio Pellegrini has only been in charge at Vélez Sarsfield for 683 days.

The median values per league vary between a maximum of 1,066 days in the Northern Ireland top division and a minimum of 76 days in the top level of competition in Peru. The very low values measured in South America reflect a strong tendency to change coach, but also the recent season start in most of the leagues.

As for age, a significant positive correlation ( $R^2=17.3\%$ ) exists between the average tenure duration of coaches and the average length of stay of players. This link underscores important differences in managerial cultures according to country. The more club directors in a league change coaches, the more they change players in the squads, and vice versa.

Figure 5: median tenure duration of coaches, by league

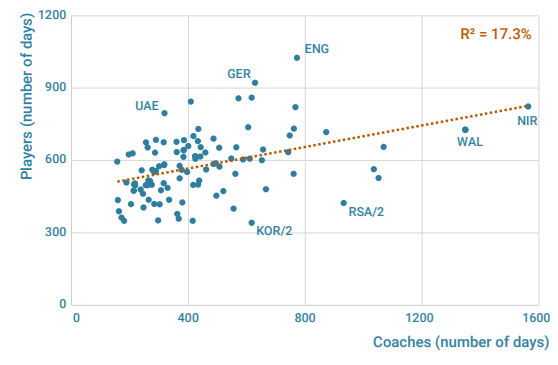
a/ Longest median tenure durations (days)

	Premiership (NIR)	1066	<div style="width: 100%;"></div>
	Premier League (HKG)	809	<div style="width: 76%;"></div>
	USL Championship (USA/2)	790	<div style="width: 73%;"></div>
	Úrvalsdeild (ISL)	790	<div style="width: 73%;"></div>
	Divizia Națională (MDA)	745	<div style="width: 68%;"></div>
	K League 1 (KOR)	605	<div style="width: 55%;"></div>
	1. Division (NOR/2)	605	<div style="width: 55%;"></div>
	Eliteserien (NOR)	550	<div style="width: 50%;"></div>
	Eredivisie (NED)	543	<div style="width: 49%;"></div>
	Premier League (UKR)	542	<div style="width: 49%;"></div>
	A-League (AUS)	537	<div style="width: 48%;"></div>
	Premier Division (IRL)	528	<div style="width: 47%;"></div>
	Premyer Liqa (AZE)	522	<div style="width: 46%;"></div>
	MLS (USA)	511	<div style="width: 45%;"></div>
	Meistaradeildin (FRO)	501	<div style="width: 44%;"></div>

b/ Shortest median tenure durations (days)





















	Primera División (PER)	76	<div style="width: 7%;"></div>
	Primera B (CHI/2)	82	<div style="width: 7%;"></div>
	Primera División (BOL)	95	<div style="width: 8%;"></div>
	Primera División (CHI)	96	<div style="width: 8%;"></div>
	NB I (HUN)	99	<div style="width: 9%;"></div>
	Liga 1 (IDN)	103	<div style="width: 9%;"></div>
	Série B (BRA/2)	104	<div style="width: 9%;"></div>
	Premier League (ARM)	111	<div style="width: 10%;"></div>
	Brasileirão (BRA)	120	<div style="width: 11%;"></div>
	Superliga (ALB)	127	<div style="width: 12%;"></div>
	1. Lig (TUR/2)	132	<div style="width: 12%;"></div>
	Segunda Liga (POR/2)	135	<div style="width: 12%;"></div>
	Pro League (KSA)	136	<div style="width: 12%;"></div>
	Premijer Liga (BIH)	137	<div style="width: 12%;"></div>
	Süper Lig (TUR)	140	<div style="width: 13%;"></div>

Figure 6: average length of stay of players and coaches, by league



The coach with the greatest longevity among the teams analysed is Jomo Sono, founder, president and trainer for 27 years with the club Jomo Cosmos, currently playing in the South African second division. Eleven other coaches have been at the head of their team for ten years at least, among whom Atlético Madrid's Diego Simeone.

