

AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARATIVE HISTORY
OF YOUTH FOOTBALL IN FRANCE AND THE
UNITED STATES (C.1920-C.2000):
*THE AGE PARADIGM AND THE DEMARCATION
OF THE YOUTH GAME AS A SEPARATE
SECTOR OF THE SPORT*

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Abstract

This thesis contends that the contemporary phenomenon of youth football is the fruit of a variety of historical developments over the twentieth century. The manner in which the junior game evolved as an independent subset of the sport in France and America was certainly exemplary of the idiosyncrasies of national sporting culture, football in particular, the general timeline of each country as well as the place of ‘youth’ in wider society. The present study aims to expand the understanding of the game of football, specifically the youth sector, through a transnational line of enquiry covering the period from circa 1920 to circa 2000. The thesis structure is broadly thematic and chronological. This comparative approach attempts to remain coherent across both countries with a goal of outlining the core issues and major shifts which occurred over the chosen period.

Youth football underwent a process of demarcation from the adult or elite game but maintained and furthered specific mechanisms linking the two across sporting, educational, and professional bridges. With the decade of the 1970s serving as a turning point, the youth level achieved a sort of independence while being inextricably fused to the top level. The essence of the growing separation of the youth from the senior level rested on the fundamental notion of ‘age’ as opposed to ‘ability’. The organisation of football around this concept of ‘age’, and the resulting limitation of participation, provided a basis for ‘junior’ football as a distinct entity by the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Subsequent divisions extended the differences between age categories and created a full competitive youth spectrum for younger and younger players. The game was, as a result, “juvenilized”. The registration of players and the competitions for which this registration was so important reflected the relevance of ‘age’. Throughout this process, though in different ways and at different speeds in the two countries studied, the youth game was drawn away from its roots in the school and as a pillar of the world of education. After the initial interwar and post-war eras, youth football moved toward the worlds of the club and association.

This specialisation of the game was also evident in the rules and the equipment, all of which were progressively adapted for a more pedagogically correct, and perhaps commercially oriented, fit. While the youth game separated from the adult footballing world through age classification, distinct competitive spaces, adapted rules and equipment, that expanding gulf was continually bridged in various ways in order to maintain, develop, and create new links between these two increasingly distinct sectors of the sport. The link with the elite and the professional levels was certainly not new, but from the 1970s onwards it was solidified over time and the relationship grew closer as education moved farther away or, at the least, took a back seat to ‘professional training’.

By the close of the twentieth century, this ultimately placed the youth game as distinct from the adult game. Yet, somewhat contradictorily, it was closer than ever to the elite professional domain. As subject to international, professional and commercial forces, the youth game was fused to elite football. These three forces pulled youth football away from their uniquely national idioms and towards a more globalized arena. Harmonizing the experience across national boundaries, a blend of educational, sporting and professional bridges ensured and furthered the connection between the youth and the adult elite player. From the late nineteenth century’s amateur world view – where football and sport were idealized as a means for development of the human being or the vehicle for the transmission of elite social values – the effects of professionalization turned football into an end in itself as a legitimate career. From child’s play to a real *métier*. By the end of the twentieth century, the youth game stood confidently with one foot in each world.

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I am told that my first word was neither 'mama' nor 'papa' but *balle*. Perhaps now is the moment to thank those whose names I did not utter first. Indeed, thanks are due to my parents who are responsible for so much of who I am today. It is their transatlantic story that gave birth to mine and indirectly to this thesis. Equally, thanks

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In memoriam Lumina...les plus petits ne seront jamais oubliés...

This thesis follows the Chicago style for citations and references.

Abbreviations

AYSO	American Youth Soccer Organization
ASL	American Soccer League
CEP	Certificat d'Études Primaires
CFI	Comité Français Interfédéral
CSSA	Colorado State Soccer Association
CYSA	Colorado Youth Soccer Association
CYC	Catholic Youth Council
DP	Displaced Person
FFF	Fédération Française de Football
FFFA	Fédération Française de Football Association
FGSPF	Fédération Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
INF	Institut National de Football
IAFL	Intercollegiate Association Foot Ball League
IFAB	International Football Association Board
ISFAA	Intercollegiate Soccer Football Association of America
IOC	International Olympic Committee
ISL	International Soccer League
LSO	Ligue du Sud-Ouest
MLS	Major League Soccer
NASL	North American Soccer League
NCSL	National Capital Soccer League
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NFHS	National Federation of High School Sports
NPSL	National Professional Soccer League
NSCAA	National Soccer Coaches Association of America
SEVYSA	South-Eastern Virginia Youth Soccer Association
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
UGSEL	Union Gymnastique et Sportive de l'Enseignement Libre
UNFP	Union Nationale des Footballeurs Professionnels
URPSO	Union Régionale des Patronages du Sud-Ouest
USA	United Soccer Association
USFA	United States Football Association
USFSA	Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sports Athlétiques
USOA	United States Olympic Association
USOC	United States Olympic Committee
USSFA	United States Soccer Football Association
USSF	United States Soccer Federation
USYSA	United States Youth Soccer Association
USYS	United States Youth Soccer
VGAM	Vie au Grand Air de Médoc
VYSA	Virginia Youth Soccer Association
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

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Introduction

Preface

On March 12 the Hyde Parks were worsted by the Ben Millers, 7 to 2, the game carrying with it the championship of the Chicago League. In their league games during the year the Ben Millers scored forty-five goals in twenty games, an average of over two goals per game, and a grand total of goals for the year was seventy-four in twenty-four games. The Ben Miller team is composed of young American boys, every one born in the city of St. Louis or its vicinity, and their ages vary from 18 to 26 years.

- Midwestern America, 1916¹

Everyone wanted to watch the Bastia-Iéna match, broadcast on television. But we still went to l'école de football and, for once, everyone met on the field at the same time, the boys and the girls (who are doing well, as their coach assured us). Mr. Couderchon presented to our photographer the youngest of U.S. Ribécourt's young hopefuls – already a veteran: Xavier Lagathu, 7 years old, has been kicking a ball for two seasons.

- Ribécourt, northeastern France, 1978²

Notwithstanding the sixty-two year ocean of difference between them, Peter Ratican's description of the professional twenty-six year-old "young boy" and Lagathu, the well-experienced seven year-old "veteran", stand in stark contrast. This prompts the question *quid est pueritia*? The term *pueritia* was but one of the Latin terms associated with 'youth'; others include *juventus* or *iuventus* and *adolescentia*.³ Philippe Ariès, in his seminal work on the history of ideas about childhood and the family from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century, hinted at the yet unexplored domain of a society's consciousness with regard to 'age' and 'sex'.⁴ Writing two years before Ariès'

¹ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1916-17*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1916), pp. 92-3. For more on the team sponsored by St. Louis' Ben W Miller Hat Company see David Wangerin, *Soccer in a Football World: The Story of America's Forgotten Game*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

² 'A l'école de football', clipping from unnamed local newspaper, in US Ribécourt club archive, 1977-78 season. In this clipping from the 1977-78 season, the local news went out to visit and report on the *école de football* at US Ribécourt, a French amateur club in the Picardie region.

³ Different from Pontius Pilate's enquiry, *quid est veritas*, the questions asked in this thesis are not about 'truth', but about 'youth'. For a consideration of some terms used at different times and which covered a variety of ages, see Edward James, 'Childhood and Youth in the Early Middle Ages', in P. J. P. Goldberg and Felicity Riddy, eds., *Youth in the Middle Ages*, (Suffolk: York Medieval Press, 2004), pp. 11-23.

⁴ Philippe Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973, 2nd edition), p. 86.

death, Neil Postman later argued that “childhood is a social artifact, not a biological one” and that “[o]ur genes contain no clear instructions about who is and who is not a child”.⁵

These signposts toward the study of age regarding youth are but one of the fundamentals of the difference between the child and the adult. The introductory quotes make no mention of one traditional rite of passage, marital status, but they do offer other material for questioning the notion of the frontiers between youth and adult in football: a connection with professionalism and the elite, the insistence on true native born footballers, the presence of girls, and differences in the wide age ranges of ‘youth’.

This thesis examines the development of youth football in the United States and France over an eighty-year period of the twentieth century, for each of which there is a mass of historical material. The notion of ‘childhood’, as it relates to football, depends on a gradually emerging distinction of the child from the adult. This thesis explores the boundaries of this frontier and asks whether youth football in France and the United States underwent a separation and formal demarcation from the senior game. The contention here is that the youth game became its own independent sector of the sport while maintaining or developing nationally idiosyncratic links with the top level in each country.

This thesis seeks to present a ‘paradigm change’, to borrow Kuhn’s more often used term, regarding the role and relevance of age in the history of sport, and by extension, in that of childhood.⁶ The process by which the youth game became an autonomous sector of the sport has followed a path of age limitation, separate competition, and independent, adapted *Laws of the Game*. Accelerating from the 1950s and shifting gears again as of the 1970s, youth football came into its own, such that by the end of the 20th century, the junior game had its own administrative apparatus,

⁵ Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), pp. xi-xii. The spelling throughout the thesis follows British English save for direct quotes from American literature or sources.

⁶ Ian Hacking’s introductory essay articulates the evolution of the term ‘paradigm’ and the world around Kuhn’s initial ideas fifty years later. See Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions: 50th Anniversary Edition*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. vii-xxxix.

competitive structure, rules and even equipment. The development of the youth game has been less of a divorce from the senior level and more of a slow but natural maturation. In other words, to play with the big boys, the kid was told that he must first play with those his own age.

As football has taken on a professional dimension worldwide, millions of young people have dreamed of playing for a living. While many a young person may have thought seriously about careers in other socially recognised professions, it is impossible to deny the lure of eternal sporting glory and its effects on the young. The exploration of the sporting hero within an “ambiguous world of mythology” has been given treatment elsewhere, although the intricacies of the explicit link between the sporting hero, myth and youth remain to be fully examined.⁷ If the historian is both “demystifier and demythologist”, to quote Holt and Mangan, few if any studies to date have attempted to demystify or demythologise the relevance of the sporting hero on youth. One avenue to consider is the thought that it is probably *because* societies have glorified their sports and relevant athletes that these career paths have become so prized by aspiring youth. Indeed, once sport took on the nature of a true paid professional activity and gained media recognition and social standing, it began to cultivate an undeniable draw for the young beyond its innate rewards.

It is important to note that youth have played a game that was codified and organised by adults. One wonders then about those who ran the increasingly professional sport clubs and organisations. Would they have been keenly aware of the need to find the next young and upcoming talent? Historically then, was there a major shift in the mechanics of the system when sport turned professional? How, in the words of Maurice Crubellier,

“does a society endeavour, consciously or unconsciously, in brightness or dim light, model its members and bend them to its own ends; to allow them to follow its own evolution, or even work to transform itself; above all how does it go

⁷ The cult of the hero, while not directly relevant to this thesis, does raise certain valid points regarding the motivations of the young who pursue a sporting life. Status, fame, monetary rewards, glory can all be associated to the *why* in athletes’ career choices. For a number of accounts of some of these heroes, see Richard Holt, J.A. Mangan and Pierre Lanfranchi, *European Heroes: Myth, Identity, Sport*, (London: Frank Cass, 1996).

about this in regards to its youngest members, those who are the most malleable....”⁸

This brings us to the second contention of the thesis: that in parallel to the process of demarcation from the senior level, the organisation of youth football sought to bridge this expanding gap. Situating the recognition by clubs and national associations of the importance of finding the next generation of players is not, however, a simple discovery of the minutes of one committee meeting on one specific date. Rather, the historical question of a youth policy must be considered within the context of the sport at that time, the values and conceptions which were important for a given era. Searching for the starting point of the movement of ‘youth development’ may be just as difficult as defining the chronological beginnings of the various codes of football.

At the start, this thesis began with a desire to understand youth football as it has evolved to the present, but the initial frame for the research was both far more limited and slightly more ambitious in scope. The original angle was to trace the historical developments of social, economic and legal aspects for the more recent period of 1970 to 2000 in England, France and America. In short, the original thrust was more contemporary, interdisciplinary and focused on the connection with the professional level. Yet the questions insisted and pushed the quest further back in the timeline to the point that the thesis threatened to become a search for the ‘origins’ of youth football. In furrowing through, sometimes drowning in, the sources which aspirated the research further into the past, it became clear that it would be impossible to uncover the ‘William Webb Ellis’ moment of the youth game.

Hence, the thesis migrated more toward questions about understanding the nature of the shifts and the core themes which shaped the direction of youth football. Also important, in order to contextualise these issues, has been an exploration of the socio-historic frame within which they evolved. From an initial enquiry into the contemporary phenomenon, the thesis became a quest further into the past to situate the

⁸ Maurice Crubellier, *l'enfance et la jeunesse dans la société française 1800-1950*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 1979), p.5.

forces and agents which moved forward through time, in some cases moving away from certain ideas or conceptions about football of that period. So rather than seek which of Adam and Eve's boys first dribbled in the Garden, the focus turned to an exploration of how their descendants played and structured the sport.⁹ The research process became an attempt to understand and balance the forces of continuity and change with regard to youth football over the twentieth century beginning with the period around 1920 and the start of nationally organised football in both countries.¹⁰

In his 1964 critique of Ariès' history of the child and the family, Jean-Louis Landrin remarked that "too much research begins from a pile of documents" and thus lauded the author whose work stemmed from "a question, a curiosity about the present".¹¹ In many ways, this thesis is also the fruit of questions rather than one previously unexamined box of material or a more focused enquiry of an already well-defined field. As it may be with many such studies, this academic journey has both existential and autobiographical origins. An observation of the reach and implications of the current 'youth football phenomenon' could be justification enough for instigating research as to its origins and development. Nonetheless, it is perhaps not surprising that such an enquiry on opposing shores of the Atlantic is the work of a former coach and administrator of the youth game whose sporting roots evolved with one foot planted on each continent.¹²

⁹ Who's to say that the world's first youth footballers, Cain and Abel, did not learn the game from their mother Eve, their footballing hero, rather than good old dad? The question of sex, the hero, and the transmission of football from one generation to the next is explored in Dolores P. Martinez, 'Soccer in the USA: 'holding out for a hero'?', in *Soccer & Society*, 9 (2) (2008), pp. 231-43.

¹⁰ With both the USFA (1913) and the FFFA (1919) founded within six years of each other, this became a natural institutional starting point.

¹¹ Jean-Louis Landrin, 'Enfance et société', in *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 19 (2) (1964), p. 322. Landrin was less praiseful regarding some other aspects of Ariès work as were a number of later historians. Nonetheless, Ariès is regularly praised for opening the field.

¹² Indeed, with a transatlantic background in the youth game, such a study is, in some ways, a natural evolution of the author's own experiences and appeals to an innate curiosity about the vast differences and striking similarities lived firsthand.

Concerning the literature and research questions

Research questions are in many ways intimately linked to the discourse from which they originate and to which they aspire to contribute. Yet there is an inherent temptation to perpetually specify the nature of the enquiry just that much more, to excavate further, and with presumably more accuracy than the prior attempts. This, of course, runs the risk of a narrowing, corrective and exclusive discourse, producing the kind of intellectual polarization against which C. P. Snow forewarned in his enlightening lecture entitled *The Two Cultures*.¹³ As a remedy, long-time Librarian of Congress Daniel Boorstin has enunciated the historian's task as one that must remain focused on the past, sacrificing none of its idiosyncrasies, and above all to craft a credible account into which he injects suspense and surprise to a story whose end is already known.¹⁴ With this end in mind, this thesis has relied on the literature not as a doctrine to formally contest, disprove and correct, but as a canon to which it hopes to contribute.

The vast majority of the literature considered for this study is primarily situated within history and sociology and has an essentially national focus. The social history of childhood, which has grown as a discipline since the 1960s, has sought to establish whether there were dividing lines between adulthood and youth, and how and where these were drawn. Childhood aside, historical accounts of all things *ludus* are not rare, yet there is little detailed mention of youth within the sporting context, and football in particular. So were the notions of 'youth' and 'childhood' restricted to one specified age group in sport? Was the youth game distinct from the senior level or was it connected deliberately in various ways? Were there different definitions of youth football in the past and, if so, did they change over time? This thesis explores such questions and where the dividing lines, if any, drew a frontier between the youth and the adult player, the world of youth football and the world of the senior game.

¹³ Snow exposes the gulf between the scientific and literary worlds, both of which are so engrossed with their own ways of understanding the world, that the two are incapable of dialogue. See Charles P. Snow, *The Two Cultures: and A Second Look; An Expanded Version of The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

¹⁴ Daniel Boorstin, *Hidden History*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), see especially pages 19-23.

The idea of stages of youth which transition into adulthood through advancing age and psychological development has been examined for the past, beginning with Philippe Ariès' early work on the history of ideas about childhood and the family since the Middle Ages.¹⁵ Moving beyond the confines of Ariès' primary focus of the family, Maurice Crubellier has explored the other *milieux* in which the child of the past received his or her social, religious and physical education.¹⁶ The societal context of a childhood in rural early twentieth century Brittany is recounted in Hélias' autobiographical memoirs.¹⁷ Despite its initial resonance in the field, Adrian Wilson has explained how Ariès' work has been contested on methodological grounds and in some of its conclusions.¹⁸ Notwithstanding criticism, Ariès' work influenced many others including Neil Postman. Building on some of Ariès' ideas, Postman advanced a thesis encompassing the formalisation of literacy and education from the Renaissance onwards that required children to learn how to be adults and enter the "world of typography" through Europe's reinvented schools and, ultimately, "by doing so, [European civilisation] made childhood a necessity".¹⁹

More recently, research into the world of the child has included Cunningham's review of two major currents in the historical scholarship of childhood: the ongoing study of the ideas about childhood and the relationships, roles and patterns in "family strategy".²⁰ Paula Fass has sought to bring childhood into the discussion of globalisation and argued that "[c]hildhood is at once a universal experience, and one of the most culturally specific".²¹ Stearns' work has subscribed to the view that there are aspects of children and childhood that change little between time and place but also accepts some fundamental variations; for the author, the relevance of the history of

¹⁵ Philippe Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*, (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973, 2nd edition).

¹⁶ Crubellier, *l'enfance et la jeunesse*.

¹⁷ Pierre-Jakez Hélias, *Le Cheval d'Orgueil: mémoires d'un Breton du pays bigouden*, (Paris: Plon, 1975).

¹⁸ Adrian Wilson, 'The infancy of the history of childhood: An appraisal of Philippe Ariès', *History and Theory*, 19 (2) (1980), pp. 132-53

¹⁹ Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, p. 36. Postman describes how the two worlds became more and more clearly separated with the onset of the printing press and greater literacy. For him, societal barriers between the child and the adult in areas such as language, clothing, social manners, and rationalised and written thought were fundamental in separating the child's from the adult one.

²⁰ Hugh Cunningham, 'Histories of Childhood', *American Historical Review*, 103 (4) (1998), pp. 1195-1208.

²¹ Paula S. Fass, 'Children and Globalization', *Journal of Social History*, 36 (4) (2003), p. 964.

childhood is to force a “confrontation between what is ‘natural’ in the experience of children, and what is constructed by specific historical forces”.²² Other work such as Mintz’s has aimed to “strip away the myths, misconceptions and nostalgia” embedded in contemporary ideas about the childhood of the past.²³

Moving back to France, research by René Amigues and Marie-Thérèse Zerbato-Poudou has attempted to place some chronological bearings on the historical evolution of nurseries and pre-school from their nineteenth century origins to the turn of the new millennium.²⁴ Ludivine Bantigny and Ivan Jablonka’s collection, *Jeunesse oblige*, covers three chronological periods of youth: the birth of contemporary youth from the nineteenth century to the First World War, the interwar-to-post-war youth culture, and, lastly, a more recent period of juvenile identity since the 1960s.²⁵ The question of fringe or marginal youth is at the centre of Jablonka’s subsequent extensive review of the historical integration of youth beginning with illegitimate children of *l’Ancien Régime* and the Revolution, moving forward through time to delinquents of the nineteenth-century, all the way up to the ethnic youth of the present-day *banlieues*.²⁶ The field in general only continues to expand as evidenced by the forthcoming compendium on the history of childhood in the Western World.²⁷

There are numerous mentions within the historiography of sport, football in particular, about the origins of the youth game but few if any studies exclusively devoted to it. Beginning with France, historians Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, for example, have discussed the backgrounds of former professionals and their first steps in the sport, but the world of youth football as such remains largely unexplored.²⁸ There

²² Peter N. Stearns, *Childhood in World History*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 3.

²³ Steven Mintz, *Huck’s Raft: A History of American Childhood*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. iv.

²⁴ René Amigues and Marie-Thérèse Zerbato-Poudou, *Comment l’enfant devient élève*, (Paris: Retz, 2007).

²⁵ Ludivine Bantigny and Ivan Jablonka, *Jeunesse oblige. Histoire des jeunes en France XIXe-XXIe siècle*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009).

²⁶ Ivan Jablonka, *Les enfants de la République – l’intégration des jeunes de 1789 à nos jours*, (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2010).

²⁷ Paula S. Fass, ed., *The Routledge History of Childhood in the Western World*, (Oxon: Routledge, forthcoming 2013).

²⁸ In several articles and books, both Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl address the early days of footballers yet this serves largely as background and context for their primary object of study, which is the adult game and more specifically, the professional one. See Pierre Lanfranchi, ‘Apparition et

have been other studies on particular aspects of the sport by Antoine Mourat, Didier Demazière and Benoît Csakvary, yet the approach rests on the connections between youth and professional.²⁹

From within the discipline of sociology, Jean-Michel Faure and Charles Suaud have examined the questions of professionalism and have described the process of how French football's "incomplete professionalization" is due, in no small part, to visions about the amateur and professional worlds which incorporate the youth game.³⁰ In their later monograph the pair advanced the specific vision of the State, society and public service in France

“[I]t should be remembered that the delegatory federations-become trustees of a ‘mission of public service’ are held to a certain number of obligations...they also have as a priority the production of a sporting elite responsible to represent France in international competition: ‘It is the image of the nation which is at stake, and this becomes an affair of the State.’ The high level athlete personifies exemplary values and must play, according to the law, a social, cultural and national role of the utmost importance.”³¹

This marriage of government and private association, youth, sport and education as a mission for the public good, forms the subtext of the specific French institutional vision of sport and is fundamental to contextualising any study of French youth sport. In other words, the youth game is just another part of the ‘French football family’. As such, several authors have framed this specific vision of the relationship between State and sport as ‘French exceptionalism’.³²

Affirmation du Football en Languedoc 1900-1935’, in Pierre Arnaud and Jean Camy, *La Naissance du Mouvement Sportif Associatif en France*, (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986), pp. 259-73; Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, ‘La Professionalisation du Football en France’, in *Modern & Contemporary France*, 6 (3) (1998), pp. 313-25; Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, (Paris : Hachette, 1995); Alfred Wahl, ‘Le footballeur français : de l’amateurisme au salariat (1890-1926)’, in *Le Mouvement Social*, 135 (1986), pp.7-30; and Alfred Wahl, *Les archives du football*, (Paris: Editions Gallimard/Julliard, 1989).

²⁹ Didier Demazière and Benoît Csakvary, ‘Devenir Professionnel’, in *Panoramiques : Un monde foot, foot, foot!*, 61 (2002), pp. 7-9; Antoine Mourat, ‘Football et mono-industrie : création et évolution d’un « style sochalien » à partir de 1928’, in Yvan Gastaut et Stéphane Mourlane, eds., *Le football dans nos sociétés*, Autrement « Mémoires/Histoire », (2006), pp. 52-63.

³⁰ Jean Michel Faure and Charles Suaud, ‘Un professionnalisme inachevé’, in *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales*, 103 (1) (1994), pp. 7-26.

³¹ Jean-Michel Faure and Charles Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel à la Française*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), pp. 39-40.

³² Lanfranchi and Wahl have argued that an ‘exceptionalism’ can be observed in three areas. Firstly, the peculiar nature of professionalism was viewed not as a separate and legitimate profession but rather as an

French sport has been explored from various perspectives including questions of integration, government and policy. The trend of a contradiction in sports policy has also been well-developed by Sébastien Fleuriel in regard to elite youth sport in general and he challenged some of the *a priori* assumptions on which the French system is based as an outgrowth from Olympic failure in 1960, criticizing the authorities for the negation of the economic realities and pressures on the sporting world at the turn of the 21st century.³³ Still others, like Julien Bertrand and Jamel Sandjak, have explored how young players are conditioned for the professional game according to a “dispositionalist” approach and whether football serves as a means to integrate youth into wider society.³⁴ Physical education, in the form of the French regional or national schools, has been the object of some socio-historic work by Saint-Martin, Machemehl and Lefèvre.³⁵ None of these studies have questioned the origins of the youth game as such or explored beyond the contemporary period in great detail.

Also on the link between the State and sport, a handful of authors have penned in English including Geoff Hare’s cultural examination of French football and Lindsay Krasnoff’s work about the evolution of sporting policy in France during the second half of the twentieth century in which France attempted to create an alternative sports model from that of the Eastern Bloc and America.³⁶ Philip Dine’s research on *l’état*

accessory activity for middle-class students who could finance their studies in an acceptable manner. Secondly, the bourgeoisie distanced itself from association football and lastly, the French game was noted for the “massive presence” of foreign players prior to the instauration of professionalism. More implicitly than the prior authors, Faure and Suaud claim that “France singles itself out by a possibility of maximum intervention by the State”, in contrast to other European Community countries which are characterized by an absence of this type of *tutelle*, or State tutelage. It is unclear however if France is the only such country as the football federation in Spain and the Italian Olympic Committee hold their power through some form of governmental delegation. See Lanfranchi and Wahl, ‘La Professionalisation’, pp. 318-9 and Faure & Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel*, p. 39.

³³ Sébastien Fleuriel, *Le sport de haut niveau en France*, (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1994).

³⁴ Julien Bertrand, ‘Se préparer au métier de footballeur : une analyse d’une socialisation professionnelle’, in *Revue STAPS*, 82 (4) (2008), pp. 29-42; Jamel Sandjak, ‘Football de haut niveau et insertion sociale’, in *Les Cahiers de l’INSEP*, « Football, jeu et société », 25 (1999), pp. 309-317.

³⁵ Jean Saint-Martin, ‘La création des Instituts régionaux d’éducation physique et le modèle du médecin gymnaste en France à la fin des années 1920’, *STAPS*, 71 (1) (2006), pp. 7-22; Charly Machemehl and Jean-Pierre Lefèvre, ‘La gouvernance de l’éducation physique et sportive entre 1945 et 1967 : d’un modèle d’enseignement imposé vers une action régulée’, *STAPS*, 76 (2) (2007), pp. 121-38.

³⁶ Geoff Hare, *Football in France: A Cultural History*, (New York: Berg, 2003); Lindsay Sarah Krasnoff, ‘Resurrecting the nation – The evolution of French sports policy from de Gaulle to Mitterrand’

gestionnaire examines the context of increasing decentralisation from the 1960s to the 1980s.³⁷

While most of the above studies have not centred on youth, a number of other authors, such as Jacques Terrien, Yves Leroux, Hassen Slimani, Cécile Créac'h, Caroline Freslon, and Lidwine Bellanger, have focused more specifically on the position of youth development in France, its role in the training of young athletes for the elite level, and its apparent contradictions in creating competing ends of simultaneous elite production and general scholastic education.³⁸

As with the literature in France, youth football in the United States of America has generally been restricted to a small part of the overall historical account of the game or addressed in child psychology research or the plethora of coaching texts. With the exception of Baptista's and Robinson's early doctoral work, little extensive research was published prior to the NASL's golden years.³⁹ As such, the history of the game has in many ways grown up alongside the game's recent history itself. Cascio's almost exclusively contemporary narrative is perhaps the most telling example of the limited historiography of the game until the 1980s in which he covers the sport in America prior to the NASL in one chapter quaintly entitled 'Dark Ages in Yankeeland 1900-1968'.⁴⁰ Another of the early histories of the sport in America by Sam Foulds and Paul Harris was categorical that "soccer's appeal to America's youth did not really begin until the

in Alan Tomlinson, Christopher Young and Richard Holt, eds., *Sport and the Transformation of Modern Europe – States, media and markets 1950-2010*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2011).

³⁷ Philip Dine, 'Sport and the State in contemporary France: from la Charte des Sports to decentralisation', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 6 (3) (1998), pp. 301-11.

³⁸ Lidwine Bellanger, 'Le dispositif de formation au métier de footballeur : l'apparente unicité des centres de formation', (Université de Nantes: unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, 2003); Cécile Créac'h, 'Le FC Nantes Atlantique au cœur de l'espace national du football professionnel', (Université de Nantes: unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, 1996); Caroline Freslon, 'L'insertion professionnelle des sportifs de haut niveau dans la région des pays de Loire', (Université de Nantes: unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, 2001); Yves Leroux, 'Trajectoires et formations sportives à l'école de la Jonelière', (Université de Nantes: unpublished *mémoire de maîtrise*, 1992); Hassen Slimani, 'La professionnalisation du football français: un modèle de dénévation' (Université de Nantes: unpublished PhD thesis, 2000); Hassen Slimani, 'Le système de formation à la française', in *Panoramiques : Un monde foot, foot, foot!*, 61 (2002), pp. 78-84 ; Hassen Slimani, 'Les deux dimensions constitutives d'un capital sportif à la française entre education et compétition', in *Lendemain*, 22 (88) (1997), pp. 51-68; and Jacques Terrien, 'Le métier de footballeur professionnel', (Université de Nantes: unpublished *mémoire de DEA*, 1989).

³⁹ Robert Baptista, 'A History of Intercollegiate Soccer in the United States of America' (Indiana University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1962) and James Robinson, 'The History of Soccer in the City of St. Louis', (St. Louis University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1966).

⁴⁰ Chuck Cascio, *Soccer U.S.A.*, (Washington: Robert B. Luce, 1975), pp. 47-70.

1970s".⁴¹ Tony Cirino made several passing mentions to the growth of a youth development policy which began in the early 1970s.⁴² Zander Hollander was one of the first compilers of the sport's history in 1980, a work which laid the encyclopaedic foundations for later research by Roger Allaway, Colin Jose, and Dave Litterer, and Michael Lablanc.⁴³ While these have covered the general history of American soccer on a grand scale and often provide anecdotes about the youth game, more often than not, the focus was on the professional and college level and the ethnic and youth histories were left out. Len Oliver, long-time player, coach, administrator and member of the Virginia and American Soccer Halls of Fame, explicitly referred to the lack of "rigorous, analytical studies of soccer in America" and summarized the state of research on football up to the mid-to-late 1980s

"So there is a history of soccer in America, one that is interconnected with the lives of working-class people, but it remains for the most part undocumented. With the new interest in social and working class history, perhaps soccer's link with its ethnic roots will unfold."⁴⁴

Indeed, the 'ethnic' flavour of football was often mentioned or cited in passing as an observation, a sort of *état de fait* or in order to fill large gaps in the timeline, but it was not until later that the questions of immigrant communities in the sport's history on the American continent came to the fore. Immigration and ethnic history of the sport has produced some material which references the youth game though rarely in any great detail. Beginning with Mormino's early work in 1982, a number of articles about sports, immigration and ethnicity in America have been published but most only included passing mentions to the youth game.⁴⁵ Similar to the situation in France, a

⁴¹ Sam Foulds and Paul Harris, *America's Soccer Heritage*, (Manhattan Beach: Soccer for Americans, 1979).

⁴² Tony Cirino, *US Soccer versus the World*, (Leonia: Damon Press, Inc., 1983).

⁴³ Roger Allaway, Colin Jose, and Dave Litterer, *The Encyclopedia of American Soccer History* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press Inc., 2001); Zander Hollander, *American Encyclopedia of Soccer* (New York: Everest House Publishers, 1980); Michael Lablanc, *The World Encyclopedia of Soccer*, (Detroit: Gale Research Inc., 1994).

⁴⁴ Len Oliver, 'Cultural Implications of the Soccer Phenomenon in America'. Originally published as a chapter in *Cultural Dimensions of Play, Games and Sport* (Ed. Bernard Mergen, Ph.D. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers, Inc., 1986), reprinted with the author's permission at the American Soccer Archives <http://www.sover.net/~spectrum> (accessed June 23, 2009).

⁴⁵ Gabe Logan, 'Pilgrims' progress in Chicago: three English soccer tours to the Second City, 1905-09', *Soccer & Society*, 11 (3) (2010), pp. 198-212, and Gabe Logan, 'The Rise of Early Chicago Soccer', in Elliot J. Gorn, ed., *Sports in Chicago*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008), pp. 19-42; Gary Mormino, 'The Playing Fields of St. Louis - Italian Immigrants and Sports, 1925-1941', *Journal of Sport*

handful of unpublished doctoral studies have touched briefly on the early history of football in universities, schools, junior teams in both ethnic and native born communities.⁴⁶ Oliver has referred to the role of ethnic clubs and some mainstream American efforts which were responsible for organizing the sport for youth prior to the 1970s ‘youth soccer boom’.⁴⁷ More recently, Allaway’s enlightening look into the role of immigration and the textile industry in early twentieth century America discussed the background from which much of football’s club structure originated but rarely delves into the junior level.⁴⁸

Beyond the question of ethnicity and immigration, there has been one dominant theme in research on football in America: ‘exceptionalism’. Inspired by the discourse in political sociology that reached back as far as Werner Sombart’s foray into ‘American exceptionalism’, Frederick Jackson Turner’s ‘Frontier thesis’ and the notion of ‘Manifest Destiny’, it was the relative absence of working-class interests federated and represented in the body politic which spawned the basis for Andrei Markovits’ initial venture into the field with the publishing of ‘The Other “American Exceptionalism” – Why is there no soccer in the United States?’ in 1988.⁴⁹ This work, along with Mason’s ideas about “sporting space”, both garnered support and generated antagonist positions over the next decade, the discussion of which was certainly buoyed by America’s

History, 9 (2) (1982), pp. 5-19; Juan-Javier Pescador, ‘Los Heroes del Domingo – Soccer, Borders and Social Spaces in Great Lakes Mexican Communities, 1940-1970’, in Jorge Iber and Samuel Octavio Regalado, *Mexican Americans and sports: a reader on athletics and barrio life*, (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), pp. 73-87; David Trouille, ‘Association football to fútbol - ethnic succession and the history of Chicago-area soccer, 1890-1920’, *Soccer & Society*, 9 (4) (2008), pp. 455-76; David Trouille, ‘Association football to fútbol - ethnic succession and the history of Chicago-area soccer since 1920’, *Soccer & Society*, 10 (6) (2009), pp. 795-822; Derek Van Rhee, ‘The promise of soccer in America: the open play of ethnic subcultures’, *Soccer & Society*, 10 (6) (2009), pp. 781-94.

⁴⁶ Gabe Logan, ‘Lace Up the Boots, Full Tilt Ahead: Recreation, Immigration, and Labor on Chicago’s Soccer Fields, 1890–1950’, (Northern Illinois University: unpublished PhD dissertation, 2005); Forrest C. Tyson, ‘A Study of the factors affecting the growth of youth soccer in selected cities in the United States’, (Ohio State University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1976); Steven Apostolov, ‘Les hauts et les bas du soccer professionnel aux Etats-Unis à partir du cas du Massachusetts’, (Université de Paris VIII: unpublished PhD thesis, 2011).

⁴⁷ Len Oliver, ‘American Soccer didn’t start with Pele: Philadelphia Soccer in the 1940s and 50s’, *Journal of Ethno-Development*, (1992).

⁴⁸ Roger Allaway, *Rangers, Rovers and Spindles: Soccer, Immigration, And Textiles in New England and New Jersey*, (Haworth: St. Johann Press, 2005).

⁴⁹ Andrei S. Markovits, ‘The Other “American Exceptionalism” – Why is there no soccer in the United States?’, *Praxis International*, 8 (2) (1988), pp. 125-50.

hosting of the 1994 FIFA World Cup.⁵⁰ Building on the “crowding out” premise and seeking to continue where Markovits left off in 1914, Sugden developed the theme of “nativism” and its role in the early twentieth century to explain why football was benched from America’s sporting line-up all the way into the 1990s.⁵¹ Nathan Abrams was the first to offer a critique of Markovits’ thesis of the “crowding out” with a contrasting “inhibited” view.⁵² Ivan Waddington and Martin Roderick provided the other criticism of Markovits, Mason and Sugden contesting the notion of a limited amount of “sport space” as well as the biases to those sports which “got in first”.⁵³

Contestation of the reasons for football’s tribulations, on the one hand, and the legitimacy of the “exceptionalist” position on the other, only resumed after Markovits and Hellerman published a comprehensive and persuasive tripartite argument for football’s failure to court America.⁵⁴ Subsequently, an entire issue of *The International Journal of the History of Sport* was devoted to American sport and was bookended by references to the question of ‘exceptionalism’ and a push for a more ‘imperial’ interpretation of America’s sporting history. Dyreson describes ‘American exceptionalism’ and its “paradoxes” while Mangan asserts that the “myopic self-confidence” of the concept itself is the only thing which is “exceptional” and only demonstrates a “self-absorbed insularity”.⁵⁵ Szymanski and Zimbalist produced a text with parallel themes to *Offside* through an exploration of the differences between global football and American baseball.⁵⁶ Steven Pope is among the few daring iconoclasts to have challenged what he calls the “legacy of exceptionalism” in an appropriately

⁵⁰ Tony Mason also advanced reasons for football’s absence due to the earlier arrival and consolidation of the sport space by baseball and American football. Cited in Ivan Waddington and Martin Roderick, ‘American Exceptionalism: Soccer and American Football’, *The Sports Historian*, 16 (1996), p. 45-6.

⁵¹ John Sugden, ‘USA and the World Cup: American nativism and the rejection of the people’s game’, in John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, *Hosts and Champions - Soccer Cultures, National Identities and the USA World Cup*, (London: Ashgate, 1994), pp. 219-52.

⁵² Nathan D. Abrams, ‘Inhibited but not “crowded out”: The strange fate of soccer in the United States’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 12, (3) (1995), pp. 1-17.

⁵³ Waddington and Roderick, ‘American Exceptionalism’, pp. 46-8.