Figure 7: coaches in the job for longest (years), 01/03/2022

	Jomo Sono /Jomo Cosmos (RSA/2)	27.7	<div style="width: 27.7%;"></div>
	Stephen Baxter /Crusaders FC (NIR)	17.1	<div style="width: 17.1%;"></div>
	Frank Schmidt /FC Heidenheim (GER/2)	14.5	<div style="width: 14.5%;"></div>
	Qurban Qurbanov /FK Qarabağ (AZE)	13.7	<div style="width: 13.7%;"></div>
	Peter Vermes /Sporting KC (USA)	12.3	<div style="width: 12.3%;"></div>
	Pablo Vicó /Club Atlético Brown (ARG/2)	11.2	<div style="width: 11.2%;"></div>
	Vegard Hansen /Mjøndalen IF (NOR/2)	11.0	<div style="width: 11.0%;"></div>
	Colin Caton /Bala Town (WAL)	10.5	<div style="width: 10.5%;"></div>
	Diego Simeone /Atlético Madrid (ESP)	10.2	<div style="width: 10.2%;"></div>
	Christian Streich /SC Freiburg (GER)	10.2	<div style="width: 10.2%;"></div>
	Tran Chinh Dang /Binh Duong (VIE)	10.2	<div style="width: 10.2%;"></div>
	Oleksandr Ryabokon /FK Desna (UKR)	10.0	<div style="width: 10.0%;"></div>
	Sergey Mashnin /Metallurg Lipetsk (RUS/2)	9.7	<div style="width: 9.7%;"></div>
	Gavin Chesterfield /Barry Town United (WAL)	9.7	<div style="width: 9.7%;"></div>
	Sean Dyche /Burnley FC (ENG)	9.3	<div style="width: 9.3%;"></div>
	Ruzykul Berdyev /FC Nasaf (UZB)	9.3	<div style="width: 9.3%;"></div>
	Michael Anhaeuser /Charleston Battery (USA/2)	9.2	<div style="width: 9.2%;"></div>
	Thomas Silberberger /WSG Tirol (AUT)	8.7	<div style="width: 8.7%;"></div>
	Sami Trabelsi /Al-Sailiya (QAT)	8.4	<div style="width: 8.4%;"></div>
	Chris Hughes /Newtown AFC (WAL)	8.3	<div style="width: 8.3%;"></div>

### 4. Foreign presence

Just under 30% of coaches grew up in another association than that of the club they manage. This is an equivalent percentage to that measured among players of the same teams. This result indicates that the labour market for coaches is just as international as that for footballers.

Expatriates represent three-quarters of coaches in five top divisions: three in Asia (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Qatar) and two in Latin America (Guatemala and Mexico). Expatriates make up at least half of the coaches in 30 of the 126 leagues studied. Conversely, 15 championships do not have any expatriate coaches.