⁵⁴ The authors proposed a three-pronged explanation of historical-sociological, cultural-anthropological and organizational-institutional reasons. See Andrei S. Markovits and Steven L. Hellerman, *Offside: Soccer and American Exceptionalism*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁵⁵ See Mark Dyreson, ‘Prologue: The paradoxes of American insularity, exceptionalism and imperialism’ and J.A. Mangan, ‘Epilogue: ‘empire in denial’: An exceptional kind of imperialism’, *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 22 (6) (2005), pp. 938-45, 1194-7.

⁵⁶ Stefan Szymanski and Andrew Zimbalist, *National pastime: how Americans play baseball and the rest of the world plays soccer*, (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005).

entitled 'Rethinking Sport, Empire, and American Exceptionalism' in which he wrote not necessarily to counter Markovits and Hellerman's arguments for football's absence, but rather to raise a call to go beyond the "interpretive talisman that is *American exceptionalism*".⁵⁷

Ultimately, the debate on the 'exceptionalism', or not, of football in America has revealed only scarce mentions to the youth game and largely for the most recent period since the 1970s. While this thesis will not engage in great depth with this debate, two of its themes are relevant and form a *bas-relief* of this thesis – especially in comparison to the French case. In their argument, Markovits and Hellerman stress two essential factors of 'state-independence' and 'market-orientation' that underpin numerous areas of American society and were conditions that shaped, in no small way, the organisation of football in America.⁵⁸

Moving beyond the 'ethnic' and 'exceptionalist' discourses above, research in development and law does not give extensive treatment to the youth game. Perhaps given the lack of longstanding national professionalism recounted by the aforementioned authors, it is not surprising that research in the area of elite talent development in the United States, such as Emily Greenspan's 1983 critical look at elite youth athletes in a variety of sports, did not even mention youth football.⁵⁹ Only more recently has Jenna Merten examined in more detail the question of child labour and elite youth athletes. As regards teen sporting 'phenoms', she assessed the compatibility of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 and professional sport in the wake of the much ado about one Freddy Adu.⁶⁰ The link between youth, apprenticeship and the professional level was explored in baseball and American football by Michael Schneiderman who noted that "the burden of apprenticing young talent in those fields falls upon the Colleges and Universities", and more recently in a comparative piece by

⁵⁷ Steven W. Pope, 'Rethinking Sport, Empire, and American Exceptionalism' *Sport History Review*, 38 (2007), pp. 93-4. Italics in original.

⁵⁸ Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, p. 46.

⁵⁹ Emily Greenspan, *Little Winners*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1983). Greenspan discusses the role of scholarships, the cost of higher education and the road to professional sport in America.

⁶⁰ Jenna Merten, 'Raising a red card: why Freddy Adu should not be allowed to play professional soccer', in *Marquette Sports Law Review*, 15 (1) (2004), p. 205-25.

Jesse Gary on baseball and European football.⁶¹ Once again, both largely ignored the youth footballing phenomenon historically.

Overall, in the historiography of football youth occupies a peripheral role, and a substantial body of sociological research focuses on conceptions about the sport and its young players, but is generally limited to the present period. Alfred Wahl has noted the limits of such an approach in which a phenomenon is examined by other disciplines, notably sociology and anthropology, yet still lacking a rigorous study of its past.⁶² Moreover, as regards the abovementioned published work, what is worthy of note is the lack of a line of questioning about the nature of the youth game beyond its connection with professionalism and the elite level.

Indeed, the canon itself generally offered only brief anecdotes of the childhood of former star players, or at least those having attained professional status, about their experiences in the school yard, streets or neighbouring park for these early days of unsupervised footballing apprenticeship. The successful youth turned-professional is but one minor character in the entire youth football narrative. In regard to the history of the child in the Middle Ages, an area which bloomed in the decades after Ariès' groundbreaking research of the early 1960s, Didier Lett has argued that questions about youth would benefit from study independent from the relationships with the family or the mother.⁶³ In a similar light, the present study will seek to sever football's umbilical cord, insofar as the principal object of enquiry will be youth football itself, all while keeping its relationship with the adult-elite level always in view.

In many ways, the literature re-oriented this study to turn the clock further back precisely in response to the lack of an extensive history of youth football as such. The

⁶¹ Jesse Gary, 'The Demise of Sport? The Effect of Judicially Mandated Free Agency on European Football and American Baseball', in *Cornell International Law Journal*, 38 (2005), p. 293-325; Michael Schneiderman, 'Professional Sport-Involuntary Servitude and the Popular Will', in *Gonzaga Law Review*, 63 (7) (1972), pp. 63-81.

⁶² In 1990, Wahl stated "[b]ut the terrain left free by historians has always been occupied by journalists and more recently sociologists and anthropologists more swift to question what was happening in stadia which so captivated the crowds. As such football is studied as a phenomenon of our time while its past escapes all rigorous investigation." See Alfred Wahl, 'Le football, un nouveau territoire de l'historien', in *Vingtième Siècle*, 26 (1990), p. 128.

⁶³ Didier Lett, 'Note de Lecture: Danièle Alexandre-Bidon et Monique Closson : L'enfant à l'ombre des cathédrales', in *Médiévales*, 12 (1987), p. 130.

state of the literature described above revealed three issues: 1) a lack of focused questions which go beyond the most recent period; 2) very little comparative work on the topic which tends to maintain a national focus; and 3) few efforts to contextualise the history of the phenomenon outside the issues of gender identity, class, socialisation, ethnicity, or beyond the realms of child protection and psychology. The mentions in the historiography generally remain on the periphery or serve as introductory background. Some in the field have noted this absence of detailed research on the youth game and made calls in this direction.⁶⁴ The questions regarding the defining characteristics of what makes youth football ‘youth football’, for example, its association with ‘age’ or its distinction from ‘adult football’, would shed some light on the phenomenon in a historical context and contribute to an understanding of the place of the child in twentieth century society.

Thus, from an initial focus on the way in which the elite youth game was connected to the professional level in several countries for the more contemporary period, other wider and more historical questions began to form the core of this study. While perhaps basic, they were unasked and unanswered. They were all prompted by the following question: what was youth football? Following on from this, in what way, if at all, was youth football different from the adult game? Did the well-developed and adult-organised youth sector based around age divisions and which is so prominent today, exist with similar or different facets in the past? What, if any, were the dividing lines between the youth and adult game? How recent is the phenomenon that mobilizes millions of children (and their parents) on a weekly basis in America and in Europe? Was it in schools, clubs, or with national associations? Why and how have youth been involved in the sport and in what way was this connected to the long and already well chronicled history of the senior and professional level?

As regards international comparison, such approaches are rare. This is, according to Dietschy and Holt, “particularly ironic” as sport has “been shaped by the

⁶⁴ During the closing discussions of a seminar in London in September 2007 entitled ‘The Business History of Sport’, co-sponsored by the London School of Economics and the International Centre for Sport History and Culture of De Montfort University, several sport economists and historians noted the lack of published work in the field of youth sport and called for more research into the youth game including that with a more comparative perspective.

same economic and social forces”.⁶⁵ Indeed, comparative work is important since it can venture “beyond the question of sport, [to that] of fundamental differences in the conception of the role of the State as actor or referee” to cite from Lanfranchi’s four-country comparison of early national sporting policies.⁶⁶ In this vein, the recent organisation of a network on ‘Sport in Modern Europe’ in an attempt to establish some perspectives on a comparative cultural history for the phenomenon of sport is a source of encouragement for ‘transnational’ approaches of study.⁶⁷

This thesis aims then to contribute to the historiography of the sport with an international comparative history of youth football, an area neglected thus far. The objective is to fill some of the gaps mentioned above, and if not completely, then at least address possible avenues. In addition, it seeks, albeit briefly, to situate some of the questions about the junior game in the wider context of the youth in society in areas such as education and employment. The core of the thesis will address specific questions about youth football in order to adumbrate its nature, both changing and continual, as a separate subset of the sport and within a transatlantic context. It is hoped that this may contribute to a wider understanding of the differences – or similarities – between France and America beyond national archetypes. As noted by Lanfranchi, comparative study is all the more relevant and adapted to such a line of enquiry since “the chronologies are often the same and national approaches only reply in part to the questions”.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Paul Dietschy and Richard Holt, ‘Sports History in France and Britain: National Agendas and European Perspectives’, in *Journal of Sport History*, 37 (1) (2010), p. 83.

⁶⁶ Pierre Lanfranchi, ‘Entre initiative privée et question nationale : Genèse et évolution des politiques sportives en Europe (Grande-Bretagne, Allemagne, France, Italie)’, in *Politix*, 13 (50), (deuxième trimestre 2000), p. 30.

⁶⁷ The ‘Sport in Modern Europe’ network was established by academics from the University of Cambridge, the University of Brighton and De Montfort University in an attempt to organise several symposia with the objective of establishing “the central economic, political and social themes for the writing of a history of modern European sport”. See <http://www.sport-in-europe.group.cam.ac.uk> (accessed September 2010).

⁶⁸ Pierre Lanfranchi, ‘La consommation du spectacle sportif : une comparaison entre l’Allemagne, l’Italie et la France dans l’entre-deux-guerres’, in *Le mouvement social*, 206 (janvier-mars 2004), p. 115.

Thesis structure

This thesis advances three fundamental arguments regarding youth football in France and America over the period from c.1920 to c.2000. The work is divided thematically into four chapters and a conclusion, each centred on a specific question. The first contention is that the youth game became its own autonomous sector of the sport which evolved into one fundamentally different from the version played by adults in three ways, one covered in each of the first three chapters: the distinction of youth from adults and youth from youth according to age; the organisation of separate competitive spaces for youth; and thirdly, through changes to the core elements of the sport itself such as the field, ball, match duration and number of players. The second contention, the subject of chapter 4, is that despite a distancing of the two footballing phenomena (youth from adult), the organisers of the sport established and maintained deliberate links between the junior level and the senior game. The final argument of the thesis is that these processes, which respected some of the national idiosyncrasies, accelerated from the key decade of the 1970s to pull the threads of the youth game together and weave a sort of harmonised international version of youth footballing *communis experientia*.

The first chapter explores the coming of 'age' in football and discusses the question of the origin, nature and evolution of age categories as the basis for the organisation of the youth game. The focus is participation limitation and the mechanisms through which it was organised. The chapter traces the progressive reduction of 'age' in organised football through the introduction of a larger range of narrowing categories based on 'age'. In addition, it begins to explore the nature of the sport in American culture. Lastly, the questions asked cover the role of age in the parallel worlds of education and employment.

Chapter 2 seeks to address the nature of the separate competitive spaces in France and America. Firstly, the nature and origin of youth football competitions is explored in France as well as the questions as to whether there was a shift from scholastic to club-based football as the primary locus for the sport in qualitative terms.

The second half of the chapter examines the changes to the competitions in the United States as a reflection of the cultural evolution of the sport.

The third chapter considers the core aspects of the game and how these were adapted to youth. Four 'Laws of the Game' are the basis for the four sections. Each segment of the chapter explores one of these laws and its evolution over time tracing when and how specific age-related rules came into play. The chapter discusses the context of the game itself and how the size of the field, the ball, the height of the crossbars, for example, were adapted to youth. The final aspect of this chapter refers to the number of players in small-sided games and technical development policies which were debated and introduced in various ways and at various times in the two countries.

The second contention of the thesis concerns the gap created by the aforementioned process of separation. Therefore, chapter 4 focuses on the link between the youth game and the elite or professional level. As the youth sector became growingly distinct, the leadership of the game introduced specific mechanisms that would provide a connection between the youth game and the elite, regardless of the professional status of that elite. The bridging process was based on talent identification, or *la détection*, and talent development, or *la formation*. Such identification mechanisms included national skills contests, curtain raisers and mentorship by senior accomplished players. The development of talent was structured in an organised environment for training and coaching at *centres de formation* and summer soccer camps, and a system of youth national teams at younger and younger ages.

The concluding chapter draws together the themes discussed and presents the third and final argument of the thesis. In this last chapter, a rough outline of periodization for youth football is proposed (c.1920 to c.1940; c.1940 to c.1970; and c.1970 to c.2000) with the 1970s serving as a key decade for transition. The Conclusion summarizes how the youth game became both separate from the senior level all while developing, creating and maintaining bridges with the elite and professional sector – two historical processes which respected the various idiosyncrasies of each country even if the general trends were the same. Notwithstanding such national idioms, there

was a mix of push and pull forces, especially from the 1970s. They drew the youth game in America and France closer. This final aspect, a growing harmonisation of the game across both countries, is the third contention of the thesis. The key role of 'harmonisation' was jointly played by three actors: the tripartite team of internationalisation, professionalization and commercialisation. These three forces influenced the developments of the game and raised the sport from a local and regional phenomenon to one that was emblematic of a globalized world.

Reflecting on sources and their limitations

This section discusses the sources which have been consulted for the thesis and then expands on some of the difficulties related to their use and interpretation. It is important to note that there was no one archive of primary sources and the research material spanned two countries, different organisations, and libraries as well as that which was digitally available. The research ranged from traditional archival work, library based study and oral history to the use of digital means through various internet portals ranging from official databases of government legislation and corporate registers to club online archives. In many cases vastly disparate types of sources, they have all presented their own challenges.

The Sources

Firstly, trips to both countries allowed for study visits to the following libraries: the Library of Congress (Washington, D.C., United States of America) at various periods between 2005 and 2007, the humanities and sociology libraries of the Université de Nantes, the U.F.R. STAPS-Nantes on multiple occasions between 2006 and 2009 (Nantes, France) and regular visits to De Montfort University and the International Centre for Sport History and Culture. A number of visits to the UEFA archive in Nyon, Switzerland were organised between 2008 and 2011. Finally, working at the Centre International d'Étude du Sport (CIES) in Neuchâtel, Switzerland since 2005 has offered

the added benefit of access to its specialised sporting library and access to various resources from FIFA.

The UEFA archive located at the confederation's headquarters in Nyon, Switzerland was still in the process of cataloguing at the time of the research and to the author's knowledge, he was the first researcher to be allowed in.⁶⁹ The collection included committee records, surveys and reports from its national associations, including a host of material for, most significantly for this thesis, France. Meeting minutes, correspondence and appendices of two UEFA committees provided an international and comparative perspective on youth matters and helped keep in mind the evolving context of European football.⁷⁰ Additionally, until mid-2011 UEFA housed in Nyon a research library full of resources spanning Europe but also America. The FIFA material included the official handbooks from 1927 to 1982, activity reports from the 1970s to the late 1980s, financial reports and circular letters. In addition, the records of the International Football Association Board, the minutes of which have been digitized, were extremely helpful for tracing the evolution of the rules of the game.

A variety of records and documents in the form of regulations, competition records, annual reports, and committee meeting minutes were consulted from different sporting organisations from the 1920s to the present. These include the regulations and competition records contained in the French national federation's *Annuaire* for much of the 1950s, 60s, 70s and 80s. The official *Charte du Football Professionnel* which was the collective labour agreement for the professional game in France was consulted since its inception in 1973-74. The first four editions of the French federation's *Guide des Tournois de Jeunes* offered a look into the explosion of youth tournaments both nationally and internationally. The FFF's committees for the women and girls' game and youth were particularly helpful for the turn of the twenty-first century along with the federation's *Règlements Généraux*. The newsletters from the French professional

⁶⁹ The final cataloguing was finished by 2011. The opportunity to read on-site during 2009 and 2010 while this was going on was particularly stimulating especially for the moments to assist in connecting some dots in the official record.

⁷⁰ The 'Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football' and the 'Youth Committee' both provided information about the youth game as it was viewed from European national associations and leagues from the 1960s to the 1990s for the former and the 1970s for the latter.

league and players' union were similarly useful. Lastly, documents and newsletters from clubs supplied information about the youth game from both professional and amateur perspectives including reports from FC Sochaux-Montbéliard, AS Nancy-Lorraine's *Le Chaudron Rouge*, Entente Sportive de la Forêt's *ESF Informations* and *Journal de l'ESF*.

Online archives offered a vast range of sources such as scanned individual player registrations, photographic images, scanned newspaper articles, club newsletters, photographed medals or awards, and film documentaries. The online archive of the French *Institut National de l'Audiovisuel* contained several dozen video documentaries which included a variety of reports on youth football spanning the second half of the twentieth century. An in-depth survey of French football leagues and clubs was also conducted.⁷¹ Starting with the leagues and districts where little information was readily available, the historical/archive sections from a total of over two hundred and forty club websites were consulted (the full list is in the Bibliography). Many contained little or no relevant information, but one-hundred and twelve clubs' records did offer a wealth of club newsletters, scanned or in some cases transcribed local newspaper articles, memoirs, hundreds of old photographs, accounts of winning youth teams or their first appearance, photographed medals or certificates, over three hundred and thirty scanned player registrations, or *licences*, spanning all age categories and from 1924 to 2009, and several video documentaries from club anniversaries.

⁷¹ In addition to the FFF's *Annuaire* including the editions between the mid 1950s and 1980s which were consulted, a vast internet search was undertaken to compile a more complete picture of the regional leagues. Of the sixteen *ligues régionales* founded between 1919 and 1922, only three provided early and complete records of their youth competitions, the *Ligue de Champagne-Ardenne*, *Ligue de Midi-Pyrénées* and the *Ligue de Franche-Comté*. Four leagues offered records since the 1980s and the remaining nine leagues offer only contemporary records from the most recent seasons. One of the last leagues formed before the 1970s, the *Ligue Atlantique*, provided records from its inception in 1967. In addition, the records for six other leagues, including four from the pioneer era, were quite complete as of 1980. In order to obtain further evidence, a survey was conducted of the online archives for eighty of the one-hundred and one *districts* covering fourteen leagues for which no results prior to 1970 were available (except for Corsica and Lorraine where no *districts* exist). These contained results ranging from no records to complete listings from as early as 1955. In order to fill in the remaining gaps for districts which provided no records, the histories of clubs listed on the league or district websites were also consulted, yet again offering varied results. Two associations for regional football history in the leagues in *Bretagne* and *Aquitaine* also supplied useful information in the form of results tables or scanned newspaper articles.

Especially worthy of note are the comprehensive archives of AS Brestoise, Dieppe UC, Intrépide Angers (which also included two DVDs of scanned club documents from the 1920s to the present), and the almost bottomless online archive of Corsican football. The AS Brestoise archive included a vast amount of scanned correspondence, photos and general assembly minutes as well as a summary year by year since 1905. This drew on (and in many cases cited or displayed clearly) club documents, the weekly club bulletin in the local newspaper, *La Dépêche*, articles from the sporting weekly, *Match*, and even offered a contemporary global history for each year for the reader's wider context. The second, the Norman club in Dieppe, provided detailed entries for each season, often including a brief report of the annual general assembly, and a number of photographs. The Angers archive, contained on the 90th anniversary archive DVD, included hundreds of scanned newspaper articles, photos and club documents. Finally the Corsican archive offers a frighteningly extensive supply of material in the form of photos, scanned newspaper clippings, official French Federation, Corsican league and individual club documents. Some are clearly organized with dates and origins while others require cross-checking and further investigation to confirm dates, teams or individuals. A further unexpected internet source consisted of websites attempting to reunite former residents of French Algeria before independence and to preserve the memories of this colonial past.⁷²

For the United States, similar institutional archival material was not available. Discussion at the start of the thesis with the director of the Soccer Hall of Fame in Oneonta, New York revealed that there was little material if any related to the contemporary youth game. Subsequently, the Hall itself closed and the material was boxed away in a storage warehouse while waiting for plans to reopen in the future. Nonetheless, some other avenues offered spotty institutional records. A handful of annual reports, official rulebooks, and policy documents from the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) and United States Soccer Federation (USSF) covered the late 1970s as well as the turn of the millennium. The corporate registers of several

⁷² The Mekerra and Blida Rose online archives (respectively specific neighbourhoods in Sidi-bel-Abbès and Blida of the former French Algeria) contained countless photos, newspaper articles and memoirs on everything from employment to baptisms, and included a vast collection of leisure activity in the various sport clubs. The Oran Club Sport archive included hundreds of photos and numerous scanned club documents, registrations, correspondence for the various sporting activities in the Oran region.

states included the Articles of Incorporation for clubs, leagues, and state bodies. Several USYSA regional affiliate associations (the South-Eastern Virginia Youth Soccer Association and National Capital Soccer League) provided minutes covering the turn of the twentieth century. Various statistics on participation and reports came from the National Federation of High School Sports (NFHS) and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) which provided useful data reaching back to the 1960s as well as reports on financial aid in collegiate sport. To complete this patchy institutional picture, the American press was extremely useful as a resource.

Numerous local, sporting, ethnic and national papers were consulted. The weekly English language supplement published in *Svoboda*, the Ukrainian language daily newspaper, has chronicled extensively the evolution of the Ukrainian-American community in the United States since its introduction in 1933.⁷³ The foreign-language press and its English-language supplements should be considered as a largely unexploited goldmine for historians of football in the USA.⁷⁴ Other local and national newspapers such as *The Baltimore Sun*, *Boca Raton News*, *Boston Globe*, the *Eugene Register*, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Hartford Chronicle*, *Los Angeles Times*, *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, *The Morning Record and Journal*, *The Newburgh News*, *The New York Times*, *The Pittsburgh Press*, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, the *Reading Eagle*, *The Ridgefield Press*, the *St. Petersburg Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, and *USA Today* all provided valuable material from different parts of the chronology studied.

⁷³ For the purposes of this thesis, it also offered a wealth of extensive information about sporting practices, including football, between 1933 and the present for a small ethnic community which nevertheless provided a number of Olympic and international players and two national team coaches. Football received the most press in the 1950, 60s and 70s, coincidentally during the period in which the new wave of the post-WORLD WAR TWO Displaced Persons' generation flooded America's football pitches. The first edition of the paper explains how it is expressly directed at Ukrainian youth, presumably the second and third generations who at times have lost touch with the Ukrainian associations and clubs. The English weekly was destined to reconnect with these young people. Thus, it offers a partial window through the writing of Ukrainians in America into the Ukrainian-American past. See *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 6 October 1933.

⁷⁴ At a conference on May 16, 1961 on the role of U.S. nationality groups and their contribution to the USA, a speaker for the American Council for Nationalities, David Sanders, explained that at that time there were some 760 foreign-language newspapers in America with a circulation of over 12,000,000 and a readership of at least 20,000,000. *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 27 May 1961.

Across the Atlantic, the press was similarly useful. Providing essential contemporary accounts for the period in France before and up to the end of the Second World War were several sporting newspapers, the general context of which has been well chronicled by Zeldin.⁷⁵ *Ballon Rond* was a regional south-west sporting weekly printed between 1918 and at least 1925 with a one-year gap in 1919. It served as the official media bulletin for the regional league, the Ligue du Sud-Ouest (LSO). This made it easy to follow the inner workings of this organisation for that period. The regional editions from Nantes, Rennes, and Caen of *Ouest-Éclair* offered a wealth of information on the sport in much of western France (during the interwar years and under Nazi occupation) spanning Normandy and Brittany and also, like *Ballon Rond*, it reprinted official league news. *Match* was published in Paris and the issues from the mid-1920s well into the 1930s and included articles from all over the country. Lastly, regional papers such as *La Côte d'Azur Sportive*, *L'Écho sportif de l'Afrique du Nord* (also called *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*), and *Le Petit Comtois* included information over this same period and provided the official media bulletin for the French federation, regional leagues and districts. School and club youth competitions were commented on at regular intervals in all of these papers and which were a valuable source of information about the many aspects of youth football in this early period. In addition, *Le Télégramme*, *Ouest-France* and *Presse-Océan*, and the *Républicain Lorrain* were useful for the more recent period.

Other periodicals, both sporting and non, provided essential material for a variety of periods. The *Spalding* annual guides included minutes for the United States Football Association's (USFA) early general assemblies and reports from member state associations and leagues for the earliest period of this thesis. A selection of *France Football*, *Football*, *Football Magazine* and a number of annual *Cahiers de l'Équipe* were valuable sources for youth competitions, but also regarding the minutiae of commercial surroundings such as youth-sized balls, shoes, kits and other equipment. Consulting the mainstream *Sports Illustrated* since the 1960s offered useful context of the wider American sporting world and football's place in it. *Soccer America*, the leading and oldest continuing publication for the sport, was very useful for the period

⁷⁵ For the context and growth of the sporting press in France, see Theodore Zeldin, *L'Histoire des Passions Françaises*, vol. 3 *Goût et Corruption*, (Paris: Encres, 1979), pp. 241-4.

around the turn of the twenty-first century. Other periodicals such as the Boy Scouts magazine *Boys' Life* provided material which was aimed at participants or served to propagate certain conceptions about the sport and boyhood in general.

Official government and business records were also consulted and included the legislation databases for France and several US states. The General Secretariat of the French Government offered in almost all cases full access to scanned versions of the original laws or an official digital transcription.⁷⁶ Under the Constitution of the United States education is legislated at the state level and in order to obtain comparable data, the regularly published *Report of the Commissioner of Education* provides an overview of schooling across all States for the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁷⁷ In addition, the Education Commission of the States provided official data which summarizes existing state laws. The US Bureau for the Census provided much needed information about immigration and the population at various points throughout the twentieth century. The Corporate Business Records Office of several states including Colorado, California, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Ohio, Tennessee, and Virginia were all useful in tracing the incorporation dates and documents of American youth soccer clubs and organisations. Some US Patent Office records were helpful in following the commercial development of youth football equipment.

A variety of monographs including coaching texts have supplied important information to follow the evolution of the youth game through the pedagogical approach adopted in different eras. University yearbooks were particularly useful in tracing the career trajectories for a number of players. In order to obtain more detailed personal recollections of the game, several autobiographical and biographical sources have been used. To complement some accounts of individuals from other sources, a number of interviews with former youth players and coaches were conducted by

⁷⁶ References to French laws cited below were drawn from both the official government archive (<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr>) or, in the case of some earlier documents that are not available in their original full text, from Jean-Noël Luc, *La petite enfance à l'école – Textes officiels relatives aux salles d'asile, aux écoles maternelles, aux classes et sections enfantines (1829-1981) présentés et annotés*, (Paris: Economica, 1982).

⁷⁷ These books have been digitized by various university and public libraries and were made available to the 'Internet Archive' (www.archive.org), a non-profit foundation which was created to build a digital library working in collaboration with the Library of Congress.

telephone and follow-up email. Lastly, for the most recent period, a number of organisational and news' websites were utilized.

Some Challenges

The quest for a recovery of the past is fraught with Herculean obstacles and naturally the sources used here possess their own limitations. Boorstin outlined ten different biases of survival that have plagued historians of all ages whose challenge is to craft an honest account of the past.⁷⁸ How have such 'survival biases' affected the research here? In essence, the material presented seven major problems for the thesis: comparability; completeness; the mastery of time; an important yet absent voice; the problem of perspective; the reconstruction of the past; and, finally, the choice for thesis structure.

Firstly, the sources were not always comparable. In dealing with two countries, two languages and a vast chronology, it is probably inevitable that certain pieces of information will be so different that juxtaposition becomes impossible.⁷⁹ Whether it was the French football annuals, the *Spalding Guides*, newspapers or individual player registrations, the sources varied and left a conundrum on more than one occasion. For example, the statistics on the number of registered youth players in France in the 1940s were not similarly available for the United States at that time. Even for periods where quantitative comparison was possible to a certain extent, in the 1970s for example, the challenge was to compare the surrounding context. How does one compare the game in America – and its slow process of local and isolated regional development, often with

⁷⁸ Among these, Boorstin notes, the 'Law of the Survival of the Unread', 'Survival of the Durable, and That Which is Not Removed or Displaced', 'Survival of the Collected and the Protected: What Goes in Government Files', 'Survival of Objects Which Are Not Used or Which Have a High Intrinsic Value', 'Survival of the Academically Classifiable and the Dignified', 'Survival of Printed and Other Materials Surrounding Controversies', 'Survival of the Self-Serving: the Psychopathology of Diarists and Letter Writers', 'Survival of the Victorious Point of View: The Success Bias', 'Survival of the Epiphenomenal' and finally 'Knowledge Survives and Accumulates, but Ignorance Disappears'. Boorstin, *Hidden History*, pp. 3-13.

⁷⁹ It should also be noted that all citations from French sources, with very few exceptions, were translated by the author. In an effort to remain as close as possible to the original French, the quotations were translated with as limited poetic licence as possible. As a consequence, they may often read in stilted English.

an ethnic flavour, which occurred in the shadow of other major professional sports – with that in France – a centrally organised ‘public service’ with a *dirigiste* touch that included professionalism and that evolved at a perpetual international crossroads? Navigating around these contextual boundaries was a continual challenge in order to interpret the real meaning of changing events.

The second issue was in relation to the completeness of the sources. The specific artefacts produced by historical actors or agents do not, of course, say anything about what *else* happened. The record only accounts for what evidence remains and which successfully passed the gauntlet of time. Furthermore, the government mandate of the French federation has guaranteed a more consistent and coherent collection of *official* information whereas the largely unofficial – in comparison with France – United States Football Association (USFA) has seen all archives prior to 1945 disappear. The nature of the institutions studied and their surrounding context have profoundly affected the historical material left for posterity. For example, arriving at complete national participation figures for football in America from a composite mix of affiliated and independent high schools, colleges and competing youth organisations, required almost trigonometric calculation capabilities. Thus, such figures for the United States are inevitably less complete than those in France.

Boorstin’s “Survival of the Durable, and That Which is Not Removed or Displaced” and “Survival of the Collected and the Protected: What Goes in Government files” are probably best illustrated in the following example of the hazards of history. In the foreword to the 1918-19 edition of the *Spalding Guide*, the United States Football Association President, Peter Peel, made passing reference to the annual contribution that discussed the state of the game in England. He mentioned that the 1918-19 article covered the prior two seasons as the contributor’s “article intended for last year’s Guide was on one of the ships sent to the bottom by a German U-boat”.⁸⁰ How much of youth football’s past has been permanently sunk in the pit of ‘hidden history’?

⁸⁰ See *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1918-19*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, 1918), p. 5.

Aside from an incomplete record of the past, the third challenge has been the mastery of the timeline in the proper direction. Nancy Struna has described historical change as “movement away from” rather than towards our predestined present experience.⁸¹ The challenge to see the changes evolve forward in time from a given situation or point was regularly encountered. For example, retracing the origins and development of age categories was particularly problematic. The use of contemporary terminology when referring to prior periods was abundant. In a 1963 *Football Magazine* article, Martial Gergotich, then coach of AS Brestoise, was said to have started his career at the club in 1934 at age fifteen and then played in the *cadets* age group.⁸² However, the *cadets* did not exist as an official FFF age group until the 1940s. This sort of ‘terminology transplantation’ was not uncommon in the sources and reflects the use of a nomenclature that would have been familiar and contemporary for that period but not necessarily in the prior one. Thus, reconstructing the evolution of age categories was a constant reminder to work forward in time rather than retrospectively and replace less than perfect hindsight with only marginally better foresight.

The fourth difficulty surrounded the voices of the actors of the past – the historical population that Fossier has called “*la communauté des petits*” in discussing the historiographical silence regarding the plebeian classes in the study of European history.⁸³ In this thesis, the silent voices are the forgotten footballers of yesteryear. In terms of historical agency, the principal protagonist, the youth who actually played the game through the shifts described hereafter, is rarely heard from other than through the voice of his or her adult organiser. Much of the timeline presented in the following chapters was the work of football’s adult leadership, ranging from club, league and federation officials to volunteer parents and coaches. There is little evidence that testifies to the motivations behind this story’s primary actor: the child. While memoirs

⁸¹ Nancy Struna, ‘Reframing the Direction of Change in the History of Sport’, in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 18 (4) (2001), p. 5.

⁸² *Football Magazine*, April 1963.

⁸³ Robert Fossier, *Enfance de l’Europe Xe – XIIIe siècle – Aspects économiques et sociaux*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France), Tome 1, pp. 494-5. For Fossier’s review of those excluded from much of history, see especially pp. 570-95.

or retrospective sources are an important historical tool in helping the historical mute to speak, Paula Fass reminds us of the inherent limits of this kind of source.⁸⁴

Indeed the majority of the historical material was written, produced and created by adults and *not* by the kids themselves, making the picture by definition a skewed one – a problem encountered by Leslie Paris in her attempt to reconstruct the history of American summer camps for children.⁸⁵ The record may speak volumes about youth but the voice is generally that of youth's eternal advocate, the adult. Accounts such as the following were rare but they serve as a reminder of this silent voice within football, and probably sport in general. The *vox juvenilis* was recalled in *l'Echo Sportif d'Oranie* by one letter to the editor from 1930:

“The ‘Youth’ Complain... Please forgive this hardly academic headline ... It is nonetheless suitable in order to say what the ‘youth’ from the 3rd, 2nd, and even reserve teams told me. ‘The only space in the newspapers is for the first teams...’ said one. ‘You speak about encouraging the generation of tomorrow who is called to replace the tenors of today...’ said another with force. And since everything comes in threes, and we could not to give the lie to the proverb, a third declared to me: ‘We don’t ask for much... We are fully aware of the immense role played by l’Echo d’Oran in the diffusion of sport in Oranie, sportsmen are grateful to the paper for this, but we would like that the editors make a little space in Monday’s columns, since between us, we also have a right to a little bit of sunshine, we the ‘youth’. Condolences are justified. And since this concerns a very small effort to satisfy these ‘youth’, my colleagues think about them, all the more since they always play the curtain raisers across the leagues. [signed The Grouch]”⁸⁶

Furthermore, what is particularly difficult in studying the history of leisure activities is the fundamental bias against it as an area worth recording. Historical evidence abounds for topics such as politics and religion but leisure does not necessarily benefit from the same breadth of sources. Furthermore, only with organisation and standardization does the game leave an established record of itself. The world of leisure certainly suffers from this pathology of survival bias. Going one step further, if people

⁸⁴ Paula S. Fass, ‘The Memoir Problem’, *Reviews in American History*, 34 (1) (2006), pp. 107-23.

⁸⁵ Leslie Paris, *Children’s Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008), pp. 12-4.

⁸⁶ *L’Écho Sportif d’Oranie*, 21 November 1930.

of the past would not record much of their own leisure activity, why would they record that of their children? And if they did, were there reasons for this?

Primary sources aimed at children such as *Boys' Life* were certainly designed to vehicle ideas about youth from adults to children but they tell us frustratingly less about the youth themselves.⁸⁷ In his early research from the mid 1980s, one of the first historians of football in France, Alfred Wahl, commented on the somewhat difficult nature of the sources for tracing the history of football specifically and how the sources “reveal the image that the footballing milieu wants to present of itself”.⁸⁸ The various biases ingrained within sources such as the sporting press and organisational records, to name only two, often include a commemorative subjectivity, a touch of sycophancy and do not always reveal what really was at stake nor the voice of the principle protagonist. And yet, this should not, in Wahl's view, cause the historian to abdicate the search. Encouraging words for the apprentice.

That image described by Wahl was the basis for a fifth challenge. The plethora of sources from one area or organisation are often a testament to success or some underlying issue at stake. Take for example the vast wealth of material provided by French amateur clubs regarding their youth footballing practices and histories. In this competitive structure in which sporting performance was measured, record keeping was driven by the best or at least those with good results. Thus, records for activity where no measurable success was attained will be sparse. Equally, the large space in the American literature given to St. Louis as a hotbed of the sport and historic supplier to the national team is conditioned by its success while western Pennsylvania, another area with strong roots in the game, is hardly as celebrated.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ In this connection, it is helpful to consider reflections on such sources in the manner of Dave Russell's article entitled “‘Interesting and Instructive Reading’? The FA Book for Boys and the Culture of Boyhood, 1945-1973”, in *Journal of Sport History*, 34 (2) (2007), pp. 231-52.

⁸⁸ Alfred Wahl, ‘Le footballeur français : de l'amateurisme au salariat (1890-1926)’, in *Le Mouvement Social*, 135 (1986), p. 8.

⁸⁹ For example, despite having won three junior titles between 1939 and 1947, teams from the western part of Pennsylvania such as Beadling, Heidelberg, Avella, also lost a number of later finals and never benefited from the same exposure as St. Louis which had a university team at its pinnacle.

The following illustrates this “problem of perspective” as referred to by Tony Collins.⁹⁰ The specific context of French football has forged a link between amateur clubs and the elite level. These amateur clubs are well organised and maintain records of their contributions to the national game. The cultural importance of training young players has a fundamentally nationalist and educational end and this creates a bias toward the preservation of each and every club’s contribution to this sporting patrimony. A case in point is the building of FC Lorient’s new *centre de formation* located in Ploemeur, a small town on the southern coast of Brittany. Nearby FC Lorient, a first division club has been coached for many years by former pro, Christian Gourcuff. At the ground-breaking ceremony, it was recalled how his son, Yoann, a rising French international star, first kicked a ball at one of Ploemeur’s local amateur clubs, AS Guermeur.⁹¹

In contrast, the youth clubs in post-Pelé America, which by and large were the fruit of parental initiative for safe and participatory sport as an end in itself, did not create the same links with the institutional elite because of the lack of a national professional league that was fully commercialised and media recognized and supported until the mid 1990s.⁹² These clubs were locally focused for the organisers’ own children and thus there was not the same collective drive to preserve an organisational history. In short, a French amateur club had every interest in bragging about the neighbourhood kid who later wore the national ‘ten shirt’ after having started at the local club, moving up to the nearby pro team before starring internationally. Such contextual biases condition the nature and preservation of the sources so necessary to the historian’s task in constructing an account of the past. The context, then changes and as such, the remaining artefacts are disconnected from their original meaning or are

⁹⁰ Tony Collins, ‘History, Theory and the ‘Civilizing Process’’, in *Sport in History*, 25 (2) (2005), p. 291.

⁹¹ *Ouest-France*, 31 May 2011.

⁹² This chimes with Boorstin’s discussion of the role of informal groups. He contrasts the founding of formalised institutions such as universities which, in Europe, are more readily recorded in the chartering documents of governments, whereas the voluntary informal based booster groups, so characteristic of American society, left more disparate records in their efforts to form colleges and attract settlers. These problems of historical evidence for such a voluntary and mobile community have left a “random record of its past”. Boorstin, *Hidden History*, pp. 7-8.

received by the historian as, to use the words of Pierre Nora, *lieux de mémoire* – a problem all the more relevant in the next bias.⁹³

A sixth bias which overly weighted the balance of sources for some parts of the thesis to French Algeria was in relation to a present-day movement to reconstruct the past. The example of the French *pieds-noirs* is bathed in political, religious and civil tensions that exploded into violence in the late 1950s with the final result of most of these people fleeing. The efforts of a diaspora to preserve its collective memory through a digital archive, while full of unique sources, is coloured in a particular tone, one which is pregnant with political and religious meanings of colonial Algeria as we are reminded by Philip Dine.⁹⁴ For example, an individual who digitally scanned an award of a skills contest won when he was a child in French Algeria can provide rare evidence perhaps impossible to uncover elsewhere, but more research has to be conducted to reconstruct the context around this event. Similarly, interviews with relevant individuals and even the contemporary newspaper articles linked to an event can also be coloured. It is equally important to remember that society across French Algeria – with the *département* of Oran as a perfect example – was far from homogenous politically and demographically as noted by Claire Marynowar.⁹⁵ Indeed, Dine and Rey remind us that sport itself was infused with notions of politics that specifically targeted the young population and fight a “psychological war”.⁹⁶ All of these contextual elements force a careful examination of the source.

Equally challenging was the ‘survival bias’ which affected why those documents were scanned as opposed to those which were not. Were they the only ones which survived the not insignificant events around Algerian independence and the subsequent rapid mass migration? Or were they selected because they presented a specific era in a

⁹³ Pierre Nora, ‘Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire’, *Representations*, 26 (Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory) (1989), p. 7.

⁹⁴ Philip Dine, ‘France, Algeria and sport: from colonisation to Globalisation’, *Modern & Contemporary France*, 10 (4) (2002), pp. 495–505.

⁹⁵ Claire Marynowar, ‘Le moment Front populaire en Oranie : mobilisations et reconfigurations du milieu militant de gauche’, *Le Mouvement Social*, 236 (3) (2011), pp. 11-2.

⁹⁶ Philip Dine and Didier Rey, ‘Le football en guerre d’Algérie’, *Matériaux pour l’histoire de notre temps*, 106 (2) (2012), p. 32.

nostalgic light or coloured with political undercurrents which alter their nature? As noted by Lisa Blenkinsop

“[i]nternet communities, virtual archives and commemorative sites represent a method of recording and communicating experience and feeling, a process whereby memory is constructed, and an understanding of the past presented.”⁹⁷

Indeed, virtual archives and communities help preserve the past. But in so doing they construct a particular image of it which necessitates the kind of “qualified objectivity” mentioned by Struna.⁹⁸

Nonetheless, opening up virtual archives of sport could be considered as a direction for future research and follows the lead of Australian historians, Phillips *et al.* who have elaborated ways in which sources such as photographs could be used in the sport history field.⁹⁹ The fact that the historical field is embracing the use of other kinds of sources for the history of sport including less traditional written sources such as documentary film or images, as well as employing other disciplines such as geography, anthropology or cultural studies validates some of the methodological foundations and sources used throughout this research.¹⁰⁰

The final challenge facing the thesis was the choice for a structure. The lack of ‘fundamental texts’ with an established periodization left this thesis without much in the way of chronological bearings. This necessitated a choice of one of three approaches: following the chronology through the material itself, adopting a comparative case-study approach with each country following its own timeline, or defining a thematic structure

⁹⁷ Blenkinsop has remarked that some of the problems of the internet as a source for research are no different than that of traditional sources. In regard to the limitations of the internet, she noted that “[s]electivity and unrepresentativeness are not characteristics unique to the internet as a source, however, and the extent to which these constitute a problem is dependent on the research question the historian is seeking to explore, and the claims made for the conclusions drawn.” See Lisa Blenkinsop, ‘The Internet: virtual space’, in Sarah Barber, ed., *History beyond the text: a student's guide to approaching alternative sources*, (London: Routledge, 2009), pp. 122-3.

⁹⁸ This makes reference to the notions of objectivity and subjectivity and the challenges which face the research and writing of the history of sport as developed by Nancy Struna. She refers to and develops the term ‘qualified objectivity’, borrowed from Appleby, Hunt and Jacob’s *Telling the Truth about History*. See Struna, ‘Reframing the Direction’, p. 1.

⁹⁹ Murray G. Phillips, Mark E. O’Neill and Gary Osmond, ‘Broadening Horizons in Sport History: Films, Photographs, and Monuments’, in *Journal of Sport History*, 34 (2) (2007), see especially pp. 278-83.

¹⁰⁰ See chapter 2 by Gary Osmond and Murray Phillips, entitled ‘Sources’, in Steven W. Pope, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Sport History*, (London: Routledge, 2010), pp. 34-50.

based on the questions. Each would have had its own advantages and disadvantages. The first option would have facilitated writing and research with one continual ordinal approach, while the second would have been nation-specific and with comparisons at the conclusion. However, given the lack of sufficient existing literature, it was difficult to establish the chronological boundaries within which the thesis would be presented.

In the end, a thematic structure appeared to offer a better development of the thesis in contrast to strictly diachronic or juxtaposed case-study approaches. Indeed, it was only once each national puzzle was outlined in parallel in response to specific questions that a comparative international history of the youth game became possible. This was not without risks and while a thematic structure facilitates international comparison – since it is the themes that form the core – there is nevertheless the threat of losing a coherent chronology across the countries or confusing the parallel national contexts. The additional challenge of comparative research across the Atlantic, then, has been to maintain the questions about youth football at the centre while simultaneously considering the phenomenon beyond the confines of the aforementioned national contexts and respecting a consistent chronology. The final advantage of the adopted structure is that it has allowed for a rough sketch of a possible periodization for the history of youth football once the core chapters were written. In some respects, this choice has been motivated by calls for transnational approaches and a desire to balance, in Guttman's words, between a "specialised study" and aspects of a "larger synthesis" with a hope to outline some avenues for more European-American research.¹⁰¹

Faced with all these challenges, biases and limitations, and not least of all the sheer breadth of the research – and consequential risk of drowning in the periphery of the thesis – the writer may either renounce or soldier on. Research becomes a leviathan

¹⁰¹ Steve Pope has urged academics in the field to "overcome a strictly national focus". See Steven W. Pope, 'Rethinking Sport, Empire, and American Exceptionalism' in *Sport History Review*, 38 (2007), p. 94. Several decades ago, Alan Guttman stated that in regard to the difference between detailed research and wider synthesis: "Differences of this sort are inevitable; what I wish to stress is the importance of larger syntheses. Detailed studies are indispensable, but they are not sufficient. They provide the data necessary to validate or to disconfirm, to accept or to reject, or—more probably—to modify and to correct the larger synthesis. Specialized studies alone, however, cannot fully satisfy the historian's "rage for order." Is it not better to seek the pattern and to reconstruct the whole from the unclear or tattered pieces than to rest content with a few threads? This, as I see it, is the most important question raised by European historiography." See Allen Guttman, 'Recent Work in European Sport', in *Journal of Sport History*, 10 (1) (1983), p. 49.

itself. Yet the apprentice has drawn some inspiration from the closing lines of Boorstin's essay entitled 'A Wrestler with the Angel', referring to a phrase coined by Dutch historian, J. H. Huizinga

“The historian-creator refuses to be defeated by the biases of survival. For he chooses, defines, and shapes his subject to provide a reasonably truthful account from miscellaneous remains. Of course he must use the social sciences, but he must transcend the dogmas and theories. Like other literary artists, creators in the world of the word, and unlike the advancing social scientist, he is not engaged merely in correcting and revising his predecessors. He adds to our inheritance. At his best he is not accumulating knowledge which becomes obsolete, but creating a work with a life of its own. While Adam Smith survives in the reflected light of Ricardo and Marx and Keynes, Gibbon shines with a light all his own...His motto could be Tertullian's rule of faith, *Credo quia impossibile*, I believe because it is impossible. At his best he remains a Wrestler with the Angel.”¹⁰²

¹⁰² Boorstin, *Hidden History*, p. 23.

Chapter 1 - The 'Coming of Age' in Football: the youth game as an age paradigm, c.1920-2000

It was little Tommy Dunn, a mere child, that turned the trick for his team... Not only did the boys succeed in winning the amateur title, but they triumphed over the Keen Cutters, winners of the St. Louis Association Football League flag... The Keen Cutters, who outweighed the St. Teresas twenty pounds to the man, got off to a flying start, scoring two goals before the young boys hit their stride. With the score against them the lads did not falter, though, and finally won out, 4 to 2... The St. Teresa Juniors give promise of developing into one of the greatest, if not the greatest, team in the country's soccer history. As good judges of soccer as Benny Govier and Davis of the Chicago Tribune were of the opinion that the lads would be heard from in years to come. And they saw them two years ago when they were in the first stages of their development. The team is composed of lads from 16 to 18 years of age.

- St. Louis, Midwest America, 1910¹

E.S. Cadaujacaise defeats E.S. Girondine by 7 goals to 0... From start to finish, the Cadaujacais dominated and put the Girondin defence to work, any one attack could have been dangerous... For l'ES Cadaujacaise, the entire team played well, the forwards: Dubos, Duprat, Braneyres, Lespine and J. Grou made a number of lovely attacks, the little J. Grou, despite his fifteen years, was, with Duprat, the best of the line...

- Cadaujac, South-western France, 1922²

When the precociously talented child violinist is first accompanied by an orchestra, it is the surprising ability to perform at the adult level that is recognized and praised. With a swift motion, the bow sweeps aside any difference in age; the presumed impossibility of inexperience must genuflect to inspiration and genius. Music has long been known as a domain where innate ability is just as important as cumulated experience. From Mozart to Yo-Yo Ma, many are the talented child prodigies who have played alongside adult orchestras and made aficionados forget, at least for the length of a concerto, their difference in age. Child prodigies are not new, nor are they restricted

¹ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1910), p. 95.

² *Ballon Rond*, 22 April 1922.

to music, though the age difference between adults and the rising star is less in many sports than in the arts.³

While not internationally renowned prodigies, two youth footballers on opposite sides of the Atlantic performed rather brilliantly on their local stages in spite of their young age. In the first quarter of the twentieth century neither Dunn nor Grou went on to represent their country though both appear to have continued in the game with varying degrees of success. In the case of the former St. Teresa's Junior, there is evidence in the later *Spalding Guides* of a Dunn – with some photo resemblance to the junior boy – who played with the respected Christian Brothers' College team and later the national champion professional Ben Miller team in St. Louis. However, this appears to have been a Jimmy Dunn who shares a strikingly similar scholastic background.⁴ Further complicating the matter, a Tommy Dunn was indeed inducted in 1978 to the St. Louis Soccer Hall of Fame.⁵

Jean Grou's later trajectory is more difficult to decipher as only two mentions clearly refer to a J. or Jean Grou. While a Grou appeared regularly as a top player for E.S. Cadaujacaise club until 1925 both in the first and second teams – even including selection for a regional Ligue du Sud-Ouest match in May of 1923 – his name was generally listed without a first initial in *Ballon Rond*. On one rare occasion the report noted his first name: Jean. To make things more complicated, there appears to have been another Grou at E.S. Cadaujacaise, by the first name of Marcel, whose first name was listed on one occasion. This makes it difficult to discern if it was the same player.⁶

³ A child prodigy can be considered as “a child who, before the age of 10, performs at the level of a highly trained adult in some cognitively demanding domain”. See Martha J. Morelock and David Henry Feldman, ‘Prodigies, Savants, and Williams Syndrome: Windows Into Talent and Cognition’, in Kurt Heller, *The international handbook of giftedness and talent*, (Oxford: Elsevier, 2002), p. 227.

⁴ For more on Jimmy Dunn, see Dave Lange, *Soccer Made in St. Louis: A history of the game in America's first soccer capital*, (St. Louis: Reedy Press, 2011), pp. 7-8.

⁵ Four Duns are listed in the St. Louis Hall of Fame but it is unclear what the relation is between all of them (Jimmy Dunn, 1971; Tommy Dunn, 1978; Ebby Dunn, 1974; and Ebbie Dunn 1994).

⁶ When family members were in the same club or team, it was not uncommon for the newspaper to list a last name followed by the word “brothers” in lieu of listing both individually. As the two Grou's were only mentioned once together with their names listed separately, it is unlikely that they were related.

If we are to believe the two accounts, both youth were fifteen or sixteen years of age and playing in senior level competition. The *Spalding Guide* of 1910 recounted the victorious season of St. Teresa's junior team which had been admitted to the St. Louis' Senior League despite the fact that they were a "team of mere boys" and that "many objected to them on the ground that they were too young and could not hope to compete with the larger players".⁷ In this case the entire team was playing up against older competition with Dunn being one of the youngest members.⁸ In South-western France in 1922, *Ballon Rond* reported on another talented youth of similar age, fifteen year-old J. Grou, playing for E.S. Cadaujacaise. While the ages of the other members of the rural Gascon club and its opposition on the day are unknown, it would not appear that this was a junior team playing up an age group.⁹

In both cases, they clearly held their own as talented young footballers and their ability level was more than enough to match the senior level at which they played. Both Dunn and Grou were singled out *despite* their age. The fact that each was fifteen or sixteen suggests that age was not *the* deciding factor for playing at the senior level at that time. Indeed, the ability to play at whatever the given level was perhaps just as important as a player's date of birth. This prompts the question as to whether Dunn and Grou's young age was in fact relevant at all. Was this something out of the ordinary for the young? How did the organisers of the sport deal with youth? Were there barriers for players of younger ages barring them from playing with and against older competition? How and when did specific age structures come into effect?

This chapter explores the crossroads of the relevance and importance of age in respect to ability inside the phenomenon of youth football. It is argued here that there

⁷ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, p. 94-5.

⁸ A team photo of St. Teresa's Juniors depicts Dunn (number 8 in the photo) who is the smallest of the team, with only Marre (number 11) being about the same size. *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, p. 86.

⁹ The full team was not listed but was simply noted as a "mixed" side, meaning that some came from the first team and others from the reserves or other teams. At this time, the newspaper often referred interchangeably to youth teams of *juniors* or *minimes* as second, third, fourth, fifth teams and so forth. In the region around Bordeaux covered by *Ballon Rond*, matches regularly opposed one club's third team to another's fourth. League competitions were not listed by a specific age category *minimes* or *juniors*. This is in contrast to other areas of the country where competitions were clearly assigned to a youth category by name, such as the Ligue du Sud-Est where the *minimes* of F.C. Cette won the 1921-22 *minimes* championship. See *Ballon Rond*, 6 June 1922.

were some fundamental changes in regard to the role of age in the youth game over much of the twentieth century. If age was present in the bureaucratization of the sport circa 1920, it lay the basis for a further systematic separation of youth from adults. By the 1940s and the post-war period, football's organisers used age limits in more narrowing fashion to further split the youth game into more precise categories as the sport approached the 1970s. In the final third of the century, the age ladder in organised football began younger than ever. Through this process the overall age range within the sport's bureaucracy in both competitive and educational settings has stretched such that children at the end of the twentieth century were playing earlier in organised settings and in more narrowly defined categories. These changes were crucial in laying the groundwork for a differentiation of youth football from the adult game.

This chapter is organised in four sections, the first three of which cover one part of the chronology of this age paradigm. During the first period from the 1920s to the 1940s, both age and weight were used as criteria for distinction. The second period, from the 1940s to the turn of the 1970s witnessed further progression with more and more categories being introduced and the division according to age more and more precise with each category covering a smaller slice of the overall youth sector. During the final period from the 1970s to 2000, the centrality of age, something which was quantifiable, replaced the names, something far more qualitative, often given to youth categories. The fourth and final section examines the parallel role of age in the areas of school and labour across France and the United States in order to contextualise what occurred in football with the wider relevance of age for youth during the 20th century.

Before embarking any further, a general appreciation for the historical evolution of 'age' and a brief account of the sport and its youth prior to the starting point of 1920 will help lay a foundation for the core of this chapter. In one of the earliest pieces of historical research into the child of the past, the seminal work on the history of the idea of childhood, Philippe Ariès recounted different notions, but also stages of life loosely associated with age ranges. For Ariès, "the ages of life did not correspond only to a

biological phase, but a social function”.¹⁰ Chronicling certain historical aspects of childhood in Europe, Flandrin recalled that age was indeed not the defining factor for the schooling of clerics prior to the 17th century as classes were not separated and ten year-olds were mixed with adults.¹¹ Later, in an important change to the structure of nurseries and pre-schools in late 18th century France, the previously combined group of all children up to seven years old was divided, first in two groups (ages two to five and five to seven) and again later on into three distinct age sections.¹² As noted by Steven Mintz, “two hundred years ago there was far less age segregation...and much less concern with organizing experience by chronological age” underlining a notion of the relative unimportance of age historically.¹³

Across multiple areas of society, the relevance of age has not been static. For example, a most striking change is perhaps the quantitative weakening of the youth population from the 18th to the 20th centuries recounted by Crubellier. If young people under age twenty made up more than forty-percent of all French in 1771, the proportion had dropped to less than thirty-percent by 1948 with even fewer youth in urban settings and in Paris.¹⁴ The balancing of the age pyramid cannot have been without significance. Such issues beg for a better grasp of the overall sense of the reality of age not only in regard to sport but also an understanding of whether it has become a dominant element in defining youth and the child.

Returning to the realm of sport, the use of various criteria as a basis to categorize participants as well as provide a level playing field is not new. Crowther has recounted the use of age as a basis for the separate events for boys and men centuries ago at Olympia.¹⁵ On the feminine side, Young has pointed to three different age groups for

¹⁰ Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale*, p. 41. Ariès notes how the different ages of life were not fundamentally linked to age. See especially pp. 37-52; 75-78.

¹¹ Jean-Louis Flandrin, ‘Enfance et société’, *Annales. Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations*, 19e année (2), 1964, p. 323.

¹² Amigues and Zerbato-Poudou, *Comment l'enfant devient élève*, p. 37.

¹³ Steven Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. viii.

¹⁴ Crubellier, *l'enfance et la jeunesse*, pp. 10-1.

¹⁵ Crowther noted that “[a]t Olympia, the officials held separate events for boys. Although the evidence is not entirely certain (because size may also have been a criterion), it seems that boys as young as 12

the quadrennial foot race for girls in ancient Greece.¹⁶ More recently, participation in Florentine *calcio* from the 16th century also apparently included ‘age’ as a relevant criterion for participation alongside social status and birth origin.¹⁷

Yet age was not the only means of classifying sport participation. In contrast to the use of age as a method of distinction, it is widely accepted that participants for folk football ‘teams’ during traditional Shrove Tuesday events in the 19th century were often divided by marital status as the determining factor for the composition of each competing side. Indeed, the tradition of ‘married versus unmarried men’ continued even into the 20th century in France and was even used as part of the festival to close the club season in 1935 at *Stade Luçonnais*.¹⁸ Leading up to the 1920s, and the starting point for this thesis, the use of age as a means for classification had been present but was only one type of dividing line.

The other aspect of this background prior to 1920 is the sport football itself and the place of youth within it. In both countries the sport was played and organised in different ways in the period since the game had been codified in English public schools in the mid eighteenth century.¹⁹ The diffusion of the game across the Channel brought the sport to the French and included the creation of school teams.²⁰ However, as the game spread across the country before the turn of the twentieth century, it was far from being the dominant sport in the presence of cycling, gymnastics and the promotion of physical culture for example.²¹ This period of massive sporting diffusion saw games cross not just the Channel but even the Atlantic as evidenced by the introduction of

could compete; those 18 years and older were obliged to enter the men’s category.” Nigel B. Crowther, *Sport in Ancient Times*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2007), p.47.

¹⁶ David C. Young, *A brief history of the Olympic games*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 114-5. Young cites Pausanias who describes the race which took place not at the Olympic games but during a separate festival in honour of Hera.

¹⁷ Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, *Moving with the ball: the migration of professional footballers*, (Oxford: Berg, 2001), p. 16.

¹⁸ *Ouest-Éclair*, 27 April 1935. After a youth exhibition match and a concert by the local philharmonic group, the programme listed all the names of the players for the *célibataires* against *mariés* match.

¹⁹ For an account of the initial role of public schools and the codification of the sport, see Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society 1863-1915*, (Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980), pp. 11-16.

²⁰ Alfred Wahl, ‘La pénétration du football en France’, in Alfred Wahl, *Football et histoire: Recueil d'articles*, (Centre de recherche Histoire et civilisation de l'Université de Metz, 2004), p. 19.

²¹ See Zeldin, *L'Histoire des Passions Françaises*, pp. 375-91.

basketball in France only two years after its invention in 1891.²² Football continued its rise and appeal as a widely played activity and by 1906 it had more teams and players than rugby.²³ In some cases, the diffusion of the sport replaced more traditional games in rural areas like Hélias' western Brittany.²⁴ The rise in popularity did not diminish the amateur vision and values on which the game was based; rather it was these potential benefits that motivated much of the sport's organised leadership. Indeed, the game was a tool to inculcate youth with certain societal values in what Wahl calls *l'école des vertus*, or the 'school of virtues'.²⁵

This vision was still at the heart of the newly unified Fédération Française de Football Association (FFFA) which instituted *ligues régionales*, or regional leagues, that would more or less autonomously administer the game locally, though in some cases this superposed a nationally unified network over existing local or regional organisational structures.²⁶ French historian Alfred Wahl has qualified the creation of the *ligues régionales* as a tool to consolidate the association's role as the centre of a decentralised sporting movement.²⁷ Chronicling the period during which the sport transformed from its amateur roots into what became the unified world of professional and amateur football from 1932 onwards, Wahl has argued that several factors contributed to this shift: the growing public interest which turned the sport into a spectacle with paid attendance, the grasp on the organisation of the game by leaders

²² While introduced in 1893, basketball did not take off as a participant sport until after World War One. See Sabine Chavinier, 'Histoire du basket-ball français catholique (1911-1921). Jeu des patronages ou sport Américain ?', *Sciences sociales et sport*, 1 (1) (2008), pp. 27-48.

²³ Rugby accounted for 141 teams and 2115 players while football was played in some 350 clubs by 3,850 players. See Wahl, *Les Archives*, p. 86. In the twenty to thirty years following the year 1900 the sport ballooned in terms of participating teams and players. Just before the First World War there were approximately 2,000 clubs. Following the human loss of the Great War the FFFA built its numbers up again to reach some 75,000 players in 1923-24, 95,000 two years later and 130,000 at the eve of professionalism in 1932. See *Ibid.*, pp. 126, 179, 181, and Lanfranchi and Wahl, 'La Professionalisation', p. 314.

²⁴ Hélias, *Le Cheval*, p. 436.

²⁵ Wahl, *Les Archives*, pp. 76-9.

²⁶ The nationalising forces of the FFFA did not necessarily precede local organisational efforts. For example, in the South-East, the first regional committee in Sète was created in 1906, a full thirteen years before the FFFA sanctioned regional league. See Pierre Lanfranchi, 'Apparition et Affirmation du Football en Languedoc 1900-1935', in Pierre Arnaud and Jean Camy, *La Naissance du Mouvement Sportif Associatif en France*, (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 1986), pp. 261-4.

²⁷ Wahl, *Les archives*, pp. 177-181. Wahl argues that the discourse at the time included ongoing tension between local and regional sporting associations and Parisian federations which did not want their policy mandated by a centralist capital. Thus, the founders of the FFFA deliberately chose to encourage regional structures that would be able to run the game locally all while maintaining federal unity.

who were aware of its economic and social benefits, and the need to invest in competitive teams which created a players' labour market subject to the laws of supply and demand.²⁸

Tradition holds that, in America, football – all codes of the game that is – began with the Oneida Football Club in Boston whose memory is enshrined on a monument on the Boston Common, a poignant example of Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire*.²⁹ Melvin Smith's recently published *Evolvements of Early American Foot Ball: Through the 1890/91 Season* records a variety of pre-Oneida sporting contests before the American Civil War up to the end of the nineteenth century and shows how the Boston boys were not alone in playing "foot ball".³⁰ In considering the vast and ordinary nature of ball games revealed in Smith's research, the historian may wonder how the Boston boys of Oneida managed to obtain such a sacrosanct place in sport history. Are they viewed in retrospect as part of the 'founders' of American football and soccer in America because seven surviving members planted a monument fifty years after the fact on the most important public space in downtown Boston? Is this important place of legitimate historical merit or simply an example of explicit nosism?³¹

²⁸ Alfred Wahl, 'Le footballeur français : de l'amateurisme au salariat (1890-1926)', in *Le Mouvement Social*, 135 (1986), p. 29.

²⁹ The Professional Football Researchers Association, 'No Christian End! The Beginnings of Football in America', <http://www.profootballresearchers.org> (accessed 28 April 2011). Steven Apostolov provides an interesting reading of the construction of the monument in the 1920s and the debate surrounding the ball displayed (round versus oval). See Apostolov, 'Les hauts et les bas du soccer professionnel', pp. 74-80.

³⁰ See Melvin Smith's recently published *Evolvements of Early American Foot Ball: Through the 1890/91 Season*, (Bloomington: Authorhouse, 2008).

³¹ The Oneida Football Club played an older variant of the game somewhere between the rugby and soccer codes (though there is some discrepancy between accounts by original team members about the club's beginnings). In reading James D'Wolf Lovett's description (published almost fifty years after the fact), it is interesting to note the variations in the way the sport was played: the use of a round ball; running and kicking were both employed to advance play. To quote Lovett, "there were no 'touchdowns', nor was the ground marked off by lines of any kind; in fact, there was no 'gridiron', nothing but straight football". Lovett contrasts the terms "touchdown" and "gridiron" with the modern game, in other words American football, rather than in comparison with the association game. This suggests that his audience, by 1906 in Boston, would have a preference or at least a better knowledge of the running game over the association rules. However, in describing how goals were scored, Lovett indicates that "the difference between guarding a line the entire width of the ground and one a few feet long between the upright poles of today's game can readily be seen". There are some inconsistencies in the founding date between Lovett's account, published in 1906, as the first year of the club another team member, Winthrop Saltonstall Scudder's, recollections of the club, dated 1926, that give 1862 as the start to the club's three-year undefeated run. See James D'Wolf Lovett, *Old Boston boys and the games they played*, (Boston: Riverside press, 1906), pp. 91-3, and Winthrop Saltonstall Scudder, *An historical sketch of the Oneida football club of Boston, 1862-1865*, (Massachusetts Historical Society, 1926).

Independent of this debate which will not be discussed here, organised games evolved and spread throughout the country in the decades after the Oneida boys. One key example can be found in Robinson's work on the local leagues and associations in St. Louis that included a vast youth programme largely linked to Catholic schools.³² At the start of the twentieth century the game was reported across the eastern seaboard and in the mid-west and by the time the war broke out in 1914, amateur and semi-professional leagues, associations and various school competitions were up and running in the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Ohio, Minnesota, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri, Utah, Washington and California.³³ The diffusion of the game had reached a point that those involved in the game began to work towards a national organisational structure that was finally achieved with the United States Football Association (USFA) in 1913.³⁴

Thus, both countries had a prior history of youth involved in football, a sport that, by circa 1920, had become codified and organised. The full extent of the youth sector is still yet to be fully explored in America and France but direction can be taken from Kerrigan's work on English schools' football – a sport that was formalized in 1904 though only after twenty-some years of fragmented and federated local competitions, of which only those of the London schools have been the object of extensive historical scholarship.³⁵ Was the growth of youth football driven from the top down? Or was it the result of incalculable and diverse efforts by teachers, parents, and even the boys themselves? In the words of Matt Taylor

³² James Robinson, 'The History of Soccer in the City of St. Louis', (St. Louis University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1966), p. 37.

³³ See *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1910), p. 3 and *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1914-15*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1914), p. 3.

³⁴ Representing seven state associations, the USFA was first recognized provisionally by FIFA in 1913 and afterwards did the process for recognition by the American Olympic Committee begin. At the same time, the USFA also drafted "articles of alliance" with another major sporting governing body, the Amateur Athletic Union. See *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1914-15*, p. 13.

³⁵ While *Teachers and Football* is extensive and covers much of the early period before the start of the ESFA as well as its first decade, the geographic focus of Kerrigan's work is largely on London with only some mentions to schoolboy football in other cities. The historical community would only benefit from further research into these background stories so essential to an understanding of the later phenomena in England but also France and the USA. See Colm Kerrigan, *Teachers and Football: Schoolboy association football in England, 1885–1915*, (Oxon: RoutledgeFalmer, 2005).

“[a]ll this suggests that we need to be more sophisticated in our understanding of the spread of football, recognizing the likelihood that its expansion was driven by a combination of popular and elite initiative. The proliferation of teams focused not on institutions but on the suburb, neighbourhood or even the street, supports the suggestion that much of the momentum for diffusion came not from above but from below.”³⁶

That ‘below’ most certainly included youth during the early period of diffusion prior to the 1920s. Notwithstanding a push from bottom-up, the organisation of the sport by the second decade of the 20th century had become codified and administrated. This meant that football in America and France now had the institutional basis from which to proceed.

The ‘licence’ and early participation limitation according to age in France, c.1920-c.1940

Despite having been at the forefront of the founding of international bodies such as the IOC and FIFA, French football remained divided on the home front until the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. Finally organised by 1913 under one umbrella, the ‘Comité Français Interfédéral’ (CFI), the members voted almost unanimously in 1919 to transform the organisation into one national single sport federation, the FFFA.³⁷ If French football’s organisation quickly took on a national and unified structure, its authoritativeness was not only recognized by the sporting community, national and international once the French government granted a status of *utilité publique*, or “public service” the *décret du 4 décembre 1922*.³⁸ Unity aside, Wahl and Lanfranchi recount the primary question in the first quarter of the century in French football as focused on the amateur-professional debate.³⁹ The historiography is mute,

³⁶ Matthew Taylor, *The association game: a history of British football*, (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2008), p. 37.

³⁷ Delaunay *et al.*, *100 ans de football*, pp. 82-4. The only vote against was the USFSA which stood to lose its role overseeing its own footballing activities.

³⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Statuts Règlement Intérieur et Règlements Généraux 1969-70*, art. 1. Just after its affiliation to the CFI, the USFSA had obtained recognition as a “public service” in May of 1913. See Delaunay *et al.*, *100 ans de football*, p. 65.

³⁹ Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, (Paris: Hachette, 1995), pp. 33-53.

however, as to whether limiting participation by age was a relevant aspect of the sport's administration during this period.

Two aspects are of relevance here, the view of youth and the growth of participant sport. Coming out of the conflict, as argued by Ludivine Bantigny, the Old Continent's youth were viewed as the "ointment that would heal Europe and from its decadent slide".⁴⁰ After the war football had gained a new status in Europe as the most popular participant as well as spectator sport during peace time.⁴¹ Indeed, France saw its player and club registrations rise enormously between 1919 and the eve of World War Two.⁴² Thus, following the enormous death toll of the Great War, participation limitation by age was not likely to have been among the most serious administrative concerns for the game's leadership who were certainly looking to fill the ranks of clubs and teams devastated by the conflict.⁴³

Within this context, a player's age does not appear to have been a fundamental issue during the 1920s, at least at first glance, but it did grow in relevance throughout the inter-war period. Building up to the Second World War, age became more present in the bureaucracy of the game and the organisers expanded the range of ages at which a youth could register as a player. Football was not alone in its administration of age and there is some evidence that questions about health and safety played some role in the development of the younger age groups.

One consistent indicator of the role of age is the printed player registration or *licence*, the *sine qua non* for participation in organised football. Throughout the 1920s the *licence A* for a senior amateur did not list a player's date of birth on the front of the

⁴⁰ Ludivine Bantigny, 'Genèses de l'Europe, jeunesses d'Europe. Entre enchantement et détachement', *Histoire@Politique. Politique, culture, société*, 10, (2010), pp. 2-3.

⁴¹ Pierre Lanfranchi, 'La consommation du spectacle sportif : une comparaison entre l'Allemagne, l'Italie et la France dans l'entre-deux-guerres', in *Le mouvement social*, 206 (janvier-mars 2004), p. 116.

⁴² Zeldin, *L'Histoire des Passions Françaises*, p. 382.

⁴³ For an account of football during the first two decades and the developments which led to the formation of the FFFA, see Alfred Wahl, *Les archives du football*, (Paris: Editions Gallimard/Julliard, 1989), pp. 37-56, 87-104.

registration card.⁴⁴ This did not mean that a player's age was entirely irrelevant of course. When Albert Charles Legros applied for his *licence A* for the 1930-31 season, his application form included his birth date listed immediately after his full name.⁴⁵ Indeed, by the early 1930s a player's birth date was an integral part of the information listed on the actual *licence*.⁴⁶ Yet no adult *licences* bore a minimum age until at least the 1941-42 season in the midst of the Vichy regime.⁴⁷ When, then, did age become an important piece of the administration of the game or relevant as regards the issuing of the *licences*?

This section explores the role of age in the process of structuring the registration of young players in France during the inter-war years as well as the questions of how youth categories changed over time. Throughout this period there were two main issues with regard to the role of age in the youth game. Firstly, the question of age became more overtly evident in the bureaucratization of the sport. And secondly, youth categories expanded to cover a larger spectrum of ages. For the majority of the inter-war period the three principal youth categories in France were the *scolaires* who were under twenty years old, *juniors* who were eighteen years of age and under, and the *minimes* between ages thirteen and fifteen. However, these categories were only the beginning and by the Second World War youth could register in a wider variety of age groups by signing a *licence* and a player's age appears to have become a more important aspect of the sport's administrative apparatus.

The oldest of the three youth categories in terms of age, the *scolaires*, is among the most commonly listed in the press during the 1920s. A report from 1920 of the activities of the *Ligue du Sud-Ouest* published in the local sporting weekly, *Ballon Rond*, announced the inaugural 1920-21 league-sponsored *scolaires* championship. Participation was to be restricted to those boys registered at a given school and also under twenty years of age, though for this competition no signed *licences* were

⁴⁴ A number of *licences* from this decade attest to the absence of age on the front of the card. US Noyon, *Licence A*, 1924-25, Association des Anciens Elèves de Feuquières-en-Vimeu, *Licence A*, 1925-26, and US Hordinoise, *Licence A*, 1930-31.

⁴⁵ Fédération Française de F. A., *Demande de Licence A*, 1930-31.

⁴⁶ Union Sportive de Boulange, *Licence A amateur*, 1932-33.

⁴⁷ Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence Amateur*, 1941-42.

required.⁴⁸ The league explained that no individual *licences* would be used, but that a league delegate would verify the registration for the whole group, or a *licence collective*, for the competition.⁴⁹ Two years later, the press printed the criteria for participation in the 1922-23 *scolaires* championship but not without some interesting age limits:

“To defend the colours of an establishment [school], any player must: 1. Be taking courses at the establishment [school]. 2. Be born after the 1st of October 1923. 3. Be a holder of a licence.”⁵⁰

Indeed, the date of October 1, 1923 appears almost certainly to be in error as a league planned for the 1922-23 season could not in fact have players born after 1923.⁵¹ The group registration appears to have given way to an FFFA-issued *licence scolaire* which itself was replaced in 1923 or 1924 by an individual *livret scolaire*, or booklet.⁵²

The presence of *scolaires* was not limited to the South-west, however. In Brittany, the entry for the AS Brestoise archive in 1920-21 notes that a *scolaires* section was formed following the approval of the AS Brestoise General Assembly at the end of the 1920-21 season.⁵³ A contemporary mention of the *scolaires* denomination also appears on the other side of the country in the Alsace. The regional league in the east boasted a membership of one-hundred and thirty-one clubs for the 1926-27 season, including thirteen ‘*club scolaires*’ which suggests that this was hardly isolated to the South-west region.⁵⁴ Indeed, by 1927 and the founding of the *Ligue de Normandie*, the FFFA structure and regulations had been extended to affiliated regional bodies covering the entire country.

⁴⁸ *Ballon Rond*, 27 November 1920.

⁴⁹ *Ballon Rond*, 6 November 1920.

⁵⁰ *Ballon Rond*, 21 October 1922.

⁵¹ A typographical error of history surely. It is likely that the date should have read 1903 limiting players to under the age of nineteen.

⁵² *Ballon Rond*, 24 May 1924.

⁵³ AS Brestoise archive, 1920, note regarding the 1920-21 *Assemblée générale*.

⁵⁴ Pierre Perny, ‘Le Football alsacien – 1890/1950 : une histoire sportive et politique’, (PhD thesis, Universités de Strasbourg et de Fribourg), extract published at Ligue d’Alsace de Football Association, ‘Quatre-vingt ans après’, <http://lafa.fff.fr/cg/0300/www/actu/394676.shtml> (accessed March 1, 2010).

But being a *scolaire* was dependent on continuing one's education beyond the school leaving age of eleven years old.⁵⁵ This was not necessarily the experience for the majority of youth at this time as noted by educational historian Antoine Prost.⁵⁶ Indeed, this is probably why Martial Gergotich, ex-pro and long time coach at AS Brestoise, recalled only two youth categories, *juniors* and *minimes*, during his youth in the 1920s and 30s in largely rural and agricultural Brittany.⁵⁷ At his club the older of the two age groups, the *juniors* were announced for inclusion for the first time in the schedule for friendly matches for the 1927-28 season.⁵⁸ The minutes from the following year's general assembly confirmed the fielding of a *juniors* team among the list of six teams in activity.⁵⁹

The standardisation of a nationalised structure meant that the definition for *juniors* was the same all across the country and even across the Mediterranean in French Algeria where newspapers reprinted extracts from the FFFA statutes which included 'Article 16 for Juniors' as it applied to the regional associations on the then three French *départements* of Oran, Alger and Constantine.⁶⁰ The situation was the same for the *minimes*. An article covering the start to the 1922-23 season for the Bordeaux club, *La Vie au Grand Air du Médoc*, describes that the club had started a section for *minimes* under fifteen which would gather every Thursday and Saturday afternoon.⁶¹ Another report was more precise and explained that the *minimes* age group was for youth "from thirteen to fifteen years old."⁶² It is unknown to what extent young boys in this age

⁵⁵ The 1882 law known as the *Loi Jules Ferry* set compulsory schooling up to age thirteen but the earliest leaving age was at eleven years old on the basis of an examination. *Loi n° 11 696 du 28 Mars 1882 qui rend l'Enseignement primaire obligatoire*, (Journal officiel du 29 mars 1882), art. 4. See <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/histoire/loiferry/sommaire> for the fully transcribed text of the law (accessed December 9, 2010).

⁵⁶ In his review of the French education system, Prost explained that until the 1930s and national reform, "[p]rimary education did not constitute a first level of education, through which all children passed. It is an autonomous education, which feeds into working life...". Antoine Prost, 'Quand l'école de Jules Ferry est-elle morte?', in *l'Histoire de l'éducation*, 14 (1982), pp. 27-8.

⁵⁷ AS Brestoise archive, 'Anciens Joueurs - Gergotich', <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/gergo.htm> (accessed January 12, 2010). Cited in the comprehensive club history, Martial Gergotich recalls that in the 1920s and 30s "*clubs only had three categories of players: Minimes, which should correspond to today's Cadets, Juniors, and Séniors.*"

⁵⁸ AS Brestoise archive, 1927, note from the 30th of September.

⁵⁹ AS Brestoise archive, *Assemblée générale annuelle du 15 Juin 1929*.

⁶⁰ *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, 30 August 1929.

⁶¹ *Ballon Rond*, 22 July 1922.

⁶² *Ballon Rond*, 13 June 1924.

group played on *minimes* teams or whether they competed in senior teams. Jean Grou, from the chapter's opening quote, was not the only fifteen year-old to impress at the adult level. The press highlighted one boy named Laurent who played with Lanton-Taussat, a small club some twenty kilometres west of Bordeaux on the Arcachon Basin. The young man received high praise for his performance: "A special mention to Laurent who, aged fifteen, was the best on the field."⁶³

The formal registration of a young player was an essential ingredient to participate in junior or senior competition especially following the consolidation of the sport in 1919 under one unified federation.⁶⁴ Yet this appears to have been an ongoing process of development as to the regulations and not necessarily everyone in the football club environment was familiar with the situation. By the late 1920s a young player had two options to sign outside of *le football scolaire* as officially explained by the Ligue de Bourgogne-Franche Comté in the regional newspaper:

"The League Secretariat has been receiving for some time requests for information touching on the question of the qualification of juniors. It is reminded to clubs that they can sign a player to a licence in two ways: 1) Through a special junior licence (cost: 0.50 francs) which allows for qualification for junior contests only; 2) Through an ordinary licence (cost: 2.50 francs)... It is understood of course that any player who competes in an official junior match with a licence not delivered according to the abovementioned conditions will be disqualified. The club risks losing the match."⁶⁵

The registration process was relatively clear in the press but there were some question marks about the actual age for signing a first licence in the early part of the twentieth century. By the late 1920s in principle, the minimum age for signing a licence was fixed by the FFFA's statutes and Article 16. Reprinted in *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie* the regulation was unequivocal in that "[n]o licence can be requested for any player under age fourteen".⁶⁶ While this was the situation under the FFFA, the question remains whether even younger players could have signed a *licence* at other times? For example, a story in Parisian weekly, *Match*, from 1930 on Raymond Dubly, former

⁶³ *Ballon Rond*, 27 January, 1923.

⁶⁴ For a full discussion of the formation of the FFFA, see Wahl, *Les archives*, pp. 177-181.

⁶⁵ *Le Petit Comtois*, 7 October 1929.

⁶⁶ *L'Écho sportif de l'Oranie*, 30 August 1929.

French international, reported that he started playing with the R.C. Roubaix *juniors* from the age of ten.⁶⁷ Born in 1893, he would have turned ten on the 5th of November 1903 and, as a member of RC Roubaix, was playing under the aegis of another sporting federation, the USFSA. Thus, it is possible that age regulation was different prior to the FFFA.

With the consolidation of one national federation, all the regulations for the sport were harmonised in the ‘Règlements Généraux’. These were printed in the FFFA’s *Annuaire* which lay to rest all questions about the status and qualification of players and would have resolved all the doubts and enquiries that the regional leagues’ secretariats such as the one in Bourgogne-Franche Comté were tiring of answering through the medium of the press. The 1930 edition of the *Annuaire* was categorical in its delimitation by age of the three categories for younger players. It included a ‘*Statut des Juniors et Minimes*’ as well as a ‘*Statut Scolaire*’. The former clearly stipulated in article three that *juniors* were those young players who had “not yet reached age eighteen on January 1 of the current season” while the *minimes* were those who had “not yet reached age sixteen and have attained fourteen years of age on January 1 of the current season”.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, some young players may have registered at significantly younger ages, such as Charles Colemard who was reported to have signed his first *licence* at age nine for the 1930-31 season.⁶⁹

The FFFA’s youth age limits were in place for the 1930s yet questions about age continued throughout the decade. The combined development of *junior* and *minime* categories and the increased presence of regulated age do not always appear to have worked to limit the participation of youth at the senior level or refrain from inter-age competition. There were those in favour of limiting such age-mixing, and in theory, a young player who signed an ordinary *licence amateur* would see a *junior* stamp glued to

⁶⁷ *Match*, 14 January 1930.

⁶⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 43.

⁶⁹ *Le Télégramme*, 5 May 2000, cited in AS Brestoise archive, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/colebard.htm> (accessed January 15, 2010). Charles Colemard, honorary president of the club, is noted to have signed 70 *licences* during his time at the club, his first at age nine and his 70th coming at seventy-nine years of age. It is unclear that the first one was an actual FFF-issued *licence* and may rather have been a club-issued membership of some kind since no other example at that time concurs with a nine-year-old signing a *licence Amateur*.

the back and thereby restrict the player to *junior* competition.⁷⁰ In an initiative for one age group down, one club in Nice went as far as proposing a rule change to ban too much inter-age play. In preparation for the 1930 General Assembly of the District de la Côte d'Azur, the Football Amateurs Club de Nice submitted a request that *minimes* only be allowed to play up in junior teams but no higher.⁷¹

In contrast to the opposition to inter-age play, there were examples of youth whose licence did not bear the *junior* stamp, a fact which strongly suggests that they played at the senior level. One such young player was Antoine François Mori whose *licence A - Amateur* listed that he was born on the fourteenth of October 1918 in Bastia. He was still thirteen years of age in the start of the autumn 1932, though it is unclear if he signed his first licence with *Cercle Athlétique Bastiais* before or after his fourteenth birthday.⁷² Signature date aside, there was no evidence of the restrictive “junior” stamp.

Even within the categories, the age ranges were broad and represented a significant mixing of size. Several photographs from the A.S. Brestoise archive attest to the *minimes* level during the 1930s including the league winning team of 1934-35.⁷³ The 1935-36 photo of the *minimes* team portrays a large range of ages with the tallest boys towering over the smallest.⁷⁴

⁷⁰ *Le Petit Comtois*, 7 October 1929.

⁷¹ *La Côte d'Azur Sportive*, 1 May 1930.

⁷² Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence A - Amateur*, 1932-33. Interestingly, the stamp by the FFFA is dated 26 November 1932 and thus over a month after Mori's birthday on the 14th of October. As the exact start to the season is unknown, it is unclear if Mori signed the *licence* while still thirteen years of age or if he was made to wait until his fourteenth birthday. Five other *licences* were obtained from that season including four from the same club and one from a club in Lorraine. Other *licences* for that season had been stamped in the prior weeks including one signed by Mori's clubmate, Jacques Bicchiéraï, (on the 3rd of October 1932), one from Union Sportive de Boulange, 22nd of September 1932. Was Mori indeed required to wait until he turned fourteen to sign? See Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence A - Amateur*, 1932-33, and l'Union Sportive de Boulange, *Licence A - Amateur*, 1932-33.

⁷³ AS Brestoise archive, 1935, *Minimes Champions Ouest*, 1934-35 ; and *Minimes*, 1935-36.

⁷⁴ AS Brestoise archive, 1935, *Minimes*, 1935-36. Such photos should be taken with some caution however since not all the boys appear to be wearing a kit which could mean that there were some additional invitees. Indeed, a photo opportunity in 1935 would have been a big deal for any and all bystanders no matter how young.

Image 1 - *Minimes* at A.S. Brestoise, 1935

But if these boys were performing well and playing at an equal level to older boys or even fully-grown men what was the problem? It would appear that physical health was a concern at least for some within French football's leadership. As children were staying longer at school, they were perhaps viewed more as fundamentally different from adults and in need of some form of protection or at least guarantees that they were ready to mix with grown-ups. One doctor by the name of Loïc Barbedor wrote regular editorials on a variety of health issues in *Ouest-Éclair* around the turn of the 1930s and made calls for a "serious medical exam" to determine if youth athletes were ready for the senior game.⁷⁵ The 1930 FFFA *Statut des Juniors et Minimes* did clearly stipulate in article 3b that "players in category B [*minimes*] shall present a medical certificate and written parental approval for the authorisation to play football".⁷⁶ Perhaps what Dr. Barbedor had in mind was more extensive, something in the vein of an official form which was apparently instituted within a couple of years – the wider medical-sporting context of which is well described by Mierzejewski and El Boujjoufi.⁷⁷ Sadly, it was not before the physician's tragic death in the summer of 1932.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ *Ouest-Éclair*, 29 June 1932.

⁷⁶ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 43.

⁷⁷ The FFF *Annuaire* in 1955 lists the 1933-34 season as the first for this mandatory full medical and physiological check-up. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, p. 8. For more on the involvement of the medical corps in sport during this period see Stéphan Mierzejewski et Taïeb El Boujjoufi, 'Le recrutement socio-professionnel du personnel enseignant des Instituts Régionaux d'Éducation physique 1927-39' in *STAPS*, 75 (1) (2007), pp. 9-24.

⁷⁸ The well-liked Dr. Barbedor died trying to save his son after a boating accident and both drowned. The young physician had witnessed the birth of his seventh child just a month prior. He had been active as a

The decade leading up to the Second World War witnessed the expansion of the age range for organised football and continued questions regarding the role of age and not only in football. The magic number of sixteen appears to have been a common cut-off point for adult competition at this time. The newspaper *Match* regularly listed an ‘Answer’ section in its weekly and the editors often responded to questions of an administrative sort. The editors replied to one enquiring reader that the minimum age for signing a *licence* as a cyclist (with the *Union Vélocipédique Française*) was sixteen years old.⁷⁹ The same paper later reported that in boxing a *licence* could be signed only upon turning sixteen.⁸⁰ Indeed, age was an important aspect in many sports and even down to the local level. For example, for the departmental athletics championship in the Finistère held in May 1937, the registration of all athletes was required to list the date of birth of all *juniors* and *cadets* participants whose participation in some disciplines was not compulsory.⁸¹

Returning to football, age continued to forge a path in the bureaucracy of football. A player’s birthday was finally included among the important information listed on the front of a *licence amateur* by 1932.⁸² Within two years boys from the age of eleven could officially sign a *licence*. The newspaper *Ouest-Éclair* reminded its footballing readership that “players born between the 1st of January 1919 and the 31st of December should only sign a minime or pupille licence”.⁸³ But there appear to have been some possible exceptions or maybe even uncertainty. The same article reported that if boys desired to play up in the junior competitions, they were to sign an ordinary

football coach with La Tour d’Auvergne in Rennes, and served on various sports committees. After his death, the *Ligue de Bretagne* named its athletics competition for *juniors* and *cadets* the ‘Challenge Barbedor’. See *Ouest-Éclair*, 25 July 1933, 2 July 1936.

⁷⁹ *Match*, 21 January 1936.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 10 March 1936.

⁸¹ *Ouest-Éclair*, 25 May 1937. The cadets age group (aged sixteen and under) were not required to compete in the pole vault and javelin.

⁸² One *licence amateur* from the 1930-31 season still listed only a player’s name, address and club. By the 1932-33 season the *licence amateur* listed the date of birth immediately below the player’s name. A photo of the player was also attached to the back of the *licence* for the first time for either the 1931-32 or 1932-33 seasons, presumably to facilitate proving identity and age. See Étoile Sportive Hordinoise, *Licence A -- Amateur*, 1930-31, and Union Sportive de Boulang, *Licence A - Amateur*, 1932-33.

⁸³ *Ouest-Éclair*, 28 July 1934.

licence and have a *junior* stamp glued to their registration.⁸⁴ Was there some confusion about how the younger players were to play and what were the limits of their participation in terms of competing against older teams?

If by the mid 1930s officials registered young players into three separate categories covering a larger segment of the age range than in the prior decade, this did not impede a grouping of these youth together or inter-age play. During the opening weeks of the 1935-36 season *Ouest-Éclair* reported on the *minimes* who appeared to be involved in *junior*-level competition:

“League for Juniors – Following the delay by the federation in sending the licences ‘minimes’, the calendar for the teams of juniors, as it had previously been established and submitted to the interested clubs, will have to be modified.”⁸⁵

Juniors and *minimes* did indeed play against each other though often this appeared limited to friendly matches. For example, in the curtain raiser prior to a second division professional tie between Stade Rennais and Caen, the *minimes* from Rennes played against the *juniors* from the postal service’s A.S.P.T.T. team.⁸⁶

The debate as to when a youth was ready to compete at the adult level and the resulting medical exam may well have been influential in the changes during the 1930s along with the sport policy of the IIIe République (responsible for the opening of the École Normale d’Éducation Physique) and Leo Langrage’s approach under the *Front Populaire* government.⁸⁷ But what should not be overlooked is the growth in numbers of young players who, by their presence across the country, would have brought the issues to a head. Indeed, by the turn of the 1940s youth players were achieving a critical mass. If much press had been given over to the under-twenty *scolaires* age

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ouest-Éclair*, 3 November 1935.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 26 December 1937.

⁸⁷ Regarding the Third Republic see Gérard Fouquet et Jean-Michel Peter, ‘Création de l’ENEP à Paris en 1933 et formation des enseignants d’éducation physique sous la IIIe République’, *STAPS*, 95 (1) (2012), pp. 75-90. For the *Front Populaire*, see Fatia Terfous, ‘Sport et éducation physique sous le Front populaire et sous Vichy : approche comparative selon le genre’ *STAPS*, 90 (4) (2010), pp. 49-58.

group in the 1920s, this category disappeared from the official list of age groups by 1939.⁸⁸ In their stead, the attention on the youth game turned to a younger crowd.

The focus was no longer just schoolboys but moving to the whole of the younger generation. One of the top clubs of the day, SC Fives, was the subject of a feature in *Match* in 1936. Reporter, Mario Brun who penned football articles all throughout the period and was known for his coverage in *Nice-Matin* and as an editor for *Football*, noted that of the two-hundred amateurs at Fives, one-hundred and thirty were youth players in the *junior*, *minime* and *pupille* categories.⁸⁹ This push towards youth was not only at top clubs like Fives but was a growing national trend. The official statistics for the 1940-41 season listed 13,586 *minimes* and *pupilles* split almost evenly between the unoccupied area and Nazi-occupied France.⁹⁰ These youth accounted for no less than twelve percent of all registered players in that season.⁹¹ Moreover, this impressive official registration said nothing of the *unofficial* mass participation on village squares and in schoolyards, a fact which undoubtedly underestimates the weight of this body of players. While they may not have had a recognised voice in the game's organisation, was this youthful mass that was knocking on the door of the adult game the principal cause for two significant changes at the start of the 1940s?

As was the case with many aspects of society, sport underwent various changes during this period and Zeldin attributes the “transformation of sport into an activity for the masses for the young” more to the Vichy era than the prior Third Republic.⁹² It is unclear, however, to what extent the administrative changes to the type of *licence*

⁸⁸ Newspapers like *Ouest-Éclair* made regular mention each year during the 1930s of the latest edition of the FFFA statutes and different age categories. After the appearance of the newest and youngest category, *pupille*, in addition to the established *professionnel*, *junior*, *minime*, *universitaire*, and *scolaire* categories, the last two covering the university and scholastic under-twenty game disappeared from the regular list in 1939. See *Ouest-Éclair*, 31 August 1939.

⁸⁹ *Match*, 2 February 1936.

⁹⁰ *Football*, 5 May 1941.

⁹¹ The other 97,986 *licences* for adults and *juniors* accounted for the other eighty-seven percent.

⁹² With regards to wartime France, Zeldin has cautioned however against any interpretation that Vichy could be discussed as one coherent regime. See Zeldin, *L'Histoire des Passions Française*, pp. 396-8. See Zeldin, *L'Histoire des Passions Française*, pp. 396-8. Others have reminded the importance of the Third Republic as the setting which saw the boost to courses for sport educators through the creation of the *École normale d'éducation physique*. See Gérard Fouquet et Jean-Michel Peter, 'Création de l'ENEP à Paris en 1933 et formation des enseignants d'éducation physique sous la IIIe République', *STAPS*, 95 (1) (2012), pp. 75-90.

offered by the FFFA were a direct result of the political sphere. Up to the 1940s players generally signed an ordinary *licence amateur* accompanied with the relevant *junior* or *minime* stamps. By the 1942-43 season, new categories had been assigned and an amateur player was in one of five groups as either a *sénior*, *junior*, *cadet*, *minime* or *pupille*.⁹³ Gone was the singular generic moniker of the *licence amateur* in its ‘A’ or ‘B’ variety and in came four clearly labelled youth categories with limits on either end of the spectrum.⁹⁴ The second change was the printing of a clear minimum and maximum age for the first time on the player’s registration card. For the first time, the *licence* itself listed the limits making age verification a simpler task on match day by the league official or referee. For example, *juniors* were required to be born in 1923 and 1924.⁹⁵ For senior level competition, the minimum age was firmly in place by 1943.⁹⁶

If the turn of the 1940s was the moment for football’s organisers to reform the age structure and create four clearly defined age groups this did not mean that inter-age play disappeared. The curtain raiser for the first team clash between E.S. Saint-Brieuc and U.S. Saint-Malo was a *pupilles* versus *minimes* match.⁹⁷ It should not be forgotten however that the formalisation of age limitation did not only occur on the younger end of the spectrum. In some cases, clubs had simultaneously created teams for the young and teams for the old. The announcement in 1924 by one club explained that:

“...la Section Burdigalienne has decided to revive its pre-war tradition, reconstituting in its bosom the grouping of players, by creating, in addition to its official teams, two new teams which will be composed of: one, players over thirty years old, and the other, the minimes from thirteen to fifteen years old.”⁹⁸

Indeed, the separation of players according to age went both ways and it was not uncommon to see match reports in the press for teams of *vétérans* as they were called.

⁹³ This was more extensive than in other sports. Rowing for example listed only three categories: *séniors*, *juniors* and *débutants*. See *Ouest-Éclair*, 27 March 1939.

⁹⁴ While the ‘A’ and ‘B’ *licences* did continue after this period, they were no longer the headline on the actual player registrations. For a full discussion of the origins of the *Licence A* and *Licence B*, see Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, p. 47 and Alfred Wahl, ‘Le footballeur français : de l’amateurisme au salariat (1890-1926)’, in *Le Mouvement Social*, 135 (1986), pp. 26-9.

⁹⁵ US Hordinoise, *Licence Junior*, 1942-43.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.* Achille Fasciaux’s *licence* at US Hordinoise was renewed for the 1943-44 season as a *sénior* with the clearly stamped age limit for *séniors* on the backside of the registration.

⁹⁷ *Ouest-Éclair*, 6 November 1941.

⁹⁸ *Ballon Rond*, 13 June 1924.

The newspaper *Match* went as far as encouraging one enquiring reader in its ‘Answer’ section by responding that “[i]t is never too late to do well: at 50 it is still possible to play football. But it would be better if it were in a team of vétérans.”⁹⁹

Thus, between the 1920s and the 1940s, the administration of the game in France saw increased space given to age. Categories were structured on a more and more specific definition of age and for younger and younger players. The barrier of age was not impermeable however and the question was not restricted to football. Inter-age play did occur though the question of health and protection may have influenced the formalisation of a medical exam to define the limits for playing up with older competition. So, while Lanfranchi and Wahl conclude that a young player in the 1920s and 30s would have signed his first *licence* in a *scolaire* club, the actual age structure was slightly more complex and by the 1940s accommodated youth in four clearly denominated categories and at a progressively younger age.¹⁰⁰

Classifying juniors and school boys by age and weight in early twentieth century America, c. 1920-c.1940

The limitation of participation in America was in some respects rather different from the situation in France. Since the sport in the United States did not enjoy the same nationally unified and centralised structure as existed in France, the regulation of youth participation evolved somewhat differently. Age was initially only one means of classifying youth and separating them from the adult game. In contrast to France, organisers in America also used other measurements such as weight. The fragmented organisation of the sport stateside meant that many islands of the sport often had disparate approaches to participant limitation. With time and specifically the promotion of a singular national junior competition, the game’s leadership gradually gave preference to age as the primary means of distinguishing the youth and senior levels.

⁹⁹ *Match*, 14 April 1936.

¹⁰⁰ Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, pp. 72-74.

The question of classification implied one of two methods in approaching competition. One could either restrict it to similar groups – established on the basis of age or some other means – or one could encourage inter-age play. This issue was not new at the turn of the 1920s. James Robinson has chronicled the origins of the game in St. Louis around the turn of the twentieth century and the central place of the Christian Brothers College. The order of Brothers who ran the school were intimately involved in the sports scene locally and organised “junior teams” that played other local under-sixteen teams during the late 1880s.¹⁰¹ So, some maintained an age-appropriate structure. In other cases, however, young players were not restricted from competing in senior teams. Before Tommy Dunn led the St. Teresa’s Juniors in St. Louis in 1910, another young player made his debut at the top level around the same age. Ben Govier, long time player, respected team captain and later writer for the *Chicago Tribune*, was reported to have played with his club’s senior side in 1891 while still in his youth. In a testimonial article published some fifteen years later, Joe Davis wrote about Govier who “played his first game with the Pullman team against Detroit, and although only fifteen years of age, displayed great promise.”¹⁰²

While individuals such as Govier played among older team-mates and against older competition, there were also examples of entire youth teams ‘playing up’, or playing above one’s age. The aforementioned St. Teresa’s Juniors were, if one is to believe the accounts, lucky to compete in the senior amateur division. Correspondent for St. Louis, David Barrett explained how this team of juniors was not initially admitted as they were “considered too small to compete with the senior amateur” and their entrance to the Senior League was only “thanks to some clever statesmanship on the part of their manager, Tobias Burke”.¹⁰³ That same season in the greater New York area another junior team was recorded as playing at the senior level. In the 1910 *Spalding Guide* the juniors from the Eureka Athletic Association Soccer Football Club

¹⁰¹ James Robinson, ‘The History of Soccer in the City of St. Louis’, (St. Louis University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1966), p. 32.

¹⁰² *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16* (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1915), p. 81.

¹⁰³ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1910), pp. 94-5.

of Kearny, New Jersey were highlighted despite their difference in size with their adult competition:

“The Eurekas, although generally outweighed by their opponents, managed to put up a good game, because of their speed, endurance and team-work, and in most cases were returned the winners.”¹⁰⁴

The presence of these full junior teams at the adult level are more often than not underlined as exceptions to the rule. Was there concern for the juniors as smaller and therefore more vulnerable? Was the issue of participant limitation based on safety? The approach to sport at the start of the twentieth century was a rational one based on the concepts of quantification and measurement. The extent to which this was conditioned by concerns of safety is unclear but if these existed, there were various attempts at separating youth and adults as well as youth themselves in sporting competition.

In order to address the question of how youth should be divided up, there were several answers used across the spectrum of physical education and sport. Age may have been an important aspect but in America it was not the only criterion. The enormous ‘Cyclopedia of Education’ which was edited by Paul Monroe and published by the United States Government Printing Office in five volumes offers valuable insight into these questions at this time.¹⁰⁵ Aside from information about education across the country, child and youth-related issues as wide ranging as child labour and hygiene to the philosophy of education and teaching methods, it contained a lengthy section on athletics in elementary schools and the classification of boys. The author began with an admission that “[c]lassification of the boys taking part is another necessity” and further explained that

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 109.

¹⁰⁵ Monroe’s *Cyclopedia* included over 1,000 contributors who provided articles on all aspects of education including sports. The five volumes were published between 1911 and 1913 and Monroe himself was an educational historian. The *Cyclopedia* has been considered important for the “unique contribution it made at a point in time of critical importance in the history of American education” as well as an “essential historical document for all students of education and American thought”. See William W. Brickman and Francesco Cordasco, ‘Paul Monroe’s Cyclopedia of Education: With Notices of Educational Encyclopedias Past and Present’, in *History of Education Quarterly*, 10 (3) (Autumn, 1970), pp. 324-337.

“they must be divided into groups so that those shall come together in competition who are of the same general physical ability. Grouping was first tried on the basis of age, and two classifications were made; boys under 13 years of age, and all other elementary schoolboys.”¹⁰⁶

The two age groups posed problems, however, because the difference between boys of the same age could range five feet to four feet in height and “it was difficult to guarantee that the boy rightfully belonged in the group in which he was placed”.¹⁰⁷ As a result, other methods for classification were envisaged and the example of New Orleans (classification by height) was cited. The author continued:

“A recent suggestion is that the boys should be classified on a combination basis of age, height, and weight. That is, Class A might be all boys whose age in years, plus one half the height in inches, plus one quarter of weight in pounds, shall not exceed 62. There is no doubt that some such plan as this would make a perfectly fair classification, but its practical working is not certain.”¹⁰⁸

Age as well as weight and height were proposed as possible methods to separate youth for competition in elementary school athletics. Height does not appear to have been relevant for classifying youth in football, but both weight and age were used by different associations and leagues in a variety of areas across the country.

Why was there not one definitive method for classification? It is important to recall the federal structure of the country itself and that education was the domain of the state governments so there was not the same standardised approach that was possible in France. Furthermore, another fundamental difference with France was the lack of a national structure to the sport of football in America. While the game existed at adult and youth levels in many parts of the country, the various organisers were not all federated under one banner as was the case across the Atlantic. This is particularly well illustrated in the cases of the Chicago and Baltimore youth leagues, the first being linked to the national structure while the second was not.

¹⁰⁶ L.F. Hanmer, ‘Athletics, Educational’, in P. Monroe, ed. *A Cyclopaedia of Education*, volume 1, (New York: MacMillan, 1911), p. 278.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 279.

In the bold and almost evangelic style describing the “continual progress” of the game that is common to many articles in the *Spalding Guides* of this period, W.R. Cummings wrote that the game in Chicago had progressed perhaps more in his city than elsewhere and that boys from ages seven to twenty-one were mastering the game.¹⁰⁹ Trouille whose research has covered the city of Chicago, made reference to this period during which “many clubs were fielding up to four teams, including youth divisions”.¹¹⁰ But how were these divisions organised? The boys of such a wide range of ages did not necessarily play together. The Chicago South Park Commissioners began a junior league in 1911 by introducing a 110 lbs. and under class for grammar school boys.¹¹¹ While the South Parks leagues themselves were not directly affiliated to the USFA, the leadership included individuals like Peter Peel and Edward B. DeGroot who were active promoters of the youth game and responsible for the direction of the city’s two affiliated members to the USFA throughout this period: the Peel Challenge Cup and the Chicago Soccer Foot Ball League.¹¹² Once a 110 lbs. League was operational, 125 lbs. and 90 lbs. and under classes were introduced the following year and by 1915 the age range covered fourteen to twenty years of age.¹¹³ Cummings described the 1915 final gold medal match between Calumet and Palmer park sides and how the “small boys average about three feet in height, under 90 lbs. in weight and about ten years of age”.¹¹⁴ Another local league, the Suburban High School League had plans to add a “bantam” class for the 1915-16 season which was expected to attract a further six teams, though the details are not mentioned as to the maximum weight allowed at the “bantam”

¹⁰⁹ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16*, p. 79. Cummings wrote: “Perhaps no greater advancement has been made in soccer than is apparent in the park systems in Chicago and vicinity, where numerous boys and young men, ranging in age from seven to twenty-one years, have developed a thorough and complete knowledge in every department of the game.” Such a ‘progressivist’ and optimistic vision should probably be read with caution.

¹¹⁰ David Trouille, ‘Association football to fútbol: ethnic succession and the history of Chicago-area soccer since 1920’, in *Soccer & Society*, 10 (6), November 2009, p. 796.

¹¹¹ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16*, p. 79. While the junior league first opened in 1911, there was no mention of this in the 1914-15 *Guide*. Only the following year did the annual provide extensive information about the Windy City’s youth scene.

¹¹² Gabe Logan, ‘Lace Up the Boots, Full Tilt Ahead: Recreation, Immigration, and Labor on Chicago’s Soccer Fields, 1890–1950’ (Northern Illinois University: unpublished PhD dissertation, 2005), p. 183.

¹¹³ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16*, p. 79.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80

level.¹¹⁵ Thus, the Chicago structure was based on 90, 110 and 125 lbs. weight classes and possibly linked to a national structure for youth categories.¹¹⁶

The contrasting example of Baltimore – an industrial city on the Chesapeake Bay – exposes the difficulty in establishing a coherent national structure for the youth game. The city’s Public Athletic League operated several leagues that mixed ages but separated its junior participants by weight. For the 1913-14 season, the league registered sixty-two teams from forty schools furnishing 866 players in three weight classes: lightweight – 95 lbs., middleweight – 115 lbs., and unlimited weight.¹¹⁷ The next two seasons maintained these same divisions.¹¹⁸ However, by 1921, the Park Soccer Tournament was limited to two weight classes, “under 95 lbs and over 95 lbs.” and only thirty seven teams with five-hundred and fifty-five players.¹¹⁹ The school scene was reminiscent of the earlier weight categories. Well-known teacher and coach at public school 76, Alfreda Iglehart led three “soccer elevens” to titles in the 95 lbs., 115 lbs., and heavyweight divisions.¹²⁰ While not immensely different from the classification in Chicago, the weight categories were nonetheless different in Baltimore. The fact that the state of Maryland did not have an affiliation to the USFA before the mid-1920s meant that in terms of organising and administering the youth game, it could of course do just as it pleased. There is no evidence for a national youth competition of any kind at this time, but one can imagine the potential physical disadvantage to a Chicago 90 lb. team if it ever faced the 95 lb. “lightweights” from Baltimore.

Continuing with the question of affiliation, there was a third body of organisers who had yet another approach to the sport and outside the umbrella of the national governing body. Schools operated youth competitions and structured these rather simply according to grade in school, another way of saying age. Schools used age as a

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹¹⁶ The *Spalding Guides* make no mention as to whether the USFA had adopted a standard classification system for youth football across all its membership.

¹¹⁷ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1914-15*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1914), pp. 149-51.

¹¹⁸ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16*, p. 74; *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16*, p. 83

¹¹⁹ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, p. 109.

¹²⁰ *The Sun*, 19 February 1924.

basis for separating even younger groups, in this case boys between fourth and eighth grade. For the first time in 1914-15, the five public schools of Englewood, New Jersey, selected teams for inter-school competition with a division of a team of boys in fourth and fifth grades and a team from the sixth, seventh and eighth grades.¹²¹ Thus, there was a plethora of ways to classify youth and any effort for national standardisation would have been thwarted by different governing structures for the school system and for the sport's diverse organising constituencies.

With the 1920s approaching, one witnessed a growing shift away from weight and towards age as the most important criterion for classifying youth. Some organisers were clear about the cut-off for participation while others only mentioned an existing age limit without clearly stating the age. On the east coast, the Rhode Island Junior League included six teams, half of which shared the name of a senior level club playing in the Rhode Island League or the Williams Challenge Cup Competition.¹²² For the start of the 1916-17 season, the Junior League was described by the organisation's secretary, Vincent Votolato, in the following manner:

“This organization has been in existence but two years, and although it has an age limit the brand of football that is displayed often excels that of the higher leagues.”¹²³

The submission by William Haddock from the Pittsburgh Press Soccer Football League offers further evidence of age limitation in a structure similar to Rhode Island with two divisions. The Press Junior League was initiated for the 1915-16 season and “made up of young men, eighteen years of age and under”.¹²⁴ At the start of the Roaring Twenties, out west in California, the Sacramento League claimed having an average age of eighteen years for their playing population.¹²⁵

¹²¹ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16* (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1915), pp. 47-8.

¹²² *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1916-17*, pp. 67-8.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-1.

¹²⁵ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1922), pp. 147-8.

Registration was also possible for even younger age groups. For the 1917-18 season the Spalding corporation sponsored a 'Midget League' in Montreal for what was claimed to be the "first league of its kind in America" albeit it was in fact across the Canadian border.¹²⁶ The league was for players fifteen and under and after a successful first year the organisers added a second "Juvenile" division for youth up to seventeen.¹²⁷ In the American Mid-West, the St. Louis Municipal League in 1922-23 included eight teams in two juniors divisions whose players were described to "average about fourteen years of age, and show great promise of becoming future stars of the game".¹²⁸

Thus by the 1920s the game's organisers were moving towards a structure for youth football that was age-based rather than weight-based. By 1924 various leaders of clubs in Baltimore met in September of that year to finally form a state body which was sanctioned by the USFA and the member teams were to be "rated according to age limit".¹²⁹ It is unclear whether this move to age-based classification was a direct consequence of joining the national body. Regardless, even the aforementioned public school league with its well-established network of school teams classified by weight was moving to age categories. Following the demise of the professional American Soccer League and in midst of the Great Depression that loomed over the country, the Baltimore-based league set an age limit for the first time at fifteen years "being a requisite for competition" and the younger players were not allowed to compete on Sundays but only on Saturdays in the "competition set aside for them".¹³⁰

The move in the 1920s towards age illustrates the growing primacy of separating the youth from the men. However, this separation according to age was also enforced despite sufficient ability. In 1935, William Sachno, a talented young athlete from Tilden Technical High School had initially signed with a senior team as a professional

¹²⁶ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1917-18*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1917), p. 95.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, p. 127.

¹²⁹ *The Sun*, 27 September 1924.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 13 September 1931. By this time the league was made up of one-hundred and two teams across the city.

only to be told he was in effect too young. The following season, the Ukrainian press explained the situation in this way:

“It may interest the readers of the Ukrainian Weekly to know that William Sancho [sic], Ukrainian, 18 years of age, of 3114 West 53rd St., Chicago, Ill., has signed up with a championship soccer team, the “Calumets.” His position is center forward. In his first game he scored 3 goals; the first one being a hard shot from 18 yards out. Last year Bill received an offer to play with the Sparta Aces, a professional team, but had to quit because the Illinois Athletic Commission ruled him too young to play professional ball.”¹³¹

Although there was already a groundswell moving towards age-based football, the turning point may well have been the formalisation of the National Junior Cup in 1935. With a national competition that had to be played under the same rules regardless whether the youth came from Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago or St. Louis, the clubs and organisations had to set aside the vernacular of local “juniors” as they faced a challenge to adopt a new national “junior” language. So when over one-hundred teams from across the Eastern seaboard to the Midwest states entered the 1938 competition, they were all playing by the same rules.¹³² Even if some local leagues continued to classify juniors at whatever age they saw fit, such as the fifteen and under age limit for the Berks County junior soccer loop, the presence of a coherent and centralised regulation for the National Junior Cup competition forced the USFA’s membership to adhere to these rules.¹³³

Although one standard of defining a “junior” was according to his age, the game’s organisers may indeed have achieved an agreed definition of the term at least at the oldest level. Yet this universality was also the basis for occasional conflict and the beginning of problems with over-age players competing in the Cup. In the early years of the tournament the USFA’s rules clearly stipulated that youth players must be eighteen and under.¹³⁴ This did not prevent matches from being thrown out such as the

¹³¹ *Ukrainian Weekly*, 25 October 1935.

¹³² *Pittsburgh Press*, 29 May 1938. The 1937-38 competition featured one-hundred and six entries.

¹³³ In yet another example of the isolated nature of the administration of the game in America, the Berks County junior league organisers drafted their own rules and regulations for their 1935 Junior Loop and fixed the limit at fifteen and under. *Reading Eagle*, 18 September 1935.

¹³⁴ *The Pittsburgh Press*, 19 August 1938.

Western Penn district semi-final between junior sides Beadling – the eventual victors after two replays – and Cecil – the guilty party for using overage players.¹³⁵

Perhaps the presence of age cheating was the real evidence of the shift from weight based youth classification to an age-based one. However, due to the fragmented nature of football's organisation in America, the road was different and probably more meandering than the path followed by the sport in France. There is no evidence of a standard approved list of four categories split by age in the way the French had their *juniors*, *cadets*, *minimes*, and *pupilles* by the turn of the 1940s. In America, there were juniors, juveniles, midgets and even bantams but some of the terms overlapped in age or weight depending on the area in which the game was played. Yet, there was a common transition and harmonisation with the arrival of a national competition which required an agreed definition and regulations accepted by the growing constituency of the USFA. At the dawn of what Trouille has called the “ethnic period” of the sport in America, age was an essential ingredient of the youth game.¹³⁶

The French youth football family expands and grows younger, c.1940-c.1970

In the midst of war and occupation in the early 1940s the youth game in France was alive and kicking with the two youngest categories, the *minimes* and *pupilles*, representing one-eighth of all registered players alone. Coming out of the war, the institutional structure of French football was solidified with the *ordonnance n° 45-1922 du 28 août 1945* that added state-delegated authority and legitimacy to one federation per sporting discipline, while guaranteeing a certain amount of autonomy in the exercise of their administration.¹³⁷ With this solid governance base, the subsequent thirty years were marked on either side by significant changes to the youth age categories. These two bookends aside, it was a relatively stable period in terms of age and one during

¹³⁵ *The Pittsburgh Press*, 8 April 1940.

¹³⁶ In his research on the sport in Chicago, Trouille has qualified the period from the late 1930s up to 1971 as the “ethnic period”. See David Trouille, ‘Association football to fútbol: ethnic succession and the history of Chicago-area soccer since 1920’, in *Soccer & Society*, 10 (6), November 2009, p. 802.

¹³⁷ Faure and Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel*, p. 39.

which the established categories spread throughout France becoming a daily reality in many clubs. By the end of the period, the age ladder had been considerably reduced and French youth footballers were registering in more categories and younger than ever before.

One aspect that was both a constant and a reflection of change was the nomenclature used by football's organisers. Leaving the *scolaires* aside, the names of the other two categories from the inter-war years, the *juniors* and *minimes*, did not change between the 1940s and the 1970s. Yet their nature did alter over time as to the underlying meaning of the terms when newer age groups were added to the overall picture. *Le Grand Robert de la Langue Française* provides an etymological vista on the development of these terms. The word *junior* was derived from the Latin *juvenis*, and its significance as the age group immediately preceding the adult level remained the same throughout the twentieth century. The second initial category, *minimes*, was also Latin in origin from *minimus* meaning *le plus petit* or the youngest in French. Its place as last in the football family was usurped by the arrival of the *pupille* in the mid-1930s as mentioned in the prior section. This term, *pupille*, from the legal Latin *pupillus* or *pupus* meaning "little boy" was principally used in reference to a child orphan placed in the care of a legal guardian or in need of supervision. In the years following the Great War, the term *pupille* had significant societal meaning for the French and was sometimes coined specifically as *pupille de la Nation* or *pupille de la Marine*.¹³⁸ This family structure of three age groups born in the 1920s and 30s was further expanded at the start of the 1940s when the *cadet*, or "the one who follows the oldest", took his

¹³⁸ In his *Le Sursis*, Sartre wrote "Mon père est mort en 1918. Je suis pupille de la Nation." Cited in *Le Grand Robert de la Langue Française*. On the topic of the *pupilles de la Marine*, Jacques Rongier authored an article on the history of the *École des Pupilles de la Marine* located near Brest. He explains how sailors were trained from a young age but also given a civic education. During most of its activity, the school, founded in 1862 and finally closed in 1958, took in boys as young as seven, often orphans, and trained them up to the age of thirteen at which point they would move on to the next level of school at the *École des Mousses*. The notion of *pupille* would have covered any boy under thirteen. This distinction has been essentially maintained given that a *pupille* in football in the 1960s covered the ten to thirteen age group. See the Plougonvelin monthly newsletter, Jacques Rongier, 'L'École des Pupilles de la Marine' in *Les Echos*, November 2007, pp 5-6, and *Ibid.*, December 2007, pp. 18-20. The term was also linked to orphan girls though in this case the age range apparently covered up to sixteen years. In a report of the municipal council meeting, the newspaper noted the concern held by the administrative committee of the local orphanage for the welfare and safety of the girls, or *pupilles*, under their protection until age sixteen. See *Ouest-Éclair*, 26 July 1918.

rightful place in between the *junior* and *minime*.¹³⁹ The classification by name evolved at the start of the 1940s. In sum, *junior* was still Jr. while the *cadet* muscled his way into second place, but *minime* lost his spot as the youngest when football adopted the orphaned *pupille*.

This “family structure” for football was in place throughout much of the thirty year period between 1940 and 1970. While the names largely did not change, the ages associated with them did. If the FFFA’s regulations stipulated that a *junior* in the 1930s was no older than eighteen years and seven months, there was change in store for the early 1940s. The 1941-42 season appears to have been the last before the new player status regulations for youth were introduced.¹⁴⁰ The change was not an easy one to comprehend and it appears to have created more than some confusion. The Comité Régional d’Anjou announced the new age categories as follows:

“To avoid any confusion in the application of the clauses adopted by the Fédération Française de Football, the C.R.A. [Comité Régional d’Anjou] has had to exchange numerous letters, and from all the documents received, it can confirm what follows...¹⁴¹

The C.R.A. enumerated a new list of categories that included *juniors*, *cadets*, *jeunes cadets* and *minimes* with no mention to the familiar *pupilles*. For this new 1942-43 season a *junior* would have been no less than seventeen years seven months and one day and no more than nineteen years and seven months old.¹⁴² At the same time, the *cadet* made his first appearance in the administrative paperwork of the FFFA having

¹³⁹ Ariès has chronicled the origin of the term *cadet*. The word came from the gentilhommes who served as military apprentices and “learned, at the start of the 17th century, weapons, horse-riding and the art war”. While the *Grand Robert* records the first usage of the term in sports from 1928, it did not make its official appearance as an age group in football until 1941 or 1942. Throughout the 1920s and 30s some clubs, such as *Cadets de Bretagne*, did use the term in the name of the association but not as particular to one age group. See Ariès, *L’enfant et la vie familiale*, p. 72.

¹⁴⁰ *Ouest-Éclair* of the 10th of May 1941 listed the annual information about the licences for the upcoming season. In this article no mention was made of the *cadet* though the second page of the paper did list the official announcement of the new status for Jews in Nazi-occupied France under the headline “Un Nouveau Statut pour les Juifs”. See *Ouest-Éclair*, 10 May 1941.

¹⁴¹ *Ouest-Éclair*, 11 November 1942.

¹⁴² US Hordinoise, *Licence Junior*, 1942-43. The age here is calculated on the basis of August 1st as a theoretical start date to the season. While the regulations of the ‘Statut des Juniors et Minimes’ of 1930 clearly stated that *juniors* “should not have reached eighteen years of age on the 1st of January of the current season”, there was an exception in the rules. A club could sign a junior one full year older than stated above. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 43.

been a regular part of other sports such as basketball or athletics for some time. So, as of the 1942-43 season a boy between fifteen and seven months and seventeen and seven months old in August was to sign in the newly offered *cadet* category.¹⁴³ The newspaper explained that the *jeunes cadets* were those boys born in 1927 and 1928 (between thirteen and seven months and fifteen and seven months in August) while the *minimes* were born in 1929 and 1930 (between eleven and seven months and thirteen and seven months).¹⁴⁴ This overlap of *minimes* with the well-known *pupilles* and the addition of two new categories may have confused more than one club official or referee.

These changes did not last long, however, and the following year the *jeune cadet* was removed from the accepted categories altogether.¹⁴⁵ The brief rise in the age limits was not to last long and the French federation reintroduced the age groups under the same names (*junior*, *cadet*, and *minime*) for the 1943-44 season. This resulted in the fact that the *junior* age bracket had dropped one full year and thus a *junior* player would have been no less than sixteen years seven months and one day and no more than eighteen years and seven months old.¹⁴⁶ The same changes to the *juniors* category also brought down the age limits for *cadets* a full year.¹⁴⁷ Equally, the *minimes*, no less than twelve years and seven months and no older than fourteen years and seven months, now covered half of the old *pupilles* age group. All three categories had been reduced in terms of the minimum and maximum ages though not as far down the age scale as the structure prior to World War Two when a *pupille* could sign while still eleven. A definitive reason is unclear but the sport's leadership may well have needed to reach lower down the age ladder in order to fill teams that had lost players to the war.

At the same time restrictions on playing up appear to have become more strict. After the push for a medical exam to prove physical aptitude for the sport in the 1930s, this became the ticket to higher level competition. For the 1942-43 season a *cadet* was allowed to play up in any category including *sénior* so long as he had submitted a

¹⁴³ US Hordinoise, *Licence Cadet*, 1942-43.

¹⁴⁴ *Ouest-Éclair*, 11 November 1942.

¹⁴⁵ *Ouest-Éclair*, 25 May 1943.

¹⁴⁶ Étoile Sportive du Vernet, *Licence Junior*, 1944-45.

¹⁴⁷ Étoile Sportive du Vernet, *Licence Cadet*, 1944-45.

medical certificate as clearance.¹⁴⁸ The following season it was no longer enough, however, as the instructions to referees printed in the press were that all youth *licences* must include an annotation or stamp signifying that the player had obtained the B.S.N. or ‘Brevet Sportif National’ without which a *cadet* was forbidden to play up.¹⁴⁹ Even the *licence* itself included space on the reverse side for authorisation to be signed by a doctor. Achille Fasciaux’s *licence* from the 1942-43 season portrays the circular mark of the B.S.N. from the ‘Département du Nord’ overtop the 1943-44 *sénior* stamp and the medical clearance to the left of the photograph.¹⁵⁰

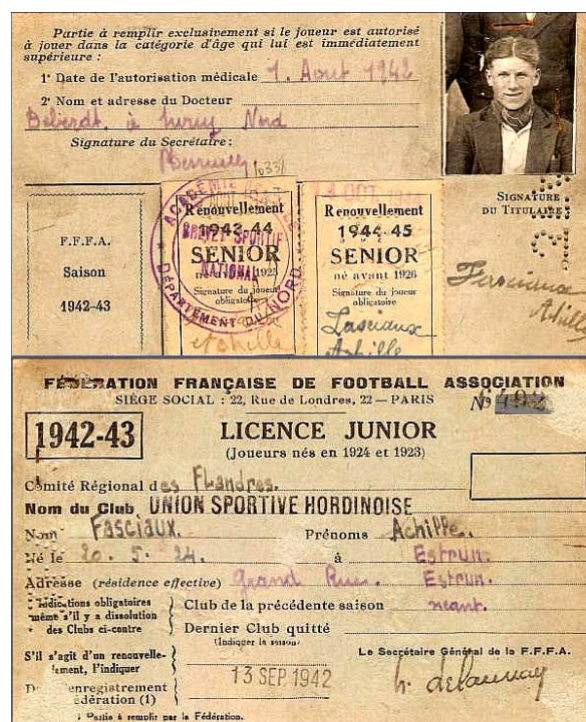


Image 2 - Front and back of Fasciaux’s *Licence Junior* from 1942-43

What was the reason for the change? Was it possible that the tragic loss of life during the war meant that the only hope for teams across the country was a reduction of

¹⁴⁸ *Ouest-Éclair*, 11 November 1942.

¹⁴⁹ *Ouest-Éclair*, 25 May 1943. The B.S.N. was an outgrowth of the *Brevet Sportif Populaire* designed by the *Front Populaire* government as a means to ensure a good physical condition for the French population. See Michaël Attali et Jean Saint-Martin, ‘L’évaluation en EPS : entre légitimité disciplinaire et défis culturels (1959-2009)’, *Les Sciences de l’éducation - Pour l’Ère nouvelle*, 43 (3) (2010), p. 70.

¹⁵⁰ US Hordinoise, *Licence Junior*, 1942-43.

age limits in order to find enough players to field full teams all while protecting their physical health at the same time? Or perhaps a consequence of the changes imposed by the wartime Vichy regime which effected numerous changes to the way football was organised, such as the temporary suppression of professionalism and the greater restriction on movement of players?¹⁵¹ Were the youngest players (the eleven year-old *pupilles* of the interwar years) simply neglected in terms of organisation by a society consumed by the daily pressures of war and occupation? Indeed, the clubs in such conditions could hardly have been expected to have had enough adults to supervise all these players.

The organisation of the game was rigorous and players were required to be fully registered members in order to represent the club. Local rivals, however, were sometimes caught up in the action and turned a blind eye to such requirements. For a Dieppe derby match in Normandy between the *cadets* from FC Dieppe and Dieppe Universitaire Club on the 9th of November 1947, the District body responsible for overseeing the competition did not miss the opportunity to enforce the rules. With unregistered players on both sides, the two Dieppe rivals forfeited the match with one club being fined while a player from the other was suspended.¹⁵² The apparent rigidity of the bureaucracy did not however impede certain exceptions or perhaps mistakes. Notwithstanding an official stamp and signature by FFF General Secretary Henri Delaunay, the signatory of a *Licence Cadet Étranger* from the 1946-47 season, Italian immigrant Virgil Onesta, was born in March of 1929 – making him some nine months older than the printed age limit of 1930 for the *cadets* category.¹⁵³

The basic age structure outlined in the 1943-44 season was essentially the same over the following decades. As clubs rebuilt and grew in number during the post-war

¹⁵¹ Xavier Breuil has argued that while Vichy did have some impact on the running of the sport for example with the suppression of professionalism, it was not actively used as a political and ideological tool in the way that other competing sporting activities were. See Xavier Breuil, 'Vichy et le football', in Paul Dietschy *et al.*, eds., *Sport et idéologie*, (Comité Européen de l'Histoire du Sport, 2004), pp. 53-61.

¹⁵² Dieppe Universitaire Club, '1947', <http://duc-football.ifrance.com/1947.html> (accessed January 20, 2010).

¹⁵³ Étoile Sportive du Vernet, *Licence Cadet Étranger*, 1946-47.

era, most of the attention went to the older youth.¹⁵⁴ The apparent hiatus of the *pupilles* leading up to Liberation and in the first years of peace may reflect a place of lesser importance for this category. A more likely reason for their silence is that there were no official competitions for this age group in these years and thus no need for an official registration. Yet, the “orphans” were present and began to fill the *écoles de football* held by many clubs on Thursday afternoons.¹⁵⁵ A short article in the 1953 *Cahiers de l'Équipe* reviewed the successful A.S. Brestoise club and noted the presence of twelve *pupilles* among the one-hundred and fifteen youth at the club.¹⁵⁶ Several seasons later the entire age structure, including the *pupilles*, dropped another eight months as it shifted to September 1st as a cut-off limit.¹⁵⁷ With these new limits in place, young players such as Louis ‘Loul’ Guéguen were able to sign their first *licence* as a *pupille* while still only nine years of age.¹⁵⁸ This drastic shift for the 1955-56 season was only to be an anomaly however. The age limits returned to their normal structure of the January 1st cut-off spanning, at the start of each season, a minimum of ten and seven months for the *pupilles* and a maximum of eighteen and seven months for the *juniors*.

In the final decade leading up to the 1970s the youth sector of the game continued to grow in numbers and grow younger. Some clubs actively sought the youngest players in their areas and fielded teams for the first time in their history. For example, in Gilbert Zaccaron’s archival report on the history of amateur club, *Portes-lès-Valences*, he notes that José Fabra signed the club’s first *licence pupille* for the 1960-61 season.¹⁵⁹ Clubs like *La Combelle Charbonnier Association* turned to the youth as their future and the players of tomorrow. From the Auvergne region, *La Combelle* included a variety of *pupilles* teams throughout the 1960s where many of their

¹⁵⁴ From 2,594 clubs in 1940, the number of affiliated clubs had risen to 8,773 by 1955. The total number of registered players increased from 75,616 to 475,620 across all age categories. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, pp. 8-9.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter 2 for a more detailed discussion of the *écoles de football*.

¹⁵⁶ *Cahiers de l'Équipe 1953*, p. 148.

¹⁵⁷ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁸ Guéguen was noted as having signed his first *licence* at age nine. A.S. Brestoise archive, *Récapitulation-joueurs – Loul*. <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/loul.htm> (accessed January 12, 2010).

¹⁵⁹ Gilbert Zaccaron, *70 ans du Football à Portes-lès-Valence*, p. 9. Unpublished research report sent via email correspondence with Zaccaron on May 5, 2010.

later players, some of whom turned professional, first learned to play.¹⁶⁰ Both ends of the age spectrum were growing in importance and in 1965 a maximum age was first introduced on the *licence*.¹⁶¹ While the presence of a maximum age was not revolutionary as teams of older players, or *vétérans*, had existed in the 1920s and 30s, the relevance lay in the continued importance given to age.

Over the next few years football's organisers made the most significant changes to the age structure since the modifications of the 1940s. For decades the *pupilles* had been the youngest official age group in which a youth could register. This changed in 1968 when the FFF introduced the *poussins*.¹⁶² Another Latin based word, from *pullicinus* meaning "a bird's little one" or "little chick," *Le Grand Robert* explains that it is a term of affection for young children often used by a mother. The *pupille* had long held its place as the youngest of the football family after ousting the *minime* in the 1930s. However, in the revolutionary air of 1968, the orphan himself lost his place to the *poussin* in a sort of *Mai '68 des poussins*.¹⁶³ These little chicks boosted the football family numbers once more and within several years helped all youth account for over forty-five percent of all registered players.¹⁶⁴ Age had been an important aspect of structuring the game but never before the turn of the 1970s had it been so quintessential in that youth now represented almost half of the sport.

¹⁶⁰ La Combelle Charbonnier Association Breuil photo archive, *Pupilles*, 1962-63. A club closely linked to the history of the mining industry of the region, its focus on youth development provided a number of young players with the skills necessary to play professionally in the post-war era and into the 1960s. Under the guidance of Jean Bourdier, a number of players would play professionally. The two primary destinations were l'A.S. Saint-Etienne and F.C. Sète for players such as Ferry, René Domingo, Emile Antonio, Jean Renko, the Tylinksi brothers, Michel and Richard, Pierre Valentek, Constansio Rebello, and Maryan Paszko.

¹⁶¹ Olympique St. Genis-Laval, *Licence Sénior* 1964-65; AS Saint Barnabé, *Licence Sénior*, 1965-66. It is misleading, however, to think that no veterans teams existed prior to this date for older players at the other end of the age spectrum. The minutes of the AS Brestoise General Assembly of June 1929 list a *vétérans* team among those listed for that season. See AS Brestoise archive, *Assemblée générale annuelle du 15 Juin 1929*.

¹⁶² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1968-69*, p. 105.

¹⁶³ This makes reference to the student demonstrations of May 1968, the spirit of which was reflected in the protests by the union of French professionals during a several day occupation of the FFF offices. See Alfred Wahl, 'Le mai 68 des footballeurs français', in *Vingtième Siècle*, 26 (1) (1990), pp. 73-82.

¹⁶⁴ In 1971 the FFF listed a total of 760,000 registered players including 350,972 youth players. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, pp. 7-10.

Over the thirty year period, age continued to be a key marker for the organisation of the sport and become more present through more categories and explicit minimum and maximum ages. Three categories from the prior period (*junior*, *minime* and *pupille*) continued to exist in the post-war era. To this family, football's organisers added two additional age groups: the *cadet* and *poussin*. While the names did not themselves change – as they would during the last quarter of the twentieth century – the age ranges did fluctuate and by the turn of the 1970s they dropped by one year and seven months in order to cover the widest span in the history of the organised game in France. There was a shift away from a general *licence* for any and all players and accepted inter-age play to a new scenario. The ordinary *licences* accompanied by *junior* stamps were replaced from the 1940s with distinct age-appropriate *junior*, *cadet* and *minime licences* and, by 1943, the adult category was limited to those born before a certain date. Indeed, if *juniors* and *minimes* as much as four years apart in age could play together during the inter-war years, this suggests that inter-age competition, if not the principal format, was certainly an accepted part of the amateur footballing world in France at that time. But the lowering of age restrictions and the formalisation of more categories and competitions changed this so that a boy in 1970 would not move up to the *sénior* level without first progressing through a normalized process of playing as a *poussin*, *pupille*, *minime*, then *cadet* and finally as a *junior*.

Furthering the age divide and the role of ethnic clubs in the USA - from the war years into the 1970s

The period between the 1940s and the 1970s was a time both of change and of continuity in the youth game in America. This section addresses three points, two of which persisted from the prior era and one novelty. If the 1920s witnessed a shift away from weight toward age as the principal means of distinguishing youth players from adults and amongst themselves, then during the following thirty years age continued to serve as the basis for classification though it did not necessarily impede inter-age play. One additional constant from the past was the lack of one standardised approach to youth football as was the case in France. The National Junior Cup aside, various

organisers – clubs, leagues, municipal recreation departments, and schools – generally all structured their age categories according to their own local situation. In contrast to the earlier period, the organised game in the 1940s, 50s and 60s included even younger age groups.

The National Junior Cup continued to be a force for harmonisation across the country though its effects may not have been greeted with smiles everywhere. When the USFA announced that it would reduce the maximum age limit for the competition by one year to under-eighteen from the 1940-41 season onwards, organisers in Western Pennsylvania saw this as a challenge to field teams as many of the area's junior teams "were all enrolled in upper-grade divisions".¹⁶⁵ Despite a transitional measure to allow youth who had registered prior to September 1 of that year and who were just over the limit, this did not apply to any of the local youth in Pennsylvania. Age limit changes were in the Pennsylvania air at the time though each organising body went its own way. The local Western Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association introduced a maximum age the following year.¹⁶⁶ The limit of eighteen and under – one year-older than the USFA limit – meant that age restrictions for juniors in club competition were not the same as those for school ball.

The disparate treatment of age limits was not helped by the fact that the game was not necessarily segmented, with age being the exact and only dividing line. This is underscored by the personal recollections of Len Oliver from Philadelphia, member of the American Soccer Hall of Fame. Oliver, who was born on November 3, 1933 of Scottish immigrants, has formally recalled the structure of the youth and ethnic game in Philadelphia during the 1940s.¹⁶⁷ He explained that playing in the street at the youngest of ages was only the beginning and that

¹⁶⁵ *Pittsburgh Press*, 16 October 1940.

¹⁶⁶ *The Daily Times*, 16 August 1941.

¹⁶⁷ Len Oliver, 'The Ethnic Legacy in American Soccer', *SASH Historical Quarterly*, 1996, reprinted with author's permission in the American Soccer Archives, <http://www.sover.net/~spectrum/ethniclegacy.html> (accessed June 8, 2009). The entry for Oliver in the National Soccer Hall of Fame states that he was the youngest player ever in Olympic tryouts at age seventeen in 1952. However, this is not entirely coherent with the player's age unless the qualifying mentioned occurred in 1951 during his first semester in college when he was still seventeen. Temple University's yearbook included Oliver in the 1955 graduating class with a degree in Accounting. He played on the college's soccer team for four years and played baseball

“[b]y the time we were 9 years old, in 1942, we were ready for formal teams, which in the Kensington neighborhood meant the Lighthouse Boys Club soccer program, the famed incubator of youth soccer in Philadelphia since the turn of the century.”¹⁶⁸

Oliver expanded on the structure of the Lighthouse club which “offered us age divisions, a club for practices, a large field complex, and retired English and Scottish players to coach ‘the lads’” and explained that the “boys played in the city’s third division, or Junior League”.¹⁶⁹ Inter-age play, at least at a junior level was an accepted part of the local scene and Oliver further explained in an interview that

“[e]ach of the ethnic clubs would put in a junior team. The junior teams were capped at eighteen years old...I was thirteen playing against eighteen year-olds.”¹⁷⁰

If playing up within the youth ranks was accepted, there still were limits to where the junior game stopped and the senior game began. Indeed, experience at the senior level was perhaps just as important an ingredient in this demarcation of youth. The national junior competition had already witnessed age regulation related problems in 1940 but the barriers between junior and senior did not stop at age. The definition of who was eligible as a “junior” was at the source of a 1945 national incident. Initially, the St. Louis Schumacher Juniors thought they had won the national title after outclassing Our Lady of Pompeii four goals to one in front of an estimated (and likely disappointed) home crowd of three thousand at Baltimore’s Patterson Park.¹⁷¹ The Baltimore officials filed a complaint within twenty-four hours that the St. Louisians had played several senior players.¹⁷² The case went to the USSFA’s competition committee which finally decided after several months to strip the Schumachers of their title on the

for three. He was listed as an All-American player for his sophomore, junior and senior years. See http://www.soccerhall.org/famers/len_oliver.htm (accessed May 9, 2008) and *Templar*, (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1955), p. 49 and for Oliver’s birthdate, correspondence with the author, April 2, 2012.

¹⁶⁸ Len Oliver, ‘American Soccer didn’t start with Pelé: Philadelphia Soccer in the 1940s and 50s’, in *Journal of Ethno-Development*, 1992. Writing in the early 1990s, Oliver was the Director of Coaching for a Washington, D.C. based club and involved in various state federation coaching initiatives at that time and contrasts the experience of the modern youth soccer environment.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

¹⁷¹ *The Sun*, 25 June 1945.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 6 July 1945.

basis that three players already had senior level experience.¹⁷³ At issue was not, in fact, that the players were overage, but that “a player of junior age who has advanced to senior competition and thereby gained senior soccer experience cannot thereafter play as a junior” according to Rule 22.¹⁷⁴ The rule appears to have been clearly understood by the Schumacher club and they did not make the same mistake twice when they appeared in the following year’s final.¹⁷⁵

While age regulations were clear for a national competition like the Junior Cup, the local situation across the American continent continued in its diversity of approaches to age categories. By 1945, Harry Kraus, the New York State Association Secretary and active soccer promoter, had succeeded in growing an eighteen-team “Juvenile League” also known in the press as the “Diaper League” for boys in New York City.¹⁷⁶ According to Trouille, the competition scene in Chicago in 1947 included separate “junior” and “youth” divisions.¹⁷⁷ At the same time in Baltimore, the Maryland State and District of Columbia Soccer Association council approved a new league for eighteen to twenty-one year-old players “past the age limit for junior competition but who aren’t quite yet ready for first-class senior competition”.¹⁷⁸ Along with Oliver’s Lighthouse club from Philadelphia, the city of St. Louis laid claim to be the most complex and developed football scene with enough youth to split them into a variety of different age groups. In Robinson’s history of the game in St. Louis, he highlighted the important role of the Catholic Youth Council (CYC) which included

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 21 October 1945. It was revealed that the club was also under investigation for allegations that they fielded ineligible players for their semi-final victory over Chicago. The charges were apparently dropped after significant pressure from St. Louis officials.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 6 July 1945. One of the players in question was Gino Pariani who was in the side which beat England 1-0 in Belo Horizonte at the 1950 World Cup. Pariani was definitely eligible by age but had already been playing at the senior level. The American Soccer Hall of Fame notes that he was born on February 21, 1928 making him still seventeen at the time of the 1945 junior final. See ‘Gino Pariani’ in http://www.soccerhall.org/famers/gino_pariani.htm (accessed May 9, 2008).

¹⁷⁵ The Schumacher Juniors returned to the final the following year and won again and it appears they did so with fully eligible players as there is no evidence of an appeal.

¹⁷⁶ *The Calgary Herald*, 19 September 1945. Kraus was a regular figure in the administrative circles of the sport. He held the position as President of the German-American League and was only narrowly defeated in the election for USFA president in 1947. Kraus also appeared at clinics to teach the game to both boys and girls. See *The Newburgh News*, 25 October 1945, *New York Times*, 1 July 1947, *The Hartford Courant*, 15 February 1948.

¹⁷⁷ Trouille, ‘Association football to fútbol’, p. 802. Trouille explains that by 1947 the National Soccer League “boasted 43 senior, 12 junior and five youth teams within its nine divisions”.

¹⁷⁸ *The Sun*, 14 September 1947.

seventy parishes with teams covering four age categories in 1947: senior (over eighteen), junior (under eighteen), juvenile (under sixteen) and intermediate (under fourteen).¹⁷⁹

However, even with defined age categories, inter-age play at both youth and senior levels did continue at the turn of the 1950s. When his Lighthouse Boys' side won the 1948 National Junior Cup, Oliver recalled it as a "memorable soccer moment for a 14-year-old player".¹⁸⁰ After his team repeated the feat the following year, the entire side moved up into the city's Second Division – described as the natural thing to do by Oliver – and won the 1949-50 Palmer Cup which was an achievement as "some of us were only 16 years old playing against 30-year-old men".¹⁸¹

The development of age categories at a local or city level went in parallel with a lack of clear national bureaucracy of age. Oliver himself noted that even for the National Junior Cup he never recalled players signing any USFA or USSFA paperwork like the French *licences*: "[t]hey just checked our birth certificates and we played".¹⁸² This absence of nationally-organized and approved age categories, as was the case in France for example, raises the question as to whether the game's approach to the youth was in any way standardised across the country.

Was a "juvenile" player in New York City the same as in Detroit? Were the "intermediates" in St. Louis the same age as "youth" in Chicago? The reason as to why there was such disparity across the country may be a simple question of geography. The six-hundred plus mile trek completed by the Windsor Athletic Club Juniors from Missouri for their 1949 National Junior Cup semi-final clash in Bridgeville, Pennsylvania against the Heidelberg Juniors was more an expedition than a simple

¹⁷⁹ Robinson, 'The History of Soccer', p. 237.

¹⁸⁰ Oliver, 'American Soccer'. Oliver, born in November of 1933 was still indeed fourteen for the Junior Final played in early summer of 1948.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.* Oliver notes that "After two years in the Junior Division, we were ready to move up to the next level of competition. That's the way it was done-when you were ready, you played up."

¹⁸² Len Oliver, correspondence with the author, April 2, 2012. Oliver did recall "registration cards" at his club, Lighthouse Boys', but not any USSFA paperwork.

round trip journey for ninety minutes of goal-less football.¹⁸³ Windsor eventually hosted Oliver's Lighthouse Boys' who had to travel over nine-hundred miles to play the final; these distances were significantly more than the four-hundred and eighty miles that the *cadets* from Marseille covered on their trip to win that same year's French Coupe Nationale des Cadets final in Paris – already a very significant journey across most of the country. These distances in the pre-jet travel era impeded more regular competition outside of the rare National Junior Cup ties. If the professional game struggled for national coherence and uniformity across the American continent, how could the youth level expect much better?¹⁸⁴

As the game moved into the 1950s, the disparity in classification continued but the various city and local organisers expanded their age categories to reach even younger ages. In 1952, the city of Milwaukee's Recreation Department announced the launch of "junior soccer" for boys in the fifth through eighth grades roughly between ages eleven and fourteen.¹⁸⁵ While some used scholastic age groups, ethnic organisations, such as the Ukrainian clubs in the German-American League and the American Soccer League, maintained a variety of age groups: "junior", "juvenile", "pupil", and "little boys".¹⁸⁶ By 1957, the Ukrainian Sport Club of New York sent "every Sunday, six soccer teams to compete in different leagues, according to skill and age groups".¹⁸⁷ But the ethnic clubs were not alone in fielding more and more younger teams.

¹⁸³ The Windsor team from south St. Louis played Heidelberg and went through to the final on corners (7-5) after a scoreless draw. See *The Pittsburgh Press*, 29 April 1949 and *ibid.*, 1 May 1949.

¹⁸⁴ Even the college level struggled to deal with the distances and related travel costs on the American continent. When Oliver's Temple University team was invited by west coast champion, the University of San Francisco in 1953 for a repeat of the prior year's college final, the Temple University administration were forced to decline the trip because of the not insignificant travel costs. See Len Oliver, 'American College Soccer, 1946-1959: The Postwar era', in National Soccer Coaches Association of America, *Soccer Journal*, 1998, reprinted with the author's permission in the American Soccer Archives, <http://www.sover.net/~spectrum/collegepostwar.html> (accessed June 23, 2009).

¹⁸⁵ *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 7 September 1952.

¹⁸⁶ The Ukrainian Sport Club of New York played in the German-American League which included a "Pupil Soccer League" as well as a "Little Boys League". The Philadelphia Ukrainian Nationals, still an amateur club at the time, "operate two Peewee teams in a fashion of a 'farm' system to prepare future material". See *Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 December 1954, *ibid.*, 10 November 1956,

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 19 October 1957.

The Connecticut-based Farmington Recreation League regularly participated throughout the late 1950s in what was claimed to be a “National Midget Soccer Championship” for boys sixteen and under.¹⁸⁸ The tournament – from the quarter-final round to the final – was played in Ludlow, Massachusetts and the youth from Germantown, Pennsylvania eliminated the Farmington midgets in the semi-final.¹⁸⁹ The “midget” denomination was not shared by ethnic Ukrainian clubs nor in St. Louis where by the turn of the 1960s, the CYC boasted a total of well over six-thousand players in “three-hundred and thirty-two teams in eight age classifications”.¹⁹⁰ By the mid-1960s this had risen to almost nine-thousand players in eighty-nine leagues including seven age categories which covered from the Juniors, “under-eighteen”, to the Atoms or “under-eight” age class and none called “midgets”.¹⁹¹ If the “midgets” were not present in St. Louis or the Ukrainian clubs, the term was regularly used in other areas such as Baltimore and Philadelphia and covered boys as young as thirteen. In 1963, a midgets match between a Catholic Youth Organisation team from Baltimore’s St. Elizabeth’s parish lost a close match to Philadelphia’s Lighthouse Boys’ club. Scoring twice for Philadelphia was thirteen year-old and future professional Bob Ludwig.¹⁹² Ludwig was born on January 16, 1950 and would have been thirteen in July of 1963 when he played in this match. In college he played under future US national team coach Walt Chyzowych, coach at Philadelphia Textile University at the time.¹⁹³ Ludwig was a two-time All-American before turning professional with the NASL’s Philadelphia Atoms in 1974. Two of Ludwig’s children, both of whom he coached, Dennis and Katie, later went to play college soccer at Rutgers for the former and University of Maryland for the latter.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ *The Hartford Courant*, 24 November 1955.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 26 November 1955.

¹⁹⁰ Robinson, ‘The History of Soccer’, p. 238.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-40. The full list of age groups included Junior District (Under-18, Juniors (Under-18), Juvenile (Under-16), Intermediate (Under-14), Crusader (Under-12), Bantam (Under-10) and Atom (Under-8).

¹⁹² *The Sun*, 15 July 1963.

¹⁹³ *Lebanon Daily News*, 11 October 1969.

¹⁹⁴ Dennis went as far as signing a developmental contract and scored two goals with D.C. United of the MLS before being waived after appearing only twice in the 2002 season. See *Philadelphia Inquirer*, 12 September 1997, *The Washington Times*, 20 April 2002, *The Washington Post*, 16 September 2002.

While the “midget” category seemed clearly between ages thirteen and sixteen, the remainder of the 1960s presented a mixed picture. In the build-up to the 1970s, less than ten miles east of Farmington, the Newington, Connecticut Boys’ Midget Soccer League offered two separate age groups in 1964 with a “Junior Division” going from age eight to eleven while the “Senior Division” went from twelve to fifteen.¹⁹⁵ In Connecticut, the initial sixteen and under midgets in the 1950s grew into two divisions and continued in the area throughout much of the mid to late 1960s. If the Connecticut football scene featured eight and nine year-old “juniors”, the big newcomer in terms of youth organisations was the American Youth Soccer Organization begun in 1964 in southern California which adopted simple number-only age groups. Widely promoted as a participant sport in which “everybody plays”, by 1968 AYSO featured three divisions which used none of the previously mentioned denominations.¹⁹⁶ The categories were simply for “under ten”, “under thirteen” and “thirteen to sixteen”.¹⁹⁷

By the turn of the 1970s, the age category chaos was widespread across the country. In Los Angeles, the AYSO’s girls programme launched with one age group from eight to twelve while boys in the northeast aged ten to fourteen were grouped together for the Boston Area Youth Soccer organisation.¹⁹⁸ In the meantime ethnic clubs, like those in Chicago, continued to field “junior”, “juvenile” and “midget” teams.¹⁹⁹ There was just no national standard.

While there was clear growth down the age spectrum to include younger players in the organised game from the 1940s onwards, it was hardly a systematic approach. Indeed, the variety of terms used ranged from city to city or region to region though age was the general baseline. This reflects the ground-up approach of the youth game discussed in more detail in the following chapter but what is essential here is that there was continued age mixing even with the expansion of the overall age range.

¹⁹⁵ *The Hartford Courant*, 24 November 1964.

¹⁹⁶ For more on AYSO, see David Keyes’ ongoing doctoral research. See David Keyes, ‘Making the Mainstream: The Domestication of American Soccer’, (Unpublished research paper supported by the CIES Joao Havelange Scholarship).

¹⁹⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, 24 March 1968.

¹⁹⁸ See *Los Angeles Times*, 18 January 1970, *Boston Globe*, 18 June 1970.

¹⁹⁹ *Ukrainian Weekly*, 20 November 1970.

Interestingly perhaps, the lack of a national structure, which existed in France over the same period – a key factor in the game’s growth there – did not impede a youth boom in numbers of registered players overall. Indeed, by the early 1970s there was a vast enough foundation of youth clubs, leagues and state associations to form a national body. It is important to remember however, that until the 1970s the focus of these club or city organisers was more on providing football to their local youth than connecting the entire system through unified national competition.

In this final period of the pre-Pelé era in America and before the “youth soccer boom” of the 1970s, it is clear that organisations certainly continued using age as a means to separate the adults from the boys and even the boys from the boys. Thus, in the American youth game during the post-war to 1970s period, age continued to serve as one, if not the main, method of classifying players in a largely amateur world of ethnic clubs, schools and church-related organizations. This distinction drawn between boys and adults existed within a quasi-vacuum of significant nationalised professional opportunity in the game during the 1950s and 60s at least in comparison with baseball (or the amateur but highly professionalised environment of American collegiate gridiron football). This meant that the American youth game remained distant therefore from the same forces of commercialisation and professionalization that shaped the youth game in France.

The youth game at the start of the 1970s was in many ways building momentum to push towards some form of national standardisation and harmonisation that had just not yet turned the corner. Perhaps what best encapsulates this is Forrest C. Tyson’s doctoral thesis on the youth game which he finished in 1976. He noted how the recently formed national youth body, the USYSA “is attempting to provide national uniformity somewhat similar to Pop Warner football or Little League baseball”.²⁰⁰ Yet even more telling were the thesis’ recommendations for growth. Tyson argued that for the sport to continue to grow in America the game needed four things: firstly, “standard age limits set across the country” – he suggested from age six to eighteen – secondly, the

²⁰⁰ Forrest C. Tyson, ‘A Study of the factors affecting the growth of youth soccer in selected cities in the United States’, (PhD thesis, Ohio State University, 1976), p. 23.

“involvement / participation of girls in programs”, thirdly, the “development of a ‘Professional’ image in soccer” and finally that “costs should be kept to a minimum (so as to maximise accessibility)”.²⁰¹ With the hindsight of another thirty years, Tyson’s clairvoyance was rather remarkable. In other words, he told the sport in the mid 1970s, ‘run Forrest run, but run with boys and girls of the same age across the entire country, run in the shadow of the major leaguers, and without bursting mama and papa’s pocket’. Telling words indeed from a rather prophetic voice.

The youthful ‘Un-American Menace’ and moving from names and numbers, from ‘cadets’ to ‘under-...’ – c.1970 to c.2000

As the youth game entered the 1970s it was growing in France and in pockets of the American landscape. The age at which young players could be officially registered as part of the national footballing family had decreased in both countries since the inter-war years. But in the final third of the century, age continued to effect change within the youth game. Girls of all ages stepped on to youth football fields as legitimately accepted members of the sport. In the passing shadow of the NASL’s big-time professionalism, the rise of competing visions of who should manage youth soccer in America created a lack of clarity among local, regional and national age structures and even threatened other youth sports. There was no turbidity, however, in the centralised French youth game which uniformly imposed a new age structure on several significant occasions.

Overall, from the 1970s the youth game grew younger and younger. The actual age at which a player could enter youth football’s official administrative apparatus as well as unofficial club-based activity continued to drop all the way up to the turn of the new millennium. In parallel, the sport’s organisers moved away from named age categories to strictly numerically based ones. If age had become an important aspect in defining the youth game, it was undoubtedly a result of the sheer mass of young players who were defining the game as their own.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

After the significant decrease of one year to the minimum and maximum ages of the *juniors*, *cadets*, and *minimes* in the 1940s, the subsequent decades saw the rise of even younger *pupilles* and *poussins*. Yet another set of reforms swept across French age categories in 1971. For the 1971-72 season, the FFF introduced wide ranging changes that affected all categories of *licences*. The *juniors*, who had been between eighteen and seven months and sixteen and seven months, could be no older than eighteen and no younger than sixteen.²⁰² At the *cadet* level the changes reduced the age range from fourteen and seven months to sixteen and seven months old to a minimum of fourteen years and one day to no more than sixteen years old on August 1st.²⁰³ The *minimes* followed suit and the age limits dropped to a new and lower maximum of fourteen years and a minimum of twelve years.²⁰⁴ The *pupilles* obtained new limits of ages ten to twelve.²⁰⁵

The principal difference lay in the shifting of the cut-off date for signing in a given category. From the introduction of the *licences* in the 1920s and the first appearance of age limits in the early 1940s these were generally organised around the calendar year.²⁰⁶ Instead of limiting categories based on the year in which a player was born, from 1971 the *licence* would be issued based on the player's age on August 1st. Presumably, this was to fit in concordance with the start and end of the season, though another hypothesis could consider the role of international youth competitions, both national representative teams and club tournaments, as a push to harmonize the youth game across national borders (discussed more fully in Chapter 4). The modifications meant that this was a reduction of seven full months from the prior thirty years.

²⁰² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p.126, and Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence Junior*, 1971-72.

²⁰³ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p.126 and Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence Cadet*, 1971-72.

²⁰⁴ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p.126 and Olympique St. Genis-Laval, *Licence Minime*, 1971-72.

²⁰⁵ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p.126 and Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence Pupille*, 1971-72.

²⁰⁶ The yearly cut-off date of January 1st was maintained for most of the century until 1971, apart from at least one aberration in 1955-56 where for that one season the cut-off date was moved to September 1. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, pp. 37-8.

Change is good, or so they say. Not everyone immediately welcomed the profound changes imposed by the FFF for the 1971-72 season. At CS Cheminot Nîmois, the self-proclaimed biggest omni-sport club of the southern department of the Gard in 1971, the reaction was initially negative since most of the youth teams were significantly affected by the reduction in age limits and not insignificant numbers of youth were left out of the prior season's age group. The *juniors* were "decimated" and the *pupilles* were obliged "to start from scratch since only three of the forty-four students from the prior year could resign a licence in this category".²⁰⁷ Not all was lost, however. Even if the *minimes* "also suffered from the changes of the age categories" the team's "recent results augur well for the rest of the season".²⁰⁸ Of course, the issues were transitory and only affected the day to day life of youth at clubs for that one season.

The youngest of the age groups, the *poussins*, were not left out of the changes as the age limits dropped from the prior range of eight and seven months to ten and seven months down to a minimum of eight to a maximum of ten years old.²⁰⁹ But the fact that the category existed did not mean that it was present all across the country in vast numbers. The absence of any mention to *poussins* in the preface written in the 1972-73 season by the President of the Corsican League for its 50th anniversary is telling to this effect.²¹⁰ The opening address was full of self-congratulatory mentions for the Corsican advancement of the footballing cause – one which may well have been hiding a non-sporting subtext of the ongoing fight for political autonomy as has been argued by Didier Rey.²¹¹ President Rossi proudly stated the progress made, the growth of the sport on the island and listed the number of registered players by category at all

²⁰⁷ CS Nîmois archive, 'Le Club Sportif Cheminot Nimois a 40 ans!', scanned news article from the club's 40th anniversary, 1971.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p.126.

²¹⁰ 'Le message du Président', in Album Charly Filippini, http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-0-00087-album-charly-filippini_4825.html?pn=7, (accessed May 5, 2010).

²¹¹ Didier Rey, 'Usage politique du football en Corse (1959-2000)', *Ethnologie française*, 35 (1) (2005), p. 140.

levels.²¹² The term *poussin* was entirely absent however. Such an exercise would likely never have missed the opportunity to praise the organisation's progress.

Perhaps there were few if any *poussins* in Corsica at this time. The trend does not appear to have been isolated since the 'little chicks' of football were chasing the ball around France but still in meagre numbers. The statistics nationally for the 1971-72 season listed a total of twenty-thousand *poussins* equivalent to two percent of all registered players.²¹³ Indeed, it is precisely the absence of any mention of *poussins* that suggests that those under ten were not yet considered a sufficiently important part of the footballing pyramid of age categories to merit inclusion despite having an official *licence* to call their own.²¹⁴

The minority status was similarly felt by another group of players at this time who were at the centre of another major change to the youth game: the formal opening of the door to girls' football. The juncture where girls officially moved on to the pitch offered distinct features as to whether the field was American or French. Xavier Breuil recounts the complex European, political and commercial context within which the FFF finally allowed its member clubs to start sections for women and girls in 1969.²¹⁵ The FFF adopted two initial categories for women and girls who were less than one percent of all registered players: *adultes* who were fifteen and above and *jeunes* who were between eleven and fourteen.²¹⁶ This formalised approval of the presence of girls on football pitches contrasted with the bottom-up approach in organisations like AYSO on the American west coast.²¹⁷

²¹² Charles Rossi listed a total of 2,167 *licenciés* in the following categories: 939 *séniors*, 279 *juniors*, 409 *cadets*, 410 *minimes*, 230 *pupilles* and 283 *corporatifs*.

²¹³ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1972-73*, p. 8.

²¹⁴ This does not purport to claim that there were no *poussins* at all in Corsica at this time. The category was official as of 1968 so the possibility exists that they may have been playing at the *écoles de football*. Regardless, they were not considered relevant enough to be included, at least not yet.

²¹⁵ Xavier Breuil, *Histoire du football féminin en Europe*, (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2011). See especially pages 173-199 in the section entitled 'La reconnaissance officielle du football féminin'.

²¹⁶ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1972-73*, p. 133. Breuil notes that there were 1,800 *licences* attributed to women in 1970. In comparison with the total number of 758,559 *licences* for the 1970-71 season *le football féminin* represented 0.2% of all *licenciés*. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1970-71*, p. 7.

²¹⁷ While the official recognition of the girls' and women's game in France did not come until 1969, there were those who went the unofficial route and started their own teams. In the city of Nantes, a group of girls led by Gwenaëlle Tallec, captain and left inside half, and her cousin Brigitte Solignac, winger,

Several months before the FFF formed its first national commission for the women's game, some thirty girls of Granada Hills, California convinced their parents and the volunteer leadership of AYSO to organise a league just for them. In the words of the area commissioner, Ron Ricklefs, “[t]hey liked the action and wanted a part of it and were not satisfied until a league of their own was in full swing with four teams playing every week along with the boys”.²¹⁸ The initial league was one group spanning ages eight to twelve but within three years Hans Stierle, director of the entire AYSO organisation, boasted of one-hundred and sixty-three girls teams and by 1975 the girls' side included four separate age categories covering a narrower span of two ages each.²¹⁹

The desire on the part of girls to play was felt across southern California. One of those girls who was “tired of standing on the sidelines while her younger brother... played AYSO soccer” was Palos Verdes Estates resident, Brandyn Scully.²²⁰ She was adamant about playing and in the spring of 1971, her mother volunteered to coach when no one else stepped in. Scully's subsequent stellar youth career within AYSO in 1972, 73 and 74 made enough headlines to grant her a brief cameo in the ‘Faces in the Crowd’ section of *Sports Illustrated*.²²¹ Aside from convincing their immediate family and a few league administrators, girls like Brandyn Scully were able to step on the field without some long political process of converting the minds of members of some far away national committee as was the case in France.

The fragmented nature of the youth game in America allowed for opportunities in some areas due to the limited top-down bureaucracy around the game at the time. However, this same lack of a central administration perpetuated the ongoing discrepancies between local customs of structuring the age ladder. Whether it was a Y.M.C.A. league in Florida offering three groups covering ages seven to fifteen, the

started a team on their own in the mid 1960s before finally getting the support of one local club, l'Amicale Laïque des Dervallières. One player in particular drew the attention of the media, Annie Marpault, the niece of FC Nantes' star forward Philippe Gondet. See *Ouest-France*, 3 December 1968 and *Presse-Océan*, December 1968.

²¹⁸ *Los Angeles Times*, 18 January 1970.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 February 1973, *ibid.*, 19 October 1975.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 12 September 1974.

²²¹ *Sports Illustrated*, 29 July 1974.

USYSA member Connecticut Junior Soccer Association's four divisions for ages ten to eighteen, or AYSO's six categories for ages seven to eighteen, youth all across the country were registered differently as illustrated in the table below.

Table 1 - Comparative table of age groups²²²

Age groups	Y.M.C.A.	C.J.S.A.	AYSO
Pee-wee – 7-9 years old		'D' - 7-10 years old	7-8 years old
			9-10 “ “
Midget – 10-12 “ “		'C' -11-13 “ “	11-12 “ “
Junior – 13-15 “ “		'B' - 14-16 “ “	13-14 “ “
			15-16 “ “
			17-18 “ “

Notwithstanding such incompatibility, it is important to remember that these different organisations were set up to serve their own local communities first and not some national movement. Only when locals stepped out of their community to compete regionally and then nationally with other locals – the aforementioned example of the National Junior Cup is a good example of this – did this mandate some sort of standardisation.

Differences in the organisational body responsible for the sport did exist in France as well. While the core of the game was under the FFF there were other age categories used in football. The sport at school under organisations such as A.S.S.U. (Association du Sport Scolaire et Universitaire) or U.S.E.P. (Union Sportive de l'Enseignement du Premier degré) used the term *benjamin* to refer to the *pupille* ten to

²²² Compiled from *Daytona Beach Morning Journal*, 11 February 1973; *The Hartford Courant*, 14 May 1975; *Los Angeles Times*, 19 October 1975.

twelve age group.²²³ In a television magazine ‘A la bonne heure’ that ran regularly in the 1970s, Jean Pierre, coach for youth teams at Paris F.C. explained that the A.S.S.U. term *benjamin* corresponded to the FFF’s *pupille* age group.²²⁴ The term *benjamin* is more widely used in French to refer to the youngest sibling of the family – originating from the biblical name Benjamin which was given to the youngest of the twelve brothers, sons of Jacob, who formed the twelve tribes of Israel. This was reflected in the use of the term unofficially in the 1974-75 US Ribécourt club annual to describe club players who were younger than the *poussins*. Among the *licenciés* for the 1974-75 season and mentioned directly after the twenty-one *poussins*, the club’s annual listed twelve *benjamins*.²²⁵ These *benjamins* presumably would have covered youth under age eight though the category as an FFF-approved age group did not exist at the time.

The push to include even younger players in the organised structure of the game continued just as France experienced its own youth football boom. While Corsica was perhaps slow in its initial call to the island’s little chicks of football, the *Ligue Corse* did, however, issue *licences* in the *poussin* category within the following years. Antonio Augusto Fernandes Mendes signed what appears to be his first *licence* as a *poussin* for the 1974-75 season. This was not only a regular *licence poussin*, but a separate *licence* for those of foreign nationality!²²⁶ Mendes was still nine in August of 1974 and in theory could have signed the prior season as an eight year-old *poussin* but it is unclear when the boy first moved to Corsica from his native Portugal.²²⁷ It is unclear to what extent the separate registration of foreign youth players made any fundamental difference.²²⁸

²²³ U.S.E.P. had its origins in the *Union Française des œuvres laïques d’éducation physique* (UFOLEP). For more on the background of UFOLEP see Nathalie Sevilla, ‘Le développement de l’UFOLEP pendant l’entre-deux-guerres’, in Pierre-Alban Lebecq, *Sports, éducation physique et mouvements affinitaires au XXe siècle: Les pratiques affinitaires*, (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2004), pp. 139-150.

²²⁴ Télévision Française 1, ‘Le football et les jeunes’, video archive, (September 22, 1976; Institut National de l’Audiovisuel). From 15 minutes 35 seconds to 15 minutes 52 seconds.

²²⁵ US Ribécourt, *Allez Ribécourt Saison 1974-75*.

²²⁶ Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence Poussin Étranger, 1974-75*.

²²⁷ He was born on September 9, 1964 in Punhe Viana do Castelo in northern Portugal some twenty kilometres south of Galicia in Spain.

²²⁸ While the regulations outlined certain limitations on the maximum number of foreign players for senior level competition, there was no such limit for the youth categories. Article 96bis of Chapter 5 of the *Règlements Généraux* set a limit of two foreign players for amateur clubs and up to five in areas where there was large foreign migrant labour. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1974-75*, p. 118.

As a recognized category, the FFF altered the age limits for *poussins* to a new expanded age range that reached younger than ever before. For the 1978-79 season the FFF reduced the minimum age by one year for the *poussin* category so that it was now open for children at least seven years and one day old on August 1st of each season. Had the changes come in one year earlier, little Jean-Luc Sabiani would not have had to wait until that season to sign his first *licence* in a club whose name, ‘U Niolu’, was probably better known to connoisseurs of cheese and comic books than those of football.²²⁹ Finally a regular part of Corsican youth football, the *poussins* category was included by 1979 in what appears to be the Ligue Corse’s official FFF-distributed list for ordering *licences*. The *poussins* were listed under the heading “JEUNES”, or youth, with separate columns for French nationals and foreigners.²³⁰ By 1979, football’s little chicks were everywhere and even represented close to ten percent of all registered players.²³¹

Youth footballers were indeed everywhere in France and throughout the 1970s they went from a relevant population that could no longer be ignored to one that outweighed the entire adult and senior level. In 1971, the 350,972 registered youth were already an important forty-six percent of the game.²³² Their numbers rose above the 500,000 mark in 1975 and by 1977 there were 651,075 youth *licenciés* who weighed in at fifty-four percent of the total number of *licences* attributed that season.²³³ By the turn of the 1980s, *les jeunes* had more than doubled since the start of the decade and totalled just shy of 800,000 players and almost fifty-seven percent of the playing population.²³⁴

²²⁹ E.S.C. ‘U Niolu’, *Licence Poussin*, 1978-79. The *niolu* or *niolo* is a goat cheese typical of the Niolu valley in Corsica and known for its particularly pungent odour, one that made an instant impact on Astérix and Obélix during their brief visit to Napoleon’s isle. See René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo, *Astérix en Corse*, (Paris: Hachette, 1973).

²³⁰ Fédération Française de Football, ‘IMPRIMES LICENCES’, in Album Jean-Paul Negroni, http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-00327-album-jean-paul-negroni_6631.html?pn=4 (accessed November 12, 2010).

²³¹ Of the 1,408,391 total *licenciés* for 1979, there were 132,633 *poussins*. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1979-80*, p. 6.

²³² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p. 10.

²³³ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1977-78*, p. 6.

²³⁴ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1979-80*, p. 6.

Thus, the accepted list of youth categories was expanding during this period both in terms of officially recognised ages and their actual presence on the fields across France. This extension went up as well as down the age ladder. After the initial drop in the maximum age for *juniors* in 1971-72, the FFF added a new category called *sénior-espoir*. Introduced for the first time in the 1973-1974 season, this new category was to serve as a bridge between the *juniors* who stopped at age eighteen and *séniors* who started at age twenty.²³⁵ The age category coincided with a rule that all clubs playing in the second, third or fourth divisions, as well as regional leagues, had to field at least one young player under the age of twenty-one for each competition.²³⁶ What this meant for a player like Jean-François Panzani is that he had some further opportunities as a *sénior-espoir* to play up in the first team of his club, C.A. Bastiais.²³⁷ The category was in place for only three seasons and was removed for the 1976-77 season when the *juniors* maximum age limit was raised to nineteen on August 1st.²³⁸

Just when the French senior game's '*espoir*' for the future was returned to the *juniors*, the girls' side of the game was making progress for posterity in nearing the nine-thousand mark in terms of total registered players, a full seven thousand more than the start of the decade.²³⁹ Furthermore, girls were allowed to register as young as age ten and now in three different categories: *adulte* (fourteen and over), *jeune* (eleven to thirteen), and *très jeune* (age ten).²⁴⁰ This opening of opportunity, at least on paper, was tempered by the impossibility, according to Article 10 of the 'Statut Fédéral Féminin', for mixed-sex play for the entire decade.²⁴¹ This meant that girls had to find enough players not only to field a team but also to ensure a sufficient number of opponents, a situation which has led to *le football féminin* being considered by Prudhomme-Poncet "a world apart" from the rest of the game.²⁴² Depending on where they were to have

²³⁵ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1973-74*, p. 83.

²³⁶ The rule was introduced in 1971. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p. 99.

²³⁷ Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence Sénior "Espoir"*, 1974-75.

²³⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1976-77*, pp. 121-22.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 195.

²⁴¹ This had been in place since the adoption by the FFF of a 'Statut Fédéral Féminin' in 1972. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1972-73*, p. 133.

²⁴² Laurence Prudhomme-Poncet, 'Mixité et non-mixité : l'exemple du football féminin', in *CLIO. Histoire, femmes et sociétés*, 18 (2003), pp. 167-75.

travelled for a competitive match, girls in the United States would not necessarily have had more opportunity at that time for mixed-sex play.

Just as French girls aged ten could finally sign up to play on girls-only teams, nine-year-old Gretchen Sweeney of Newington, Connecticut was banned from playing in the town's spring league not because she was too young, but simply because there were no girls' teams for that season.²⁴³ Sweeney's parents protested through a claim made to the town's Human Rights Commission but before the body could convene, town manager, Peter Curry upheld the request and ordered the Parks and Recreation Department to let the girl play or else he would withhold funding and access to facilities.²⁴⁴ As Sweeney was apparently not the only girl turned away, the city ultimately put together several girls' teams for the spring season with some thirty-five girls signed up.²⁴⁵ The Parks and Recreation Department explained that while there was reticence on the side of many volunteer coaches to allow mixed-sex play "in a body contact sport", the main issue for the season was the lack of coaches in the spring since many shifted with their children to spring baseball.²⁴⁶

As girls' teams got off the ground, younger girls were also part of the move down the age ladder in terms of organised football. While the French game officially started at the *poussins* age group at the turn of the 1980s, there were clubs which imitated US Ribécourt's *benjamins* and officially welcomed children younger than seven as *mini-poussins* or *pré-poussins*. From the Rhône-Alpes region, Olympique Saint-Genis-Laval's archive includes pages from what appears to be the club annual listing the teams, coaches, directors for a number of different seasons. The entry for 1979 listed all the expected categories from youngest to oldest *mini-poussins*, *poussins*, *pupilles*, *minimes*, *cadets*, *juniors*, *séniors*, and finally *vétérans*.²⁴⁷ From that same

²⁴³ *The Hartford Courant*, 4 April 1977.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 8 April 1977.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 23 April 1977.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 April 1977.

²⁴⁷ Olympique Saint-Genis-Laval, *composition du bureau 1979/89*. The date listed is 1979/89 though the club archive clearly assigns the document to 1979. Considering that the category *mini-poussins* is not repeated anywhere after 1979, the "1979/89" appears more like a typographical error and should read 1979/80. Furthermore, when comparing the names of the Committee members and the development of the club roles, there are several indications which confirm this theory. The 1981-82 club list includes the

season, a photo from a club from outside Paris portrayed a group of six children including one girl, Claire Culleron, and a ball. The note on the photo included the children's names and was accompanied by the term *pré-poussins*.²⁴⁸ The children are shown without uniforms and appear to be smaller and younger than two other photos for the same season which depict the two fully kitted *poussins* teams. While this is not definitive evidence that these *pré-poussins* were registered players at the club since the photos are still shots and show no match play, there does appear to be a clear distinction drawn between *poussins* and *pré-poussins* and suggests that the youth were considered to be in different categories. That clubs welcomed players even younger than the official age categories that began at age seven is perhaps not a surprise. This foreshadowed their formal inclusion when the FFF finally adopted its youngest category to date, the *débutant*, in the following decade.

The 1980s ushered in four significant changes for the age categories in France: approval of mixed-sex play, the reduction of the earliest age at which a child could first register, a further narrowing of the girls' game, and the introduction of the FFF's youngest official age group ever. The first change was in regard to mixed-sex play. For the first time in 1979-80, the youngest girls were officially allowed to play with boys. First year *benjamines* (aged nine) could play with the seven, eight and nine year-old *poussins* while the FFF sanctioned mixed play for second and third year *benjamines* (aged ten and eleven) with ten and eleven year-old *pupilles*.²⁴⁹ In a second shift, girls witnessed equality with boys for registration age in 1981. At last, a girl at age seven could register alongside a boy of the same age, the former as a *benjamine 1* and the latter as a *poussin*.²⁵⁰ This was the first time that girls no longer had to wait and could register at the same age as boys, though *le football féminin* still represented a minute

same committee roles and structure, but by 1983-84 the club had introduced the positions of Président Délégué, Vice-Président Administratif, Vice-Président Technique, none of which appear in the "1979/89" list. As the 1989 club organigram contains several of the new roles from 1983, it can be assumed that "1979/89" is indeed a typo.

²⁴⁸ Entente Sportive de la Forêt, *PRE-POUSSINS – SAISON 1979-80*.

²⁴⁹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1979-80*, p. 225.

²⁵⁰ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1981-82*, pp. 223-7.

percentage of the overall number of players.²⁵¹ The other parallel development was the narrowing of the various age groups in which girls could register. If they started with two and then moved to three categories covering ages ten to fourteen and up in the 1970s, by 1981, these had been split into five different age groups spanning an age range from seven to sixteen and over.²⁵²

The final wave of the 1980s tide was the creation of yet another and still younger age group. When the FFF inaugurated the *débutant* category in the 1982-83 season, the category was an instant success for youth aged six to eight with almost fifty-thousand new young players joining the French football family in the first year.²⁵³ These youth were finally a real part of the day to day life of clubs and no longer the unofficial *benjamins*, *mini* or *pré-poussins*. In a regional press article, CS Nîmois club president, M. Gounelle, boasted of his association's two-hundred and fifty total registered players and said of his newest youngest members "[w]e have two teams of débutants that we train every Wednesday".²⁵⁴ Entente Sportive la Forêt also welcomed players in this new age group. The club, where Claire Culleron was an original *débutante* before there were any, included *débutants* in the list of memberships for the 1984-85 season and the organisation's newsletter listed a fee of two-hundred and twenty francs (the same for all youth categories except *juniors*).²⁵⁵ Thus, the historical tendency of the youngest age group being ousted struck once again. By the early 1980s the *poussins*, who had been the little chicks on the block since the late 1960s, were upstaged by the appearance of six and seven year-old *débutants* and *débutantes*.

The lowering of the minimum age was not restricted to France. The various programmes for the sport in America also saw even younger participants, both for boys

²⁵¹ In 1982 there were just under twenty-five thousand *féminines* registered in the various age groups, a figure which equated to 1.5% of the total registered players. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1982-83*, p. 6.

²⁵² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1981-82*, p. 227.

²⁵³ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1983-84*, p. 6.

²⁵⁴ CS Nîmois archive, 'Pour le CLUB SPORTIF CHEMINOTS NIMOIS – Un cinquantenaire toujours aussi jeune, l'Avenir est en bonne voie', in unnamed magazine or newsletter, 1984, pp. 40-1. The article is in a section entitled "Nos Clubs", or "Our Clubs". While the name of the magazine is not given nor is it clear if it is a football-only periodical like a regular league newsletter, at the end of the article the advertisements are from the city of Nîmes, so it is presumably local or regional in origin.

²⁵⁵ Entente Sportive de la Forêt, *ESF Informations*, n° 18, June 1984, p. 15.

and girls. This also coincided with growing tensions in youth sports. Over the decade of the 1970s soccer made inroads everywhere that youth could be found and organisers for other sports such as baseball and American football began to worry in the face of competition for children of such a young age. Equally, different organisations overseeing the same sport also shimmied for a controlling position with their numbers growing in the thousands and covering many states. All of this occurred in the midst of the most significant change to the sport's professional landscape in decades.

Professionalism in the history of the American game was a fickle beast that came and went like a revolving door with no national league able to plant lasting foundations.²⁵⁶ From the first professional league in 1894, the American League of Professional Football Clubs – a sporting ephemeron which comprised clubs playing both football and baseball professionally – up to the American Soccer Leagues I and II, the repeated efforts to organise professional football in America have been qualified in the historiography as “organisational chaos”, “domestic disarray”, plagued by “internecine relations” to quote Markovits and Hellerman or filled with “petty-mindedness and political in-fighting”, to cite Wangerin.²⁵⁷

However, in the midst of the 1960s television sports boom and the rise in professional franchises and rival leagues in American football and basketball the time was apparently right for another attempt at top-level professional football.²⁵⁸ The

²⁵⁶ This is not intended to slight the long history of professional and especially semi-professional leagues that flourished in Chicago, St. Louis or along the Eastern seaboard. Some of these organisations such as the German-American League and the American Soccer League (in its second iteration from the 1930s to the 1980s) pre-dated or outlasted other professional sports endeavours in basketball or American football.

²⁵⁷ See Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside: Soccer and American*, pp. 99-119; Wangerin, *Soccer in a Football World*, p. 48; and Jose, *American Soccer League*, pp. 7-14.

²⁵⁸ Markovits and Hellerman refer to this as a “rearranging” of American sport. See Chapter Four, ‘American Sport Space Rearranged’, in Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, pp. 128-161. It is interesting to note that this “rearranging” occurred in the decade which followed the 1961 Broadcast Act which granted a legal exemption from anti-trust law to professional sports leagues in their collective selling of television rights. It is perhaps ironic that, in such a propitious climate for professional sport given the market conditions, football's organisers were unable to seize the initial opportunity, form a monopoly like the NFL, and exploit such ideal market conditions. More research may reveal to what extent soccer, and the NASL in particular, may have suffered from the NFL's rise and being perceived as competitive threat. For example, the NFL changed its rule in 1977 to force owners to disclose and divest investments in other professional sports which had direct implications for key investors in the NASL. See in Allan Ashman, ‘What's new in the law: Antitrust...cross-ownership ban’, in *American Bar Association Journal*, 65 (1979), p. 1103.

combination of jet travel and television offered enormous commercial opportunities and caught the interest of American investors in big-time sports.²⁵⁹ By the mid 1960s full-on national professionalism was impending with the rise of the major investor groups behind what would become the United Soccer Association (USA) and the National Professional Soccer League (NPSL) in 1967.²⁶⁰ Born from the 1968 merger of the two failing leagues, the NASL did not really take off as a major professional outfit until the mid-1970s with the legendary crowds for the New York Cosmos – although it should not be forgotten that they were an exception to the rule in league attendance.²⁶¹ Oliver, who had lived through the earlier marginalized years of the sport, recalls this period when “[s]uddenly soccer became legitimized. They brought Pelé, Beckenbauer, Chinaglia, Best, Cruyff...”²⁶² Even if, for Markovits and Hellerman, it ultimately constituted no more than a “chimera” in the history of professional soccer, before its death in 1985, the NASL did provide two key developments to the sport in America and help boost the already growing youth game during the late 1970s: it provided a direct link with the world’s best player, Pelé, and introduced the game nationally into cities and regions where soccer had no history whatsoever.²⁶³

In this context, age five was the new magic age to begin playing youth soccer in the late 1970s and the turn of the 1980s. AYSO on the west coast pioneered the inclusion of the youngest players in 1975 when it launched its Division K for five and six year-olds which was designed to give “them an introduction to the sport in a totally informal setting”.²⁶⁴ In 1979 after five years of existence, the then thirty teams in the Illinois Women’s Soccer League included four age groups (to France’s three at the time) and was “made up entirely of Chicagoland players ranging in age from 6 to

²⁵⁹ Wangerin, *Soccer in a Football*, pp. 121-2. See Chapter Four, “‘We will become phenomenal’ - Ambition and folly in the Sixties’ for a review of the involvement of business in big-league sports, Phil Cox’s International Soccer League and the rise of the three competing investor groups which ultimately spurred the NASL.

²⁶⁰ For various accounts of the rise of the NASL from the merger of these two competing leagues, see Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, pp. 163-5, Wangerin, *Soccer in a football*, pp. 123-39, and Cascio, *Soccer U.S.A.*, pp. 56-70.

²⁶¹ For a full account of the Cosmos see Roger Allaway’s *Corner Offices & Corner Kicks: How Big Business Created America’s Two Greatest Soccer Dynasties, Bethlehem Steel and the New York Cosmos*, (Haworth: St Johann Press, 2009).

²⁶² Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

²⁶³ Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, pp. 166-9.

²⁶⁴ *The Press-Courier*, 10 August 1977.

37”.²⁶⁵ Within three years, the East Hudson Youth Soccer League, approximately one hour’s drive north of New York City and founded in 1977, “expected to have about 10,000 players aged 5 to 18 by the [1982] spring season”.²⁶⁶

As was the case in France, a numbers boom accompanied the age range expansion. While the French youth game experienced a doubling of their numbers over the 1970s, the American organisations saw their membership rise exponentially. The USSF-sanctioned USYSA began with 103,432 players in some thirty-six states in 1974.²⁶⁷ By the end of the decade at the USYSA’s annual meeting, the association voted to accept its fifty-fifth state association finally covering all fifty states and nearly 650,000 players.²⁶⁸ The independent AYSO went from 3,240 players all based in southern California in 1970 to 199,055 registered youth in affiliated regions across twenty-five states by 1980.²⁶⁹

Such growth took these organisations from locally focused to nationally oriented operations. The expansion of these groups, especially USYSA and affiliate state associations and AYSO and their regions, led to some confrontation between visions and philosophies where different organisers existed in the same area. Occasionally the press, not always familiar with the sport and its structure, confused the different youth organisations which led to polite but resolved letters to the editor like a 1977 contribution from Richard Press, a concerned president of the New Rochelle Youth Soccer Association several miles north of Manhattan who wrote to the *New York Times* Westchester editor:

“I read with interest and enthusiasm your article on Oct. 2 on the development of youth soccer in Westchester. However, my fellow directors and I were distressed at the lack of mention of the Youth Soccer Association of New Rochelle.... The Youth Soccer Association of New Rochelle is a member of the

²⁶⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, 6 July 1979.

²⁶⁶ *New York Times*, 9 November 1982.

²⁶⁷ US Youth Soccer, ‘Membership Statistics’, http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/media_kit/keystatistics.asp? (accessed June 24, 2009).

²⁶⁸ United States Youth Soccer Association, *Annual Report 1979-80*, pp. 3-4. For historical and geographic reasons, several states included two associations each covering a different region: Ohio (North and South), California (North and South), Pennsylvania (Eastern and Western), Texas (North and South) and New York (North-western and Southern).

²⁶⁹ *Orange County Register*, 13 June 1993.

broadly based United States Soccer Federation. In fact, the president of the Westchester Youth Soccer Association, which inconceivably received no mention in your article, is an officer and director of our group... Unfortunately, your coverage was limited to only those teams that participate in the American Youth Soccer Organization which does not run county, state and regional tournaments. With respect to the distinction between the two national organizations, we are not trying to be divisive... Because of this singleness of purpose, this letter has been written to offset the apparent bias created by your article and to alert parents in the county to the fact that their town or city, although not mentioned, might actively be participating in soccer through the United States Soccer Federation.”²⁷⁰

On some occasions, polite but resolved correspondence gave way to a clash between organisers. This was the case with the split between supporters of AYSO and the city sports programme, ESP, in Eugene, Oregon. After an initial parallel existence, the two groups merged for an unpleasant year which became the source of conflict and divorce. Pat Howard, the commissioner of the newly reinstated AYSO Region 53 claimed that “the program last year did not resemble that of the AYSO philosophy... People were just upset... Really, I don’t know anyone who wanted the merger anyway.”²⁷¹ ESP’s director Ralph Meyers argued against paying team fees amounting to four-thousand-five-hundred dollars to the distant California-based AYSO central office.²⁷² In typical American fashion, some folks at ESP were not convinced of the benefits of belonging to some far away organisation and consequently threw their own Eugene soccer-flavoured tea party and cut ties with the AYSO.

But tensions were not only limited to within the sport itself but also between sports. While the press was quick to label ‘youth soccer’ a threat to other youth sports during this period, the actual evidence of one sport mining the other for players is unclear. There is no doubt about youth football’s growth but the extent to which it was actually responsible for limiting the development or causing American football or baseball to stagnate is far more complex than what was suggested by the media. Firstly, the various sports did not necessarily cover the same age groups or sex. High school American football or baseball was not the same as the boom of “under-twelve soccer”. Additionally, it is important to remember that different sporting seasons meant that

²⁷⁰ *New York Times*, 23 October 1977.

²⁷¹ *Eugene Register*, 17 August 1978.

²⁷² *Ibid.*

there was a limit to the possible overlap and that youth could participate in multiple activities during the same year.

Nonetheless, the threat was socially palpable enough over the late 1970s and early 80s for the press to state that local midget American football leagues were “worried the program might not draw enough youngsters this year” and that youth baseball was “losing its grip to soccer as the predominant youth participation sport”.²⁷³ But beyond the sensationalist headlines, the numbers did not speak to the same reality but one that was tempered by differences in scale. Tim Hughes, a spokesman for Little League, spoke rather of a “period of slow growth”.²⁷⁴ While youth football was adding kids by the thousands each year, the starting point was low on the number scale in comparison to the Little League baseball organisation which had already broken the one-million mark in 1964 – the year of AYSO’s founding – and included well over 1.6 million registered youth when the USYSA began in 1974.²⁷⁵ Consistent with the myriad organisers for one sport so common in America, Little League was not the only baseball programme for youth with significant membership in the post-war era.²⁷⁶ Equally, American football, as a high school sport, remained the largest participant sport for boys, regularly averaging between 900,000 and 1 million athletes for the 1970s.²⁷⁷ While they grew some, these more established sports were certainly not increasing at the same speed as youth football. Thus, the growing threat of this “new” youth sport leading up to the 1980s was possibly more psychological and ideological than purely quantitative.

Newspapers ran articles asking questions about what was the safest sport for youth, targeting “Little League elbow” and parading “the risk of serious injuries that

²⁷³ *The Hartford Courant*, 20 August 1976; *The Washington Post*, 2 May 1979.

²⁷⁴ *The Washington Post*, 2 May 1979.

²⁷⁵ The number of registered youth baseball players with Little League in 1964 was 1,066,600 and 1,640,000 by 1974. See Little League Around the World, ‘Leagues and Participants Since 1939’, http://www.littleleague.org/Learn_More/About_Our_Organization/historyandmission/aroundtheworld.htm (accessed April 26, 2009).

²⁷⁶ When Little League baseball hit the one million mark, the Khoury Baseball programme based out of St. Louis boasted some 750,000 boys playing in leagues across a number of US states (statistics from 1966). The organisation also sponsored a vast youth football programme. See Robinson, ‘The History of Soccer’, pp. 248-9.

²⁷⁷ National Federation of State High School Associations, ‘NFHS Participation Figures Search’, http://www.nfhs.org/custom/participation_figures (accessed June 3, 2009).

occur in [American] football”.²⁷⁸ However, the press were not always conclusive in providing evidence. Even articles blasting the headlines “Baseball vs. Soccer – Overlapping seasons force kids to choose their sport” were actually contradictory in their content. The *St. Petersburg Times* reviewed both youth sports in the Tampa Bay area and despite the racy headline, offered no hard proof that kids were actually forced to choose. Both youth football and baseball in the area reported that their numbers were up and both organisations insisted that they were “not competing with anybody”.²⁷⁹ The article’s author simply suggested that “[i]t would seem that as the popularity of one increases, the popularity of the other will decline”: hardly conclusive evidence at least up to Pelé’s third and final season in New York.²⁸⁰

Up to this point in time, arguments were generally frightening forecasts of baseball’s future. Nonetheless, the lightning from the Cosmos was real and the storm finally broke in the 1980s. There was not just a deceleration in the first years of the new decade, but a real drop in numbers. Whether youth football was the cause is difficult to prove, but the numbers in the early 1980s showed that youth baseball had indeed lost children somewhere between diamond and the goalposts. From 1982 to 1984, the Little League statistics showed a dip for the first time ever in its registered membership at a period when youth football continued to boom. The number of boys registered went down by almost forty-thousand in two years.²⁸¹ Alarm bells may well have gone off in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, the home of Little League.

At stake was the race for the youngest age groups which, in the suburban mass migration of a growing affluent middle class, were already playing football by the time they were eligible for baseball. For example, the league president of the Cranford Boys Baseball Leagues near Newark, New Jersey, Henry Dreyer Jr., lamented the regular decrease in players; the league had around seven hundred youth in 1983, a figure down

²⁷⁸ *Boston Globe*, 28 October 1977.

²⁷⁹ *St. Petersburg Times*, 25 May 1977.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁸¹ In 1982 there were 1,755,400 while the numbers went down to 1,737,600 in 1983 and 1,718,400 in 1984. A big jump the following year to 2,014,845 was again followed by dropping numbers again from 1986 to 1988. Little League Around the World, ‘Leagues and Participants Since 1939’, http://www.littleleague.org/Learn_More/About_Our_Organization/historyandmission/aroundtheworld.htm (accessed April 26, 2009).

from 1,250 in 1973.²⁸² The league announced that “[t]o prevent the Cranford Boys Baseball Leagues from losing even more children to soccer... the organization had decided to add an instructional league for 7-year-olds”.²⁸³ The targeting of younger and younger players in baseball may indeed have been an attempt to siphon off the drain towards a competing sport. Further south *The Washington Post* described the same issue in the following way:

“...the Central Springfield Little League has been battling a second problem for the last decade or so. Booming Northern Virginia soccer leagues start kids so young that by the time they are old enough for traditional Little League, which used to start at age 8, they already are locked into a soccer team and a soccer mentality. Enter tee ball. In tee ball, there is a pitcher but he/she doesn't pitch, and a catcher who doesn't catch. In fact there are 10 fielders who generally don't catch, and a ball that appears to have a reverse magnet inside so that it eludes all pursuers. There are 14 batters per side and they all get to hit; that constitutes an inning. Outs don't count, except that by getting out a player is removed from the base paths and can't score, but that doesn't happen too often.”²⁸⁴

The threat was indeed tangible and Little League baseball made deliberate efforts to seek out the registration of young kids with a younger version of the sport and rules that mimicked AYSO's well-known “everybody plays” philosophy.

In an unknowingly apropos parallel, William Geist of the *New York Times* had described the source of concern to high school coaches as an “un-American menace that grabs the hearts and minds of children as young as 4 years old”.²⁸⁵ Once before had football in the Northeast been similarly qualified as a threat although at that time it was as the “American Menace” to professional clubs in Europe.²⁸⁶ But towards the end of the Cold War, by recruiting children as young as was possible football had become a sporting threat, if perhaps no longer a fully ideological one linked to the historical importance of immigrant ethnic groups on the game, to other American youth sports.

²⁸² *The New York Times*, 3 April 1983.

²⁸³ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁴ *The Washington Post*, 23 April 1984.

²⁸⁵ *New York Times*, 9 November 1982.

²⁸⁶ For more on the ‘American Menace’, see Colin Jose, *The American Soccer League: The Golden Years of American Soccer 1921-1931*, (Lanham: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1998), pp. 7-14; Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, *Moving with the Ball: The Migration of Professional Footballers*, (Oxford: Berg, 2001), pp. 145-51 and David Wangerin, *Soccer in a Football World*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006), pp. 57-80.

Despite the efforts to reach younger kids with tee ball, the damage was already done and by the end of the decade youth football had won the ‘athletic arms race’, catching and later overtaking baseball in total numbers.

In the meantime French football, comfortable with its monopoly position as the dominant sport for youth, was preparing its most drastic and yet subtle change to date. The age structure in place in the middle of the 1980s remained virtually identical through to the 1990s. The shift that occurred from the middle of the 1990s to the start of the twenty-first century was of a numerical and linguistic nature. The FFF shelved named age categories for a primarily number-based system and then ‘went Anglo’ by dropping the French terms in favour of English ones. All this happened during a period of wider internationalisation and reflected a youth game *sans frontières*.

While the largest segment of the youth game in the mid-1980s was the combination of the *pupilles* and *minimes* age groups, the *débutants* continued to grow in number.²⁸⁷ The six and seven year-old *débutants* did not get any younger as a category in the late 1980s. Nicolas Genois was the exception that proves the rule. As one of the haphazard and amusing mistakes of history, he was perhaps the youngest registered player ever, at least on paper, when his 1987-88 *licence* was issued. Born on the 23rd of July 1987 he would have been only a few weeks old at the start of the season and a *débutant* in every sense of the word.²⁸⁸ Genois’ club, *SL Sevrey*, appears to have been a family club in which fathers coached daughters and brothers coached sisters.

The club had several girls playing in their youth teams. The club’s online archive includes the registrations of two girls, nine-year-old Magali Conchon who signed in the *féminine benjamine 1* category of *licence* and ten-year-old Stéphanie Descharrières who was in *benjamine 2* age group.²⁸⁹ Stéphanie shared the same address

²⁸⁷ The total number of registered youth in 1985-86 was 854,931, a figure which included 170,233 *minimes* and 173,411 *pupilles*. The 71,305 *debutants* were almost eight percent of the overall total. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1986-87*, p. 6.

²⁸⁸ SL Sevrey, *Licence Débutant*, 1987-88. This is clearly a mistake since his photo shows him as a six or seven year-old boy.

²⁸⁹ See SL Sevrey, *Licence FÉMININE BENJAMINE 1*, 1987-88, and SL Sevrey, *Licence FÉMININE BENJAMINE 2*, 1987-88.

as that listed on forty-five year-old Didier Descharrières' *licence dirigeant* – who was also listed as a coach for the club's youth.²⁹⁰ Several years later, the Bonin's exemplified another family connection at the club. Ludovic Bonin was a *junior* during the 1992-93 season while his little sister, Aurélia, returned for her second year as a *poussine* with the feminine (e) added on to the *licence* to reflect the full inclusion of girls in the footballing family.²⁹¹ A photo from the club's 1992-93 archive portrays Aurélia's *poussins* team posing in full uniform with Ludovic kneeling behind as the coach.²⁹² The girls at SL Sevrey played with the boys at these young ages. Mixed-sex play had been allowed under the age of ten from the 1983-84 season and was extended to age eleven in 1992 giving Aurélia Bonin the chance to continue playing with the boys for at least a couple of years.²⁹³

By the turn of the 1990s some of the FFF leadership worked together with football leaders from other nations to produce a map of “the current state of youth football throughout Europe” as explained in the report of UEFA's Youth Football Working group.²⁹⁴ This UEFA-sponsored youth conference was the third such event in official memory after an initial meeting in Frankfurt in 1979 and Zeist, Holland in 1987.²⁹⁵ The youth game in France was operating more and more directly in a European context and this was to be a key argument when the FFF presented the changes to age categories during the 1995-96 season. Each country had historically maintained its own age category idiom and these were sometimes vastly different and confusing.²⁹⁶ But in the post-Maastricht era international standardisation was to become a norm.

²⁹⁰ See SL Sevrey, *Licence Dirigeant*, 1990-91 and ‘Les jeunes rechaussent les crampons’, in unnamed newspaper, 8 August 1987.

²⁹¹ Both Bonin's lived on the street called Louis Chambion in Sevrey. See SL Sevrey, *Licence Junior*, 1992-93 and SL Sevrey, *Licence Poussin(e)*, 1992-93.

²⁹² SL Sevrey, *Equipe débutants*, 1992-93. Another photo from the prior year shows the club's two *débutants* teams featuring what is likely to be another family relation of Bonnin with two ‘n's, little Julien and father Guy. See SL Sevrey, *Equipe débutants*, 1991-92.

²⁹³ Breuil, *Histoire du football*, p. 268.

²⁹⁴ UEFA, *European Youth Football*, report of Youth Football Working group approved April 22, 1992, p. 3, in UEFA Committee for Juniors, Barcode RM00000673.

²⁹⁵ There were however two junior football conferences held under the auspices of UEFA's Committee for Juniors in 1967 at Baden-Baden, Germany and during the 1970 Juniors Tournament at Largs in Scotland. See UEFA, *Les 25 ans du Tournoi des Juniors de l'UEFA*, (Bern: UEFA, 1973), pp. 43-4.

²⁹⁶ A 1973 survey sent by UEFA to all European national associations included questions regarding the structure of youth football in each country. Responses varied. The FFF simply listed its categories

The FFF instituted vast reform for the 1996-97 season in order to harmonise competitions across the country. The changes reduced the age limits across all categories by almost six months and the press called this “Le Grand Chambardement” or “the Great Trouble”.²⁹⁷ In addition, the time-held tradition of named categories (*juniors, cadets, minimes*) was replaced by new age groups with numerical labels (*moins de 18 ans, moins de 16 ans, moins de 14 ans*). As the media described the process:

“Next season there will be no more Minimes, or Cadets, or Juniors or Moins de 17 and [Moins] de 15. France is aligning itself with Europe. And makes the most of the opportunity to modify its leagues. It is not only on politics or the economy that Maastricht has consequences. As Europe requires, the Fédération Française de Football has decided to change the date of its age categories, passing from the first of August to the first of January. Even if it will perturb some habits, we can only be pleased with this harmonisation. Thus, even for international tournaments, youth footballers will all be in the same boat (six months is enormous, notably between 12 and 14 years of age).”²⁹⁸

The *pupilles* became *benjamins* – though ironically not *benjamins* in the real sense of the word as last of the family – while the *débutants* maintained their status as the youngest age group. Not all the regional leagues operated at the same pace however.

While the FFF amended the age category structure, there were some regional leagues that had already made steps in this direction in the years leading up to national reform. Part of this included the dual naming of age groups with their familiar names but also numerical labels. This was undoubtedly to assist during the transition away from the named age categories. In addition, the *licence* would be clearly marked for “first” years, the (1) or *première année*, and those in their second year, or (2) *deuxième*

(*juniors, cadets, minimes, pupilles, poussins*) without the associated ages. The Spanish FA listed two youth categories: *infantiles* (from twelve to fifteen years of age) and *juniors* (from fifteen to eighteen). The Belgians may well have caused more than one headache when teams traveled outre-Quévrain since the French age groups used similar terms but with different age limits. Belgian *juniors* were sixteen to nineteen, *scolaires* covered ages thirteen to fifteen, *cadets* spanned eleven to fourteen while the *minimes* were aged ten and eleven. See letter from Michel Cagnion to Hans Bangerter, 10 April 1973; letter from José Alvaro Jiménez de Andrade to Hans Bangerter, 26 March 1973; chart entitled ‘Competition Nationale’ in *Minutes of the UEFA Committee for Juniors*, 25 April 1973, Barcode RM00002585.

²⁹⁷ ‘Jeunes Footballeurs – Le grand chambardement’, scanned article from unknown newspaper in US Aiglun archive, <http://us-aiglun.footeo.com/page/histoire-palmares-2.html> (accessed January 20, 2010).

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

année, in that age group. For example, the Ligue de Bourgogne began dual categories in the 1993-94 season. So when Cedric Leider signed with SL Sevrey, his *licence* was labelled *Débutant 1 (-7 ans)*.²⁹⁹ The *pupilles* were similarly split into *pupilles 1 (-11 ans)* and *pupilles 2 / -13 ans*.³⁰⁰ In the older age groups, the *cadets* term was dropped in order to use the newer categories of “*moins de 17 ans*” and “*moins de 15 ans*” but not before a transitional period where both name and number appeared.³⁰¹ Like its older siblings, by 1994-95, the *minime* appellation was bottled away into the museum archive in favour of two new vintages called “*moins 13 ans*”, “*moins 15 ans*”.³⁰² It is interesting to note that with the move away from names to numbers, each possible age group was separately listed. A two-year age span was not enough, it was now important to distinguish on the *licence* whether a youth was in his or her first or second year of the category in a further separation of an already classified group.

Did age limits continue to decline? While the *débutants* were no younger than six on August 1st for much of the 1980s, by 1992-93 the age limits for the category had been extended down to five and five months on August 1st though it may not have been the standard age for all and rather exceptional.³⁰³ Signing a *licence* under the age of six was possible nonetheless and Amaury Dugratoux made the most of this opportunity for the 1994-95 season since he would still have been five at the end of November 1994.³⁰⁴ The various age limits do not appear to have changed much at the start of the new millennium.³⁰⁵ According to article 12 of the FFF regulations pertaining to age categories in 2002-03 and 2008-09, the age limits were the same as those listed for 1996-97 with the exception that a child could not sign until his or her sixth birthday.³⁰⁶ It appears that this limit was applied in the case of two *débutants*, Benjamin Lavandier

²⁹⁹ SL Sevrey, *Licence Débutant 1 (-7 ans)*, 1993-94.

³⁰⁰ See SL Sevrey, *Licence Pupille 1 (-11 ans)*, 1993-94, and SL Sevrey, *Licence Pupille 2 / -13 ans*, 1993-94.

³⁰¹ SL Sevrey, *Licence Cadets (1) – 15 ans*, 1994-95.

³⁰² See SL Sevrey, *Licence Minimes (1) – 13 ans*, 1994-95, and SL Sevrey, *Licence Minimes (2) – 15 ans*, 1994-95.

³⁰³ SL Sevrey, *Licence Débutante*, 1992-93.

³⁰⁴ SL Sevrey, *Licence Débutant 1 (-7 ans)*, 1994-95.

³⁰⁵ There were some shifts within the structure itself but no major extensions to the age range. For example, in 2006 the FFF oversaw some proposals to shift the age categories so that they corresponded to the school cycle. See Fédération Française de Football, *Minutes of the Commission Centrale Féminine*, 2 February 2006.

³⁰⁶ See Fédération Française de Football, *Règlement Généraux*, 2002-03, annex 1, article 12, and Fédération Française de Football, *Règlement Généraux*, 2008-09, annex 1, article 12.

and Tony Bolzonella, in 2006-07 since the official registration date printed on their *licence* is either on or three days after their sixth birthdays.³⁰⁷ So in theory, at the start of the twenty-first century boys and girls could only sign an FFF-issued *licence* as of his or her sixth birthday.

By the turn of the twenty-first century, the question was no longer at what age a player could be a junior or *junior*. The answer was simple. Age categories would be just that: clearly denominated categories based on a mathematical calculation of a player's age at the start of the season. With the youth game crossing more and more borders – linked to the subject of youth national teams discussed in chapter 4 – the relevance for using one standardised approach led to the adoption by the French of the moniker “U” for “under” to preface each age category. For the first time in history each youth *licence* category, as of the 2009-10 season, was to be limited to one age group born in one year, instead of covering two or sometimes even three years. With the new regulations in place for the 2009-10 season, each age group was called as such and separated by one age, no more, no less.³⁰⁸

As stated in the FFF's circular to the league and district presidents, the reform would create a distinction “between the notions of competition and age category”.³⁰⁹ Gone were the filial or maternal names assigned to the various age groups. In their place were the stolid but unambiguous “U10” or “U17”. Consequently, this meant that an under-9 player in France was the same as an under-9 player in America, or more importantly also in Europe. This was explained in a presentation by the FFF's Direction Technique Nationale to the Ligue d'Alsace as an “adaptation of the licences in respect of European usage” and illustrated with the parallel UEFA age structure under the new French one.³¹⁰ The Anglicisation of the treatment of age in youth football was a final step in the direction of a harmonised international bureaucracy of age.

³⁰⁷ SL Sevrey, *Licence Libre / Débutant* (2), 2006-07 for Lavandier (n° 2544141366) and Bolzonella. (n° 2544154266).

³⁰⁸ Fédération Française de Football, ‘Circulaire relative aux modifications réglementaires votées lors de l'Assemblée Générale de la L.F.A. du 14 mars 2009’, circular letter dated May 27, 2009.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

³¹⁰ Fédération Française de Football, ‘Les changements de catégories chez les jeunes Saison 2009/2010’, p. 2.

Ultimately then, the age for registering players continued to fall officially and unofficially with new categories in place from the 1970s. At the same time, younger and younger girls made their way onto the youth fields in both America and France. The race for American kids reduced the age ladder in connection to diverse visions of the organisation of the sport as well as inter-sport competition in the wider youth sports arena. The French structure was institutionally more stable but just as flexible as the age ranges dropped over time. In a significant shift, the familiar category names were archived away in favour of a system of numerical classification. By the end of the first decade of the new millennium, all the remaining category names finally gave way to the Anglophone term of “under-...”, simply abbreviated by “U...”. Had *l’Académie française* been consulted it is difficult to imagine the ‘Forty’ acquiescing with a stamp of immortal approval.

The youngest kept getting younger indeed. Age five was an official category in America as early as the 1970s while French youth of this age had to wait somewhat longer to be a registered member of the football family. After almost a century of shifting up and down the age range, by the new millennium, any given youth would barely be able to kick a ball around without first being registered with a club, as exemplified by the FFF’s creation of a new category for U6 – as of a child’s fifth birthday – effective from the 2010-11 season.³¹¹ At last, youth aged five, whether in America or in France, were clearly eligible for registration. While the Americans worked to get youth *under* one footballing banner as opposed to other sports, the new approach to age in France finally encompassed all of youth football, quite literally, *under* its umbrella.

But the ‘revolution of age’ did not occur in a vacuum. Other significant areas of society swayed in parallel one way or another in age’s wake. The final section of this chapter will summarize the key stages of age’s relevance in two areas critical for the world of the child to which youth football so intimately belongs: school and the workplace. In both of these sectors of society, the notions and, more importantly

³¹¹ Fédération Française de Football, *Règlements Généraux 2010-11*, Ch. 2, Section 1, Article 66.

perhaps, the significance of age has evolved or rather been revolutionized. Precisely while age was becoming more and more relevant in football, it was at its apex in a period of ‘protection’ and ‘education’, two foundational notions applied to childhood by adult society.

Contextualising the relevance of ‘age’ in the worlds of school and work

*But could one feel the mix of ages when one was so indifferent to age itself?*³¹²

Philippe Ariès’ question refers to Western Europe, specifically France, prior to the seventeenth century, and the notion of the relative importance or unimportance of age. In one sense, such a question defies certain *a priori* of a post-modern world in which various stages of life associated with specific age ranges are more than presupposed. As they are known today, these stages, or ages of present-day life, are intimately associated with contemporary and specific ideas of protection, education, and progressive preparation for the adult world. Consequently, this final section will focus on these concepts in order to contextualise the increasing importance of age within football described throughout this chapter.

If the notion of ‘youth’ or the definition of ‘childhood’ in respect to age are relatively recent conceptions, at least in historical terms and debated by differing schools of thought, it can be asked what has been the role of age in the general process of dividing the world of children from adults?³¹³ If school is a defining element for

³¹² Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale*, p. 190.

³¹³ The nature of childhood in history, specifically the Medieval and Renaissance periods, has become hotly debated ground since Ariès’ focus on the relationship between the child and the family. Adrian Wilson’s 1980s article recounted the breadth of influence of *L'enfant et la vie familiale* especially in the English-speaking world and also examined Ariès’ work in the light of its critics. Later, in France, Didier Lett, Alexandre-Bidon, Closson along with Jacques Verger and Pierre Riché were among those who further explored notions of childhood in the past, specifically in the Middle Ages, and have argued vociferously against some of Ariès’ tenets. Among others, Ariès argued that the place of the child changed throughout time and that the family became centred on the nurturing and protection of, as well as the love for, the child. It is regretful that the tenor of the debate is such that subsequent research felt it necessary to refute Ariès with such vehemence. Rather than simply letting the research speak for itself, it appears necessary to label Ariès’ questions as “the cells within which Ariès has locked us”, “false ideas” and “erroneous views”. Perhaps a study of Foucauldian power relationships within post-May 1968

childhood, what is the relevance of age in education? In parallel, how has age been treated in the area of employment? Is age more important than ability to accomplish a task, sporting, education, or employment-related? And to what extent has ‘protection’ in the workplace been structured around age?

The development of age as a key criterion for defining the youth game as separate from the adult’s has not occurred in a bubble. Such a shift must therefore be seen in the light of similar changes in wider society where the age paradigm distinguishes between children and adults, in this case, at school and in the workplace. The focus here will be on the evolution of age in terms of required schooling, or the school leaving age, and various limitations on work for youth in France and the United States for the period between the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

During this period, the age of a young person was an important marker for the beginning and end of various phases of life including the entry and exit from school as well as the barrier to start work. The age ranges expanded over the course of the twentieth century. School became obligatory for younger students just as these same children were formally included at younger ages in organised sport. Conversely, the age for leaving school and entering the world of work rose throughout the period. This inverse relationship of starting school younger and finishing older, along with delaying the entry to work occurred in parallel to the changes to age in the registration of youth in football. Thus, the youth over the twentieth century began school and organised football at younger and younger ages at the same time that their entry to professional life was pushed back on the basis of a longer educational period. This process drew more clear distinctions as to who was a child and who was an adult and the same forces that separated the youth footballers from the senior ones were to be found in the places of education and work.

academia would yield interesting results? See Wilson, ‘The infancy of the history of childhood’, pp. 132-53; Lett, ‘Note de Lecture’, pp. 129-30; and Pierre André Sigal, ‘L’histoire de l’enfant au Moyen-Âge : une recherche en plein essor’, *Histoire de l’Éducation*, 81 (1999), pp. 3-22.

Childhood from the Renaissance to the late 19th century

The departure point for this succinct overview will be the period from the fourteenth century where, for some scholars, the beginnings of modern ideas about childhood took root. Ariès described the changes in education during this early period in France. From the fourteenth century, the new educational structure within the *collège hiérarchisé* brought about a shift and “withdrew scholastic childhood from the hodgepodge where, in common society, all ages were mixed”; what followed was the establishment of classes and subdivisions within the school from the sixteenth century onwards.³¹⁴ Postman posited that childhood as we know it today was in fact an outgrowth of this same Renaissance period and the pillars of his argumentation rest on the reappearance of three necessary factors for childhood to exist: literacy, education and the notion of shame.³¹⁵

The precise marking of age was important enough by 1790 for inclusion in the first American population census. In the seventeen schedules, individuals’ age is recorded and the population is distinguished according to an individual’s status either as free or slave with age sixteen serving as the limit.³¹⁶ The detailed reports for each state record individual names of residents in cities and counties and almost without exception they included mentions of the person’s age.³¹⁷ Thus, age was a relevant enough aspect to be recorded in the first census and, moreover, the age of sixteen was used as one of the key means for distinguishing between persons alongside sex and one’s status as a

³¹⁴ Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale*, p. 194.

³¹⁵ Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, pp. xii, 9. Postman argues that these three aspects existed before the Renaissance but largely disappeared in Western Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire.

³¹⁶ The categories were: ‘free white males of 16 years and upwards’, ‘including head of families’; ‘free white males under sixteen years’; ‘free white females including heads of families’; ‘all other free persons’; and ‘slaves’. Each schedule listed the total population according to the stated categories and covered a specific territory, mostly States that ratified the Constitution of 1787, though some were simply wide geographic areas. See *Return of the whole number of persons within the several districts of the United States, according to “An Act providing for the enumeration of the inhabitants of the United States”*, (Philadelphia: 1791), pp. 3-56.

³¹⁷ The survey for the state of Virginia conducted in 1782 lists age in years primarily as a number ranging from “1” or even as young as “6 months” for Charlotte Foushee, the youngest of three children to physician William Foushee, and all the way up to “68”, as in the case of Mary Lyon, apparently the youngest and oldest residents on record of all four wards of the city of Richmond. Lyon was a resident of Wardship 3 and Foushee of Wardship 4. See Department of Commerce and Labor. Bureau of the Census. *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States in the year 1790*, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1908), pp. 115, 118.

free person or slave. While this does not explain the wider social relevance of age, it demonstrates that age – sixteen in this case – was used as one of the markers for adulthood in America at the turn of the eighteenth-century.

With the move in France and the United States through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries towards fully industrialised and then post-industrial societies, the occupational world shifted its focus from the formerly dominant agrarian-based economies to more urbanized industry and consequently began to face the issue of the protection of the worker. The discourse was not deaf to the youth. Indeed, restrictions on maximum working hours per day for young persons were written into English law by 1819 which forbade factory work for children under nine years of age and limited the work day to no more than twelve hours for youth between nine and sixteen.³¹⁸ The effectiveness of the measure was qualified by Hutchins and Harrison, writing at the turn of the twentieth century, as “valuable as setting up a standard, though as a regulation it was highly inadequate”.³¹⁹ There were several possible responses to the circumstances of excessive child labour.

There are three potential answers ranging from the role of legislation as protection against extreme working conditions and a guarantee of educational opportunity, to the removal of unemployed idle children from the street, to, finally, the use of obligatory schooling as a means to national identity. One reaction could have been to take these overworked kids out of the factory and guarantee them educational opportunity in school. The submission to Monroe’s *Cyclopedia of Education* defined the “Standards for Legislation” in the area of child labour with precisely this type of a vision. The view in 1911 was that

³¹⁸ For a full treatment of this law see Chapter II on ‘The Early Factory Acts, 1802-1831’ in Elizabeth Leigh Hutchins and Amy Harrison, *A History of Factory Legislation*, (New York: Lenox Hill Pub & Dist. Co., 1903), pp. 14-29.

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 26. Appropriately entitled *An Act to make further Provisions for the Regulation of Cotton Mills and Factories, and for the better Preservation of the Health of young Persons employed therein*, Hutchins and Harrison noted that this was because of the difficulty in enforcing the law as well as its acceptance by factory operators.

“[o]ne of the objects of child labor legislation being to secure to the child his educational rights, all programs endeavor to secure a minimum education, even when the child has passed the minimum age.”³²⁰

Regulation of such labour was destined in part to protect the child from excessive work and recognize the youth’s “educational rights” even past a certain age. Extracting youth from the workplace was the desired outcome by the turn of the twentieth century, but there was perhaps an alternative view of the reason for protective laws regarding the employment and education of children. Historian Hugh Cunningham’s view, based on extensive research of child employment in English factories between the end of the seventeenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, challenges the dominant historical perspective and presented the following conclusion:

“It is usual to think of school rescuing the working child from the factory; it is more plausible to think of it removing the idle child from the street.”³²¹

Finally, Antoine Prost offers a third reaction to the purpose of organized schooling at least by the turn of the twentieth century in France: the formation of a sort of nationalised identity. He argues that obligatory schooling and patriotism in primary school had the function of contributing to *l’unification des esprits*, or “the unification of the minds” while Albert Bourzac went as far as qualifying the educational experience of the turn of century as a “patriotic school”.³²²

The link between the regulation of school attendance and child labour was inherent if not necessarily explicit. The two were intertwined but it is difficult to discern to what extent such historical forces deliberately and knowingly converged. Nonetheless, what is quiddative to this thesis is the recognition that by the start of the twentieth century childhood was indeed a recognised period of life with more or less fixed age limits and was infused with notions of protection alongside objectives of education in preparation for a modern adult society.

³²⁰ D.S. and S.M.L., ‘Child Labor’ in P. Monroe, ed. *A Cyclopedia of Education*, volume 1, (New York: MacMillan, 1911), p. 610.

³²¹ Hugh Cunningham, ‘The Employment and Unemployment of Children in England c. 1680-1851’, *Past and Present*, 126 (1990), p. 150.

³²² Antoine Prost, ‘Quand l’école de Jules Ferry est-elle morte?’, *l’Histoire de l’éducation*, 14 (1982), p. 25; Albert Bourzac, ‘L’école patriotique’, in Pierre Arnaud, ed., *Les Athlètes de la République: Gymnastique, sport et idéologie républicaine*, (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1987), pp. 29-39.

Lengthening education through changing age limits - from the late 19th century to the present

If by the late nineteenth century childhood was an accepted part of society which required the nurturing mentioned above, as age was no longer being treated with indifference, then how was age dealt with in the worlds of work and school from the end of the nineteenth century to the present? In order to answer this question, several fundamental aspects will be examined in education and the workplace. The focus in this first section will be on the regulations or legislation regarding the minimum and maximum ages for compulsory schooling. As will be illustrated below, the changes had the general effect of prolonging school duration and raising the age at which children were exempt from school attendance and allowed to work.

Table 2 - Some examples of key changes to legislation and age limits in education (1870-2008)³²³

Year	Country / State	Minimum age for compulsory attendance	School leaving age	Compulsory Age range
1894	New Hampshire (USA)			(6 to 16)
1894	Pennsylvania (USA)			(8 to 13)
1894	New Jersey (USA)			(7 to 12)
1906	New Hampshire (USA)*			(8 to 14)
1906	Pennsylvania (USA)			(6 to 16)
1906	New Jersey (USA)			(7 to 14)
1915	USA**	(7.6)	(15.5)	
1939	USA**	(7.2)	(16)	
2009	New Hampshire (USA)***			(6 to 18)
2009	Pennsylvania (USA)			(8 to 17)
2009	New Jersey (USA)			(6 to 16)

³²³ Compiled from *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the year 1894-95*, vol 1, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1896), p. 1121; *Report of the Commissioner of Education for the year ended June 30, 1906*, vol 2, (Washington DC: US Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 548; Adriana Lleras-Muney, 'Were compulsory attendance and child labor laws effective? An analysis from 1915 to 1939', in *Journal of Law and Economics*, 45 (2002), pp. 408-9; Melodye Bush, *Compulsory School Age Requirements*, (Denver, CO: Education Commission of the States, 2010), p. 2; *Loi n° 11 696 du 28 Mars 1882 qui rend l'Enseignement primaire obligatoire*, (Journal officiel du 29 mars 1882), art. 4, 6; *Loi du 9 août 1936 sur l'enseignement primaire obligatoire*, (Journal officiel du 13 août 1936); *Ordonnance n° 59-45 du 6 janvier 1959 portant prolongation de la scolarité obligatoire*, (Journal officiel du 7 janvier 1959), art. 1; *Ordonnance n° 2000-549 du 15 juin 2000 relative à la partie Législative du code de l'éducation*, (Journal officiel du 22 juin 2000).

1882	France	(6)	(11)	(6 to 13)
1936	France	(6)	(14)	(6 to 14)
1959	France	(6)	(16)	(6 to 16)
2000	France****			(6 to 16)

* The age range listed is stated to be “in many cases extended or shortened under certain circumstances”.

** The numbers here refer to national averages of the differing state laws calculated by Lleras-Muney. The implied number of years of schooling for 1915 works out to between 5 and 7 years and for 1939 between 7 and 9 years.

*** Bush cites all state laws and codes which stipulate attendance requirements as of June 2010.

**** As of this date, the *Code de l'éducation* came into force and article L131-1 replaced the old *Ordonnance* from 1959.

The above table charts some important changes to education legislation. The trend towards a longer scholastic period is evident. The leaving age rose in France from ten or eleven years in the nineteenth century to at least sixteen years of age less than one hundred years later. In France there was a period during which a minimum school leaving age coexisted with a slightly higher compulsory education age.

In the late nineteenth century, a child could take an examination for the nationalized *Certificat d'Études Primaires*, or CEP, as of age eleven. If a child passed the exam this exempted him from further compulsory schooling.³²⁴ In this early period there was a discrepancy between the age range for compulsory schooling and the age at which a child could first “be presented” to take the CEP. One could interpret this as ability being more important than age *per se*. Over the twentieth century the duration for compulsory schooling was lengthened and by the 1959 reform the article covering compulsory education no longer allowed an earlier exemption through the CEP. Furthermore, it included a mention that the upper limit was not a legal obstacle to specific provisions which could further lengthen schooling.³²⁵ Moreover, the first chapter of the *Code de l'éducation*, which was adopted in 2000 and replaced previous education laws, clearly articulates the guarantee to each youth of educational opportunity from age six to sixteen.³²⁶ Thus, there was a progressive shift from an

³²⁴ *Loi n° 11 696 du 28 Mars 1882*, art. 6. For a complete history of the CEP, see Marie-France Bishop, ‘Chronique « histoire de l'enseignement ». Si le Certificat d'études m'était conté...’, in *Le Français aujourd'hui*, 161 (2) (2008), pp. 121-6.

³²⁵ *Ordonnance n° 59-45 du 6 janvier 1959*, art. 1. The text reads “La présente disposition ne fait pas obstacle à l'application des prescriptions particulières imposant une scolarité plus longue.”

³²⁶ *Code de l'éducation*, ch. 1.

initial situation where it would appear that ability was more important than age, evidenced by a possible exemption before reaching the minimum leaving age, towards a more explicit focus on guaranteeing education to every child up to a minimum age without the possibility of earlier exemption based examination. In other words, age appears to have become more important than ability.

As education is the legislative competency of the states and not the federal government in the USA, one must look to this level to observe changes in compulsory schooling or exemption. For the purposes of simplicity and of illustrating the general changes in America three states, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New Hampshire, have been selected since they illustrate the full gamut of variety along the age scale. The changes are not uniform between the early period of 1984 and 1906, as New Hampshire shortened its minimum schooling requirements while the other two states lengthened them. Lleras-Muney demonstrates a national trend of lengthening compulsory schooling in the first half of the twentieth century.³²⁷ Another snapshot of the three selected states in 2000, taken with Lleras-Muney's statistics, demonstrate a similar trend over the century with a progressive lengthening of the period of education; the shorter age ranges lengthened to nine and, in some cases, twelve years of required schooling. It should be noted that despite having had relatively high school-leaving ages even early on, a number of American state laws still include exemptions for leaving under the minimum age.³²⁸

What was the effect of such change to age in education? Ultimately, this has meant that on average over the twentieth century, children have stayed longer in school. Adding to Lleras-Muney's initial analysis of the period up to the Second World War, the US Census Bureau provides further evidence of lengthened schooling. Based on the decennial census information between 1850 and 1970, the statistics for school enrolment demonstrate a general trend of significant increases from a range of forty-seven to fifty-eight for every one hundred individuals of the population prior to 1900, to sixty-four (1920), seventy-four (1940) and finally eighty-eight out of one hundred

³²⁷ Lleras-Muney, 'Were compulsory attendance', p. 409.

³²⁸ Bush, *Compulsory School Age Requirements*, p. 1.

persons in 1970.³²⁹ By age, the statistics are more telling, for the period between 1940 and 1970. In the fourteen to seventeen year-old age group, approximately eighty percent were enrolled in school in the 1940s.³³⁰ During the same decade only between twenty and twenty-eight percent of eighteen and nineteen year-olds were enrolled.³³¹ However, by 1960, over ninety percent of the younger age group and almost forty percent of the eighteen and nineteen year-olds were enrolled.³³² These numbers increased even further in 1970 when ninety-four percent of fourteen to seventeen year-olds and forty-eight percent of eighteen and nineteen year-olds were enrolled in school.³³³ Over that same thirty year period, the percentage of young men and women who completed four years of high school rose from twelve to thirty and sixteen to thirty-seven percent respectively.³³⁴ The percentages of men and women who completed four or more years of college (after high school) also increased from five and four percent to fourteen and eight percent; at the same time the median school years completed rose from eight to twelve years for both men and women.³³⁵ For the most recent period from 1970 to 2000, the percentage of the population having obtained a high school diploma rose from fifty-two to eighty percent and for a university bachelor's degree from ten to almost twenty-five percent.³³⁶

In France, a similar lengthening of education has been observed along with higher educational attainment for a larger percentage of the population. Between 1920 and 1971, the percentage of any given generation's access to secondary education rose significantly. For those continuing at least to the '6e' and '3e', sixth and third years before the baccalaureate, the attainment level increased from thirty percent to near one-hundred percent and from twenty percent to eighty percent respectively.³³⁷ Only few

³²⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1970*, Chapter H, Series H 433-441. School Enrollment Rates Per 100 Population, by Sex and Race: 1850 to 1970.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, Series H 442-476. School Enrollment, by Age, Race, and Sex, 1953 to 1970, and by Age and Sex, 1940 to 1952.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ *Ibid.*

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, Series H 602-617. Years of School Completed, by Race, and Sex: 1940 to 1970.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*

³³⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, *United States Educational Attainment of the Population 25 Years and Over: 1940 to 2000*,

³³⁷ Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Culture, *L'État de l'école 2000*, 3 – Taux d'accès des générations aux différents niveaux de l'enseignement secondaire, p. 21.

(less than ten percent) reached the *baccalauréat* in 1920 while the attainment at this level rose to almost fifty percent by 1971.³³⁸ This process continued to grow from the 1960s to the 1990s and is evident in the mean duration of schooling per generation. For those born in 1965, eighty percent were still in education at age seventeen and just over twenty-five percent at age twenty, while for the generation born in 1978, almost ninety-five percent were still in school at age seventeen and fifty-five percent at age twenty.³³⁹ The number of young people leaving school without any qualification decreased significantly from the 1960s to the late 1990s. From almost thirty-eight percent in 1965, only around eight percent of young people left school in 1997 without a qualification of some kind.³⁴⁰ Certainly this was due in part to a diversification of qualifications, but the end result is that more youth stayed in school longer.³⁴¹

Was this primarily a result of demographic changes with the baby-boom? The French Ministry of Education refutes any such argument and associates the changes to the education system as due to the deliberate lengthening of schooling:

“Our system of education has known since 1960 a sustained quantitative development, linked much more to the prolonging of the length of education (which is now stabilizing around 19 years, from kindergarten up to the end of higher education), than to the arrival of new generations from the baby-boom. The 1960s and 1970s saw the growth of education in kindergarten, then the burst of youth in secondary schooling. More recently, since 1985, it has been the massive entry in the lycées, then into higher education. Advances have been realised since this time, towards greater objectives prescribed in the loi d’orientation de juillet 1989 [a law for orienting youth in their educational paths]: ensuring a minimum qualification to all youth and carry 80% of them to the baccalauréat level.”³⁴²

Indeed, along with pushing back the leaving age, the increases in the percentages of school attendance at the youngest age groups is striking. If most five year-olds in 1960 were already enrolled in some schooling, this only applied to sixty percent of four year-

³³⁸ *Ibid.*

³³⁹ Ministère de l’Éducation nationale et de la Culture, *L’État de l’école 2000*, 2 – Taux de la scolarisation par âge selon la génération, p. 19.

³⁴⁰ Ministère de l’Éducation nationale et de la Culture, *L’État de l’école 2000*, 1 – Proportion de jeunes sortant sans qualification de 1965 à 1997, p. 27.

³⁴¹ Ministère de l’Éducation nationale et de la Culture, *L’État de l’école 2000*, pp. 30-1.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

olds, thirty-six percent of three year-olds and ten percent of two year-olds.³⁴³ However, by the turn of the twenty-first century, essentially one-hundred percent of five, four and three year-olds were all enrolled in some form of schooling/kindergarten while the percentage of two year-olds rose from ten to thirty-five percent.³⁴⁴ The archetype stay-at-home mother or family structure was changing as more and more children were growing up in structured environments overseen by the state and not the family.

These cases underline the continual process of extending the age at which one attends educational institutions (both entry and leaving) but also illustrates the ongoing tension in these societies' perceived status of their own youth. Can educational ability be gauged by age? Was there a change in educational policy or pedagogy that explains the lengthening of compulsory schooling through earlier entry and postponed leaving? Also possibly related was the rise of women in the workforce who no longer all stayed home to watch over children. The answer to these questions are outside the scope of this thesis, but what is evident is that in both countries, the legislation reflects a shift towards age-based minimums requiring children to pursue longer periods of schooling and thus prolonging their preparation for adulthood. In the various developments in legislation there appeared a shift regarding a key criterion for leaving school: from a focus on ability to a focus on age.

Towards child labour protection and the international approach - from the late 19th to the present

With education regulations progressing towards longer schooling periods, the focus of this second section will be on the legislation regarding the minimum and maximum ages for employment. What happened to the various restrictions, limits placed on a youth's capacity to work during the twentieth century? With regard to regulations on employment of youth, the same period offers some trends equally as interesting as those in the realm of education. In the same way that a child's age was a

³⁴³ Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Culture, *L'État de l'école 2000*, 1 – Taux de scolarisation des enfants de 2 ans, 3 ans, 4 ans, et 5 ans (1960-1999), p. 39.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

crucial delineator for changing laws on schooling which ultimately led to an extension of the duration of compulsory schooling and average length of education, the changes to employment restrictions for work were also fundamentally reflected in the raising of age-based limits.

Recalling the position taken on child labour legislation mentioned above as one which must “secure to the child his educational rights” and “secure a minimum education”, the following perspective on child labour is rather telling. In the entry in Monroe’s *Cyclopedia of Education* written by the same authors as those to whom the two prior quotes are attributed, it is boldly declared that

“There is no evidence that such industrial participation has often been harmful where oversight was exercised by those having a family or philanthropic interest in the child. In fact, it is now pretty certain that this sharing of economic activities is quite essential to the complete development of children from even 5 or 6 years of age onwards, when constructive workmanship instincts begin to appear. The labor of children under humane conditions, therefore, has been traditionally established, and has not been in general an evil.”³⁴⁵

For these authors in 1911, it was perfectly admissible to hold both views. This juxtaposition of competing views probably only appears paradoxical to the contemporary reader who has been conditioned by a century worth of efforts and propaganda against child labour.

That almost diametrically opposed views on work done by children could coexist, and even be published in the same article at the start of the twentieth century, is a testament to the process of change from a world in which children in employment was normal and regular to modern connotations of child labour as intrinsically negative by the end of that same century. This was a progression as noted by Patrice Bourdelais in referring to the build-up to modern notions about child labour. He explains that in

³⁴⁵ D.S. and S.M.L., ‘Child Labor’, p. 607. In another article covering the legislation for the conservation and protection of childhood, the same author, S.M.L, wrote that “Among the more important rights of childhood that are now generally given legislative protection are: (1) The right to be well born. (2) The right to parental name, support, and protection. (3) The right to leisure, play, and recreation. (4) The right to education. (5) The right to exemption from work until physically and mentally equipped for the specific tasks with which the work life may properly begin...(6) The right to protection from inhumane treatment. (7) The right to protection of health and morals. See S.M.L., ‘Childhood, Legislation for the conservation and protection of’, in *A Cyclopedia of Education*, vol. 1, p. 621.

England and France between the end of the eighteenth and up to the latter part of the nineteenth centuries, these decades were the beginning of child-labour regulation, a period “where this practice became intolerable, for the same reasons as slavery or torture”.³⁴⁶ Thus, before exploring the topic further, it is important not to lose sight of this context ever so prevalent at the start of the twentieth century and within which the ideas about both employment and education evolved.

If, at the start of the twentieth century, child labour was slowly becoming the object of regulation and *intolerable* as a practice, then what happened during the twentieth century? With the basis for compulsory education laid and some initial working restrictions in place in these Western countries, what was the next step for the period during which youth football was to take root? It is apparent that the existing forces continued - the raising of the minimum age for work in specific industries, but also in general, and the imposition of limits on working hours and conditions. With regard to the United States, the *Cyclopedia of Education* from 1911 recounts a number of changes during the first decade:

“In 1904 the 14-year age limit in factories only applied in 9 states, in 1910 in 11 states. For mines the age limit in 1904 was 15 in one state, 14 in 19 states, and 12 in 5 states, while in 1910 it was 16 in 6 states, 14 in 18 states, and 12 in 8 states. The employment of children was forbidden during school hours in only 14 states in 1904, but in 23 states in 1910.”³⁴⁷

Goldstein traces the continued development of regulation in the United States over this period. His account is slightly different even if it follows the same pattern. He notes that in 1900 twenty-four states had no laws prescribing a minimum age for work in factories, but by 1909 this had been reduced to six states which were still without regulation.³⁴⁸ While the details do not always concord, the trends flow in the same direction: towards more restrictions and higher minimum ages.

³⁴⁶ Patrice Bourdelais, ‘L’intolérable du travail des enfants’, in Didier Fassin and Patrice Bourdelais, *Les constructions de l’intolérable, Etudes d’anthropologie et d’histoire sur les frontières de l’espace moral*, (Paris: La Découverte, 2005), p. 91.

³⁴⁷ D.S. and S.M.L., ‘Child Labor’, p. 611.

³⁴⁸ Harold Goldstein, ‘Child Labor in America’s History’, in *Journal of Clinical Child Psychology*, (1976), p. 48.

But age was not apparently the only good gauge for employment ability. The contributors continued and explored other ways to draw a distinction:

“Obviously the age of the child is but a poor index of his development or his capacity for work. Hence physical tests are being imposed, as weight and height standards, like the minimum weight of 80 pounds and the minimum height of 60 inches employed in the New York law of 1903.”³⁴⁹

For the subsequent period between 1915 and 1939, Lleras-Muney noted a significant rise in the number of years of education required to obtain a work permit in order for youth to enter the workforce in many US states.³⁵⁰ By the 1970s, the minimum age for employment was eighteen for hazardous non-agricultural occupations, sixteen for general employment, although fourteen and fifteen year-olds could be employed under certain limitations.³⁵¹

Yet the welfare of the child was apparently not the only justification for the continued limitation of child labour. Goldstein offers another hypothesis: the push for further regulation and limitation of child labour in the 1930s was aided by another key factor - the Great Depression. With many adults out of work “the climate for prohibition of child labor became more favorable” and eventually culminated in the 1938 *Fair Labor Standards Act* which included the long-awaited federal prohibition for some industries and hazardous jobs.³⁵² It is interesting to note that Bourdelais comes to the same conclusion when interpreting the prolonging of the upper age limit of compulsory schooling to fourteen which came into effect in France in 1936, also during a period of economic hardship. According to Bourdelais, this was the first time it was done not for purely schooling reasons, but rather to lighten the numbers of new entrants in the labour market during a period of rising unemployment.³⁵³ Even if continued legislation changes were made in part to protect the adult labour market at times, the process of regulation of child labour did indeed continue to develop and ages rose.

³⁴⁹ D.S. and S.M.L., ‘Child Labor’, p. 610.

³⁵⁰ Lleras-Muney, ‘Were compulsory attendance’, p. 408.

³⁵¹ Goldstein, ‘Child Labor in America’s History’, pp. 49.

³⁵² Goldstein, ‘Child Labor in America’s History’, pp. 48-9.

³⁵³ Bourdelais, ‘L’intolérable du travail des enfants’, p. 105.

One final forum for the twentieth century's ongoing debate on child labour has been the international arena. With individual nations, like France and the United States, enacting their own laws regulating and prohibiting the employment of children, the trans-national forces have also had their say in what became over the twentieth century a real global movement. In his introduction to an edited volume that chronicles child labour around the world, Hindman describes how the movement

“began to coalesce in the late 1970s and early 1980s, picked up steam in 1989 with the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, gained enormous institutional capacity in 1992 with the creation of the International Labor Organization's International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC), and has snowballed since.”³⁵⁴

But where did it all begin? What instruments laid the basis for these changes? Paula Fass has chronicled the initial context of expectations regarding the welfare of children and how these clashed with the realities of two major conflicts, a process which ultimately spawned “a more rights based approach”.³⁵⁵ The League of Nations first adopted the *Declaration of the Rights of the Child* in 1924 which set the five article foundation for the 1959 United Nations' *Declaration of the Rights of the Child*.³⁵⁶ The International Labor Organization's *Minimum Age Convention* agreed in 1973 worked towards raising internationally the minimum working age to no less than fifteen years of age.³⁵⁷ Other examples such as the *Declaration of Human Rights* in 1948, the *Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age for Marriage and Registration of Marriages* in 1962, and the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* and that on *Civil and Political Rights*, both in 1966, have undoubtedly created a climate even more favourable to the continued development of child labour legislation. More recently, as a result of the European community's approach to standardization, the adoption of European directives relating to the employment of children has ensured that member states amend national legislation: for example the case of England which raised, based on a European-issued directive, “from thirteen years to fourteen years the

³⁵⁴ Hugh Hindman, ed. *The world of child labor: an historical and regional survey*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), xxv.

³⁵⁵ Paula S. Fass, ‘A Historical Context for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 633 (1) (2011), p. 18.

³⁵⁶ For full text of this and the following conventions or documents see Geraldine Van Bueren, *International documents on children*, (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1998).

³⁵⁷ *Convention Concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment 1973*, art. 1 and 2.

age at which a child may be employed in any work”.³⁵⁸ Internationalisation then, was a force at play in the twentieth century and in most cases furthering the restrictions and raising the age limits on child labour.

An age of revolution and the revolution of age

Over the twentieth century then, football and youth aged, and in more ways than one. Across two countries and nearly one century, the sport witnessed the arrival and introduction of the notion of classification. Age took on a key role as the principal criterion for classifying players and teams – notwithstanding the professional-amateur classification. Indeed, the professional-amateur divide was certainly more important in terms of media visibility and politics as the profession carved a legitimate space for itself through a long process during the twentieth century. However, age as an administrative matter was granted more space at both ends of the age spectrum in the ever internationalising bureaucracy of the youth game. As described throughout this chapter, the growing importance of age is evident in its inclusion, use as the basis for registration, and finally as *the* important criterion for the codification of more and more age-appropriate categories stretching down the age ladder to the youngest potential players. In parallel to the professional-amateur debate though with perhaps more subtlety and less fanfare, ‘age’ has run a close second to ‘status’ in a quiet revolution of classifying the player.

From a plethora of classification structures over the first half of the century which included weight as well as age to separate participants, the youth game pushed away from disparate forms of organisation and worked towards harmonisation. This was just as much through top-down processes – such as the international forces affecting a French youth game in its neighbouring European context – as it was from the bottom up – through a national junior competition and the sprouting variety of US organisations which oversaw ‘youth soccer’ and transitioned across state lines from local to national. Alongside this pull towards harmonisation were the general boom in

³⁵⁸ *Children (Protection at Work) Regulations 1998, Statutory Instrument 1998 no.276, regulation 2.*

registered youth and the introduction of girls in their own expanding age structure. Ultimately, the division of participants shifted farther down the age ladder, more and more towards one standard definition based on age and finally even adopted an internationally recognised formula: *under-...* or *U...*

The categorization of youth football which occurred during the last three-quarters of the twentieth century occurred alongside other changes to age as a fundamental marker for society. Age limits in school extended much like those in sport, expanding up and down the age ladder. The minimum age for work increased over the same period. The shift towards the increased importance of age in football may just be a revelation of the wider changes in views of children and youth – specifically the perceived differences between them as well as between the young and adults – and their need to be protected, educated in stages, and progressively prepared for the adult world both sporting and societal. It is not the objective of this thesis to argue that football was the singular agent behind these shifts or that it extended them to wider society. What is not beyond this thesis, or at least as it is argued here, is to demonstrate that changes to age in sport occurred simultaneously with continually evolving ideas about age in wider society. This complex combination of push and pull forces have shaped the youth game up to the present and made age a defining factor in separating youth football from the adult level.

What were the reasons for such a shift? Was this the result of a specific view in sport, or in society for that matter, to level the playing field in order to achieve an “equality of opportunity” – that modern notion of sport essential to Guttmann?³⁵⁹ Or was this rather based on demographic changes to society and sport? Were there simply more and more eligible participants? Indeed, was the gradual limitation of age introduced simply because of a more crowded field of competitors and a critical mass of youth knocking on the door? Perhaps the organisers were overwhelmed by a larger number of younger participants who registered each passing year that they felt obliged to limit the competition? First they separated adults from youth, then the older youth

³⁵⁹ See Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1978), pp. 26-36.

from the younger and so forth until the final age structure began with under-fives and finishes with under-twenty-three.

The definitive answer is difficult to discern and it is the typical chicken or the egg dichotomy. To restrict participation there must be a significant body of eligible participants. As the popularity of the sport increases, it draws more participants who then justify further separation and more categories. Yet the “youth boom” numbers in both America and France arrived in football after age categories had already been in place, albeit before the game’s expansion into the youngest age groups from the turn of the 1970s onwards. So while the demographic argument is appealing and may indeed have played a role, it was certainly not preponderant in the creation of more age categories.

If the explanation is not solely demographic, then could it also be a consequence of questions about general welfare? What was the effect of the medical field in provoking ‘protection’ in the workplace which came in the form of restrictions according to age in certain types of employment? Bourdelais has argued that the medical field’s influences in the enacting of child protection legislation in France are not to be underestimated.³⁶⁰ Did this favour the development of a penchant to ensure the protection of the child’s health outside of work and school and on the fields of sport? The aforementioned Dr. Barbedor’s regular editorial explored the medical approach to sport and on one occasion he ventured into defining clear limits between the youth and adult sportsman:

“On what precise date, since a regulation is not constructed with approximations and nuances, does an adolescent become a man? In which competitions can the young Adonis give all he has (I never see contests where the competitors limit their effort) without risks for his health... As to the age of transition, other than the fact that it is not, for everyone, a date but a period, we all know that there are twenty-year-old kids and seventeen-year-old men and we see the solution only through a selection of individuals according to a medical exam. It is not impossible but since it has yet to be realized despite having talked about it for a long time it must not be simple.”³⁶¹

³⁶⁰ Bourdelais, ‘L’intolérable du travail des enfants’, p. 93.

³⁶¹ *Ouest-Éclair*, 29 June 1932.

Is this why Michel Mignot, an eighteen year-old *junior*, was later required to obtain a doctor's signature certifying a satisfactory medical examination which attested that there was "no counter indication for the practice of football" in 1950?³⁶² In order to protect the younger and weaker children, was it deemed necessary to further separate them into single age groups? Similar to the demographic response, the question of welfare undoubtedly left its mark on the youth game with arguments against inter-age play but was not the only answer to the question.

One final hypothesis worth further consideration is the question of the extent to which the youth game was segmented for pedagogical reasons. Was it not a similar argument to the progressive preparation through education that mandated that one learn arithmetic before attempting algebra? In this connection, it is interesting to consider the development of different rules and equipment for the youth game that was concomitant with the reduction in age – a point explored in Chapter 3. With a didactic approach to the sport and coaches who sought to teach the various elements of the game to age-appropriate audiences, the relevance of separate age categories would have made a great deal of sense.

Most likely, it is a combination of various factors like the three mentioned above that led the youth game first away from the senior level and then to separate age categories of younger and younger children. The obsession with recording age and using it to qualify and register youth accordingly appears to have structured football into a stratified world where all must serve the ends of 'age-appropriateness'. The apex of this process is perhaps best illustrated by the progression towards earlier and younger age categories. When the *poussins* were considered as the youngest age group, some started *mini-* or *pré-poussins*. And when those youngsters were officially attributed the title of *débutants*, this did not stop still others from organizing *pré-débutants* for two to four year-olds to literally initiate and "awake them to the ball".³⁶³

³⁶² FC Baromesnil, *Certificat médical d'aptitude aux Sports*, 1950-51.

³⁶³ Entente Sportive de la Forêt, *Journal de l'ESF*, n° 96, September 2006, p. 5. The registration for *pré-débutants* was under the heading of *éveil au ballon*.

With age barriers in place both to prevent overage players skewing the competition and to protect the welfare of those underage, there were nonetheless bridges across these walls of age. Article 4 of the ‘Statut des Juniors et Minimes’ in the 1930 regulations stipulated that a *junior* who played in more than three first or second team games in senior divisions “loses his qualification as a junior and cannot take part in an official match in one of the two [junior] categories”.³⁶⁴ This barrier had disappeared by 1955 so that any youth player who was authorised to compete in a higher level age group no longer forfeited his qualification for his own age group.³⁶⁵ Playing up one age group was possible in French competition so long as the required medical stamp of approval was obtained.

Yet there was more. For promising youth in the *cadets* age group like Michel Sorbara, whose *licence* was stamped with a *double surclassement*, there was the possibility of a double upgrade, in accordance with article 20 of section 7 of the FFF’s regulations that allowed for such a player to skip the junior level altogether and compete with the senior team.³⁶⁶ Similarly, in America, Oliver recalled the open nature of junior play stateside with thirteen-year-olds playing against eighteen-year-olds. Bridges across the junior-senior divide also existed in the Major League and Senior Open League in 1960s St. Louis that were both “open regardless of age”.³⁶⁷

So was the reign of age valid only to the extent that the ability level did not merit playing up? As long as youth phenoms such as Laurent Paganelli – whose debut was at age fifteen for A.S. Saint-Etienne in 1978 – or Freddy Adu – who started his first match with D.C. United of the MLS in 2004 at age fourteen – continued to knock on the door of senior level football, the primacy of age would yield to a higher authority. Ability, that gauge of true mastery, has always reserved its right to impose its law on participation, at least in exceptional cases of prodigious talent. For the vast majority, however, the paradigm of age thus shifted from one banal aspect of sport activity to an age-focused structure wherein the nature of youth sport was defined *stricto sensu* by

³⁶⁴ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 44.

³⁶⁵ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, p. 71.

³⁶⁶ Cercle Athlétique Bastiais, *Licence Cadet*, 1960-61.

³⁶⁷ Robinson, ‘The History of soccer’, p. 238.

age. It was no longer described with military, apprentice-based, educational, or even maternal language (i.e. *cadet*, *poussin*, junior, or schoolboy) but simply by one's numerical age (Under-14) on a set date each year.

If, for the majority, age truly grew in importance in its use to separate the adult footballer from the youth and then the youth from other youth, then it did so in a distinct arena. Youth football became youth football thanks to age but it did so on the fields of autonomous competition and matches without senior players. For the vast majority of youth playing the game in age-appropriate classes, this was in their own age-appropriate competitions. The development of freestanding competitive structures for the youth game was a second crucial ingredient in the demarcation of youth football from the senior sport. It is to this question that the following chapter will now turn. Yet in closing the process of separation by age, it is important to remember that the gap could be bridged at any time by sufficient ability. In football, as in sport, 'ability' has always retained a place of primary importance especially given its nature as a craft based on performance. Indeed, as with the sweeping bow of the prodigious child violinist, the deft touch of any young but gifted J. Grou from Cadaujac or Tommy Dunn from St. Louis would have volleyed into the top corner any visible distinction between the footballing worlds of the adult and the child.

Chapter 2 - Separating Competitive Spaces – organised youth football at school and the club, c.1920-c.1980



Image 3 - UC Dieppoise's first team of poussins (1980-81)¹

Lest one be fooled by the apparent smiles and light-heartedness prompted by a probable parent photographer, the 1980-81 season for the first *poussins* team in UC Dieppoise's club history was by no means a competitive success. The Dieppe archive notes that their inaugural season was a difficult one. The team finished eleventh out of eleven teams, winning once, losing on nineteen occasions, scoring eight times but giving up a whopping one-hundred and forty goals.² The club archive's closing note for that season qualifies these "difficult beginnings" in the following way:

"Very tough apprenticeship for all these beginners. They had the merit to come back week after week to improve. That is their great merit, where the 'adults' would have given up. For the training staff it was also a big first. For the most part none of them had supervised young ones [before]."³

The club had already had some older age groups for a number of years, with *cadets* and *juniors* playing as early as the 1940's, but 1980 was the first time the club entered a team for the youngest competition in the *poussins* age group. It proved to be a rough start despite the opposing teams being in the same age category. The difference in ability between the Dieppe beginners and the other teams in Group B of the *District des Vallées* was keenly reflected in the goal differential.

¹ UC Dieppoise, *Poussins*, 1980-81.

² UC Dieppoise, 'Histoire 1980-81', <http://duc-football.ifrance.com/1980.html> (accessed January 20, 2010).

³ *Ibid.*

The eleven teams against which Dieppe played may have been of the same age category, but the ability level among the competition certainly varied. The Dieppe experience exemplifies the shift in focus from ability to age, as described in the previous chapter but with the reality that age divisions did not always erase differences in ability. Nonetheless, the use of ‘age’ as a basis, if not *the* defining criterion, laid the cornerstone of ‘youth football’ by separating it from the adult level. While it is first through ‘age’ that one can begin to interpret youth football, a second lens through which the game can be understood is ‘competition’.

Competition, or “a trial of ability in order to decide the superiority or comparative fitness of a number of candidates” as defined by the Oxford English Dictionary, necessitates a method of measurement or recording. The draw of competition has been irresistible to the modern sportsman. Going hand in hand with an intricate bureaucratic system of sporting administration, organised competition has been a fundamental aspect of the modern phenomenon and features among Guttmann’s seven defining characteristics of modern sport.⁴ Indeed, even in the isolated penitentiary environment of South Africa’s Robben Island during the most intense decades of the apartheid regime, the inmates’ pursuit of sport was inherently linked to a complex administrative apparatus with committees, leagues, rules and records of all competitive issues.⁵ For the political prisoners of South Africa who painstakingly kept score were children of modern sport and adherents, knowingly or not, of its obsession with quantification and records. The division of participants was not arbitrary or without some end. It was precisely *for* the purpose of organised competition, a principle not unfamiliar to those who were responsible for organised youth football in the early twentieth century school contests in France and America.

⁴ As defined by Guttmann, the seven characteristics that define modern sport from traditional sport are: secularism; equality of opportunity to compete and in conditions of competition; specialization and rules; rationalization; bureaucratic organization; quantification; and the quest for records. See Allen Guttmann, *From Ritual to Record* (NY: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 16.

⁵ Korr and Close recount that the first football outing lasted thirty minutes and no score was recorded. But quickly, the need for competition soon surpassed that for just play. Within two years of obtaining the prison warden’s authorization to play, the prisoners had organized a full scale competition with three divisions. The effort to systematize their sport in a particular way using structured competition was certainly not new to them and one of the criteria for separating competitors was not by age but by political affiliation. Charles Korr and Marvin Close, *More than just a game: Football v Apartheid*, (London: Collins, 2008), pp. 60-80.

Indeed, the creation of specific age categories outlined in the previous chapter can only be understood within the organised competitive structure they served. As such, the growing classification of players according to age into younger and more and more numerous subdivisions should be considered in parallel with the competitions in which youth actually played. Just as age was used to distinguish among players, classifying adults as ‘*séniors*’ and youth as ‘midgets’ or ‘*cadets*’, it was also the basis for defining separate ‘competition spaces’ for each category of player.

This chapter demonstrates how the general demarcation of youth football as distinct from the adult game on the basis of age was *reinforced* by a parallel delineation of competition that was reserved only for youth. This trend was accompanied by subsequent subdivisions into more and younger age levels. In the case of the *poussins* from UC Dieppois, they were the first in their age group at their club, but the competition in which they struggled so much was not the first in their region or country. Concretely speaking, what was this ‘competitive space’ and how did it evolve throughout the twentieth century in France and America?

From this departure point of “difficult beginnings”, it is the aim here to pose and address the ontological questions of youth competition. What was the nature of competition in youth football over the majority of the twentieth century? What kind of organisations participated? Were teams representative of an area, region or a specific social group? Was there a particular geography to youth competitions? When and how did these contests take place, within the educational or associative club structure, or within other ethnic, cultural, or religious settings? In short, who played whom, when and where?

The following section will not provide the definitive chronicle of youth football competitions, the research for which even a complete one-country account would be beyond the limits of this thesis. Instead, the focus here will be to sketch an understanding of the nature of some of the competitions and how they were organised. Were they school-based, club-based, or some mixture of the two? Were they

interscholastic or intra-muros? What was the organisational background and who were those in charge? What was the link, if any, between school, club and the national federation? In what kind of context – schools, social club structures or a nationalised federation for example – were these competitions administrated? Were these mainstream to society? How did the competitive space change over time as younger age groups arrived on the pitch? Ultimately, were they in competition with clubs for fields, youth players or scheduling?

This chapter will explore issues which range from the ethnic identity of immigrant communities to tension between club and school, in other words, among the competition organisers. This section will not address, however, the questions as to how they played and with what (e.g. the rules and equipment) and the link between the youth and elite level, issues which will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters. Rather, the objective will be to examine various artefacts of these ‘competitive spaces’ and propose initial avenues for understanding their nature.

It is not suggested here that all of youth football’s competitions for both countries can be summarized or qualified in the manner described below. Indeed, different types of competitions existed at different times and it will not be argued here that there was one master model for development or one predetermined route for competitions to follow. There were, however, some general tendencies which shaped youth competitions in both France and America.

At its core, this chapter is concerned with the nature and expansion of youth competition, in particular, as connected to the school, club and national federation. As will be demonstrated throughout this chapter, competitions flourished within schools and clubs at various times throughout the twentieth century in France and the United States. That much is incontestable. The very nature, emergence and growth of these competitions raised other issues however. For example, the president of the regional league in southwest France, Henri Gasqueton sought to minimize such tensions in his editorial dated in 1920 about the future of the game. This was consistent with his view

to establish competitions for both schools – non-existent there until then– and military outfits in parallel to those already in place for clubs:

“To want to make school and the military an enemy and a competitor of the club constitutes a profound error; for school and the military are but a stage in life through which everyone passes...”⁶

In the following years an approved competition was organized for school teams and linked to a national cup. So in response to the question as to whether the interests of school and club were opposed in the formative years of modern French football, the president of the *Ligue du Sud-Ouest* offered at least one vision of how and why the two could be resolved. Undercurrents such as these will be explored hereafter in the two national contexts in order to shed some light on the tensions of the competitive spaces and those who organised them.

In response to the above questions this chapter argues that there was a transition in France from *le football scolaire* to club-based football and explores the breakthrough of soccer into mainstream society through American school and club competition. This section explores the real stakes behind the scenes of youth competition, sometimes cultural, religious, or even political. On the surface, the ‘competitive spaces’ progressively reached younger and younger age groups in both countries. Consideration will be given to *le football scolaire* beginning in the inter-war years and the school competitions leading up to the 1960s. At the same time, this section will trace the development of competitions and the not insignificant phenomenon of the *école de football*. For the United States, the organisation of the game in American schools and the question of a national policy will be examined first. The focus will then turn to the issue of the nature of club competition, its organisers and the perception of this youth sport as foreign or ethnic, all through the lens of its oldest continuous youth club competition. Finally, the scene will shift to address the ‘youth soccer boom’ that took the competitive space by storm in the last third of the twentieth century.

⁶ *Ballon Rond*, 24 October 1920. To be sure Gasqueton was writing in a period of required male conscription during which virtually all men were required to complete military service.

Syntax in French youth football competitions – from “le football scolaire” to “l’école de football”, c.1920-c.1980

The future of Football in the South-West is intimately tied to the development of school sport...⁷
- from *Ballon Rond*, 1923

Students of language are generally taught the importance of grammar and syntax.⁸ Meaning in language often rests on, albeit not always entirely, diction and word order. Understanding the difference between *le football scolaire* and *l’école de football* during the period between 1920-1980 is no less a question of fundamental grammar. The former, ‘*le football scolaire*’, or translated as ‘scholastic football’, combines the noun, *football*, with its adjective, ‘*scolaire*’. The qualifier ‘*scolaire*’ is contextually specific and refers to a state of studying, a system or place of education. The noun it qualifies, ‘*football*’ is thus described by the adjective ‘*scolaire*’. It is football in a scholastic context.

The latter term, ‘*école de football*’, presents a complete role reversal. The noun, ‘*football*’, now incorporated in a qualifying prepositional phrase, describes the fundamental nature of the new noun, ‘*l’école*’, or the school. This shifts the previous context of school and football’s inclusion therein, to a new scenario in which football has become the actual object of study. From ‘*football at school*’, one has moved to the ‘*school for football*’. In other words, the playground has become classroom.

This mundane *explication de texte* underscores the key questions about who the organisers were and what the emphasis of the competition was. In this case, the linguistic change helps to illustrate the shift in the nature of school football in France and its competitions, beginning with the apparently “intimate” link between school sport and the future of French football as mentioned above in the opening quote from 1923. The bold proclamation comes from a lengthy piece on the front page of *Ballon Rond* in advance of the annual *scolaires* match pitting the best players from state schools against those from independent educational establishments. Was the future of

⁷ *Ibid.*, 17 March 1923.

⁸ In the case of the author, much is owed to two individuals: to Mrs. Davin for whom dissecting sentences was more an art form than a rudimentary scholastic exercise, and to the Professoressa Johansson-Santini who elevated the understanding of ‘*il congiuntivo*’ to its new status as a Platonic higher good.

French football really intimately tied to school sport? Or was this simply an anecdotal view in passing?

The following section investigates *le football scolaire* and attempts to address the questions put forth in the introduction. What kind of school-related competitions existed? Did the nature of *football scolaire* change, and if yes, how? The charted course begins first in the south-west of France during the inter-war years, continues east to draw on examples from the Mediterranean region into the 1950s and finally expands across a variety of regions for the last twenty years of the specified period.

Scolaires in the French South-West in the early 1920s

The south-west of France in the 1920s is interesting as a starting point for a number of reasons. Well-known throughout the twentieth century as a bastion of rugby, the region withstood the domination of the association game. Coming out of the First World War, a national football hegemony was not in place and French football had only just consolidated its national federation and regional league structure in 1919 and 1920. The organisation of football competitions for schools existed in the south-west both under this umbrella but also in parallel.

Sport, like education, was an ideological battleground for diverging views with organisations called *patronages* formed around political and religious affiliation, an outgrowth of the tensions after the separation of Church and State under the Third Republic.⁹ It is precisely for these reasons that the region is valuable as a case-study as this territory was hot with propaganda of supporters of the association game who desired its development. In these formative inter-war years, school football, or *le football scolaire*, was not immune to this climate inherited from the turn of the century's Republican versus Catholic ideological war as it was played out on the

⁹ Laurence Munoz recounts how the FGSPF (Fédération Gymnastique et Sportive des Patronages de France) represented the proponents of one side, the Church, and how, through a sporting federation, they sought to appeal to the next generation of young people in the new post-1905 society. See Laurence Munoz, 'La fédération des patronages : lien institutionnel entre le sport et le catholicisme en France (1898-2000)', paper given at the *Sports, éducation physique et mouvements affinitaires au XXe siècle* conference on 31 October – 2 November 2002, Cergy.

sporting fields of France. In contrast to these divisive trends, however, there were also forces that played a centralising role in pushing for unity and a nationalistic idea of ‘French football’ which ultimately prevailed.¹⁰

Under the regional league, the *Ligue du Sud-Ouest* or LSO, contests between *scolaires* teams in these early years took the form of leagues and knock-out cups and in some cases qualified the winner for a further regional or national event. The school game was split between those institutions which were members of the LSO and the national federation, and those called ‘*libres*’ or free. Considering the entirety of the school game through the eyes of *Ballon Rond*, the official media bulletin for the regional league, is impossible despite its value as a consistent source during this period. There was another sector of school football, the *scolaires libres*, that existed in parallel but to which *Ballon Rond* did not dedicate the same level of detail. The weekly only provided match announcements or post-game reports rather than the inner workings of the committees and federations behind the organisation of the *scolaires libres*.

The dividing line was the school’s affiliation either to the State, and thus ‘*laïque*’ or secular, or its status as independent and tied to the Church. Breaching the frontier was not impossible as evidenced by annual matches between representative sides and the active presence of individuals on both sides of the boundary. The annual “*scolaires libres contre scolaires laïques*” matches generally took place on Thursdays sometimes as early as late January or as late as April and teams were composed of a selection of the best players from the two different types of schools.

With regard to the LSO’s competition, the initial organisation of *football scolaire* was not accomplished without some difficulty and was not even listed in the initial committee structure for the start of the 1920-21 season.¹¹ The newly formed

¹⁰ Wahl has explained the processes behind the formation of the French football federation and the heated political battles between the secular Republicans and the Catholic patronages that ultimately ended with the formation of the FFFA in 1919. See Alfred Wahl, ‘Les patronages et le football (1895-1914)’, in *Sport, Culture et Religion : Les patronages catholiques (1898-1998)*, Actes du colloque de Brest, 24, 25, 26 September, 1998, pp. 193-99.

¹¹ *Ballon Rond*, 18 September 1920. The initial committees included ‘Sporting and Calendar’, ‘Referees’, ‘Fields’, and the final one, ‘Selection’, destined to identify top talent and oversee the league’s representative team.

committee for schools' football made a call for potential participating institutions in the autumn of 1920 and by late November a format was established for a mini tournament between six schools, four in Bordeaux and two others from the towns of Cadillac and La Réole.¹² The latter are some sixty to seventy kilometres from the Aquitaine citadel and as such the final saw the winner in Bordeaux face the winner of the provincial match-up.

The paper did not always record the scores for that season's matches, but the major talking point was the non-participation of the *scolaires* tournament champions, the '*lycée de Bordeaux*' or '*Muguets*' as they were known, in the national French championship, the *Championnat des Académies*. The report from the LSO General Assembly on the 4th of May explained how the central committee in Paris was at fault for the non-registration of the south-western champions.¹³ The following season appears to have been the exception to the '*Muguets*' or '*Lilies of the Valley*' dominance over this period as the '*école de navigation de Bordeaux*' represented the south-west in the national competition.¹⁴ The '*Muguets*' returned quickly to the top but regional supremacy was not enough. In 1924 the '*Muguets*' went to Paris and returned as national champions in the '*Coupe des Académies*'.¹⁵

Over this same period '*scolaires libres*' matches are abundantly recorded though the structure of the competition itself is more difficult to decipher. These often appear under the heading of the URPSO or the '*Union Régional des Patronages du Sud-Ouest*' and sometimes as part of the UGSEL or '*Union Gymnastique et Sportive de l'Enseignement Libre*'.¹⁶ Elsewhere the reports are grouped under the generic label, '*scolaires libres*', like the summary of the opening series of matches for the 1922-23 season which began on January 18 with two age categories common during this period,

¹² *Ibid.*, 27 November 1920.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 21 May 1921.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 11 March 1922.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 24 May 1924. This tournament effectively called the 'Academy Cup' brought together the regional winners of the various *Académies*, the organisational umbrella for the governance of schools at the regional level in France.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22 December 1923. The latter was printed on several occasions as U.G.S.F.L. but when cross checking with various other sources no such organisation could be found. For more on the UGSEL, see François Hochepped, 'Le Congrès de l'Union Générale et Sportive de l'Enseignement Libre : Pentecôte 1942', in Pierre Arnaud, *Le sport et les français pendant l'Occupation, 1940-1944, Volume 2*, p. 191.

the *juniors* and the *minimes*.¹⁷ While competitions only appear under these two age categories, one participating club, Tivoli A.C., presumably originating from the Jesuit-run *lycée* by the same name, had four teams listed as (1), (2), *juniors*, and *minimes* so it is unclear as to how many divisions existed.¹⁸ While it is unclear if there were further regional or national competitions for the '*scolaires libres*', there was at least on one occasion between 1920 and 1925 a representative match between selected regional players and top '*scolaires libres*' from Paris.¹⁹ This limited reporting could be a reflection of *Ballon Rond* as the official print medium for the LSO and its affiliated members and thus an unwritten bias for reporting official competition.

This potential bias comes out on several occasions. The weekly dated the 18th of September 1920 was the first re-issue after a one year hiatus as a different periodical under the name *Football Association*. In the first column the editors boldly proclaim that:

“Ballon Rond is not the organ of another newspaper, party or club, but the FREE TRIBUNE of all ‘soccers’ [sic]. Its goal is but to make known and develop ASSOCIATION FOOTBALL. As a result, it counts on the collaboration of ALL.”²⁰

Further down, the text reads in bold characters:

“Ballon Rond does not do politics... It will not start vain polemics foreign to sport, and will not respond to these slanderers. There will be no enemies... In sport, there are only loyal adversaries.”²¹

Several years later, as the secretary of the LSO commission for school football, Mr. Talbot provided a report for the league’s general assembly of the 1923-24 season. As part of his plan to improve things for the future, Talbot wrote that the league should consider looking after all school-related football, university students, secondary and technical schools. He urged the LSO to:

¹⁷ *Ballon Rond*, 27 January 1923.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 10 March 1923. The lycée de Tivoli sits currently nearby a large park which is within less than a kilometre of the Caudéran neighbourhood of Bordeaux. All the mentioned Tivoli matches were played at what was called *Parc Caudéran* which strengthens the hypothesis that the school referred to in *Ballon Rond* still exists today.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 28 April 1923.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 18 September 1920. Note the use of the term ‘soccers’ to refer to those who are not playing rugby football.

²¹ *Ibid.*

“try to attract into our League students from free establishments [the ‘*écoles libres*’] of our city and region, so as to group, under one direction, all the scholastic sporting youth of the South-West. The *scolaires libres* play football under the control of a private federation, there may be grounds to come to an understanding with this federation.”²²

Despite apparent divisions, there were those who laboured on both sides of the organisational boundary, for the *scolaires* and the *scolaires libres*. The inaugural secretary of the LSO’s school committee for 1920-21 was a young man by the name of Dargein who, considering his written contributions, was energetic and enthusiastic. In the call for participating school teams, R. Dargein wrote “Hurry yourselves [to sign up] for the triumph of our beautiful cause!”²³ In parallel to his work within the LSO, it would appear that he served on the other side as well. A correspondent named Roger Dargein wrote regular pieces regarding the independent *patronages* movement under the URPSO.²⁴ Further evidence for his involvement with the *scolaires libres* comes from the announcement for the annual *scolaires* versus *scolaires libres* match between representative sides of the LSO and the non-affiliated schools. Listed as a forward in the line-up for the USGEL representative side was none other than a R. Dargein.²⁵

Moving from the *scolaire* to the club side, a Dargein appears regularly between 1921 and 1923 in the line-up of one of the most frequently cited clubs V.G.A.M. (Vie au Grand Air du Médoc); though as no first initial is given it is not absolutely certain if this is the same individual.²⁶ Another reference to Dargein, though again lacking a first initial, is found among the list of aspiring young players under twenty-two years of age in an editorial about the 1920-21 season and he is described as “strong, but a bit slow, that his nonchalance also handicaps”.²⁷ Final piece of his activity in the *scolaires* puzzle was the mention of R. Dargein as the captain of the Tivoli A.C. first team which

²² *Ibid.*, 24 May 1924.

²³ *Ibid.*, 30 October 1920.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 24 October 1920. Issue number 58 is dated Saturday 24 October but this is a typographical error as the 24th was in fact Sunday and so it should read 23 October.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 29 January 1921.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 5 March 1921. While not conclusive, Dargein always appears with either his club, V.G.A.M., or as R. Dargein with the school team Tivoli A.C., one of the independent ‘*libre*’ schools. No other Dargein appears with other clubs or school sides. In addition, at least one of the other members of the teams in which Dargein played was also included in the 1921 *scolaires* versus *scolaires libres* match.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 4 June 1921.

is noted as “one of the best *scolaires* teams in Bordeaux”.²⁸ High praise indeed, but since the article was penned anonymously, and given that an R. Dargein regularly reported on ‘*scolaires libres*’, one is left to wonder whether the anonymous correspondent and the Tivoli captain were not one and the same young man.

As a protagonist Dargein is interesting as he was among those who apparently straddled the *libres* and *laïques* footballing worlds. Just before being named to the LSO’s *scolaires* committee in October of 1920 he pleaded for reconciliation between these two sporting movements:

“It is necessary however to ask a question that will seem naturally abnormal to all real sportsmen of the South-West. There still exists an abyss