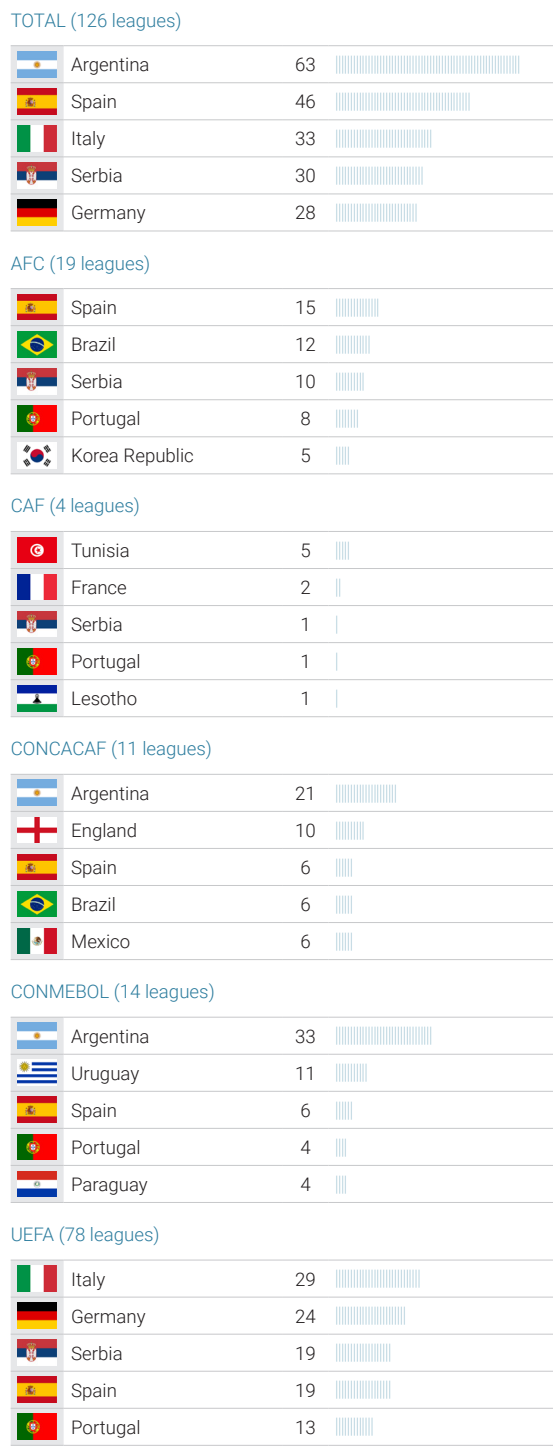
The percentage of expatriate players and coaches within a league are only slightly correlated for the sample as a whole ( $R^2=9.3\%$ ). However, at the level of each of the confederations, the correlation is strong: 56% in the AFC, 35.6% in UEFA and 35.3% in regrouping the two American entities (CONCACAF and CONMEBOL).

The result is first and foremost explained by the existence of quotas limiting the number of expatriate players allowed to be hired by clubs, notably in Asia, where, on the contrary, there is no limit for coaches.

Argentina is the most represented nation among expatriate coaches. The 63 Argentinean trainers present abroad on the 1st March 2022 officiate in 23 different countries. Out of the 63, 54 train in other Latin American countries or the United States. Their premier destinations are Mexico and Peru, with 7 Argentinean coaches each.

With 46 representatives abroad, Spanish coaches are in second position. They have the largest geographical distribution with 31 countries of destination in all of the confederations. The third position for Italian coaches (33 expatriates) is mainly linked to their strong presence in San Marino.

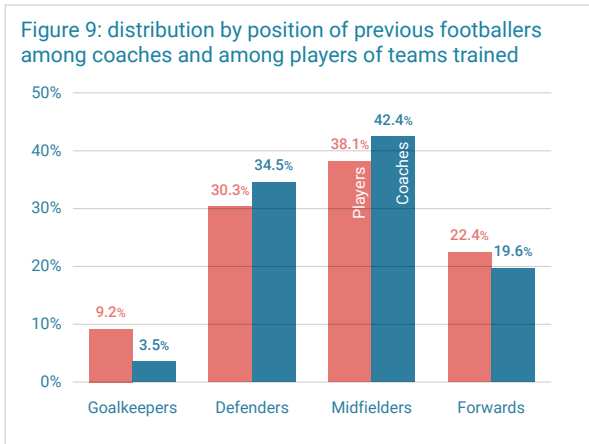
Figure 8: most represented origins among coaches, by origin and confederation



### 5. Sporting biography

Within the framework of this study, we have determined whether coaches have previously played for clubs participating in professional leagues. In total, just over two thirds have had a career as a professional footballer player.

As for positions that coaches occupied as players, we note a slight overrepresentation of midfielders (+4.3%) and defenders (+4.2%). Conversely, goalkeepers (-5.7%) and forwards (-2.8%) are underrepresented.



## 6. Conclusion

The job of coach is highly sought after, but also particularly thankless. Scapegoats of choice, many coaches find themselves sitting on an ejector seat. Our analysis shows that the average tenure duration at the head of a team is quite low: 451 days.

The thankless character of the career of coach is also highlighted by the median value of their length of stay at the club they manage: 243 days. On the 1st of March, only 20% of coaches had been in their position for more than two years. At the opposite, 39% were in place since less than six months.

This finding shows that only a small number of coaches are able to gain the confidence of their managers over the long term, the vast majority only benefiting from a relationship of trust over the very short-term and only linked to results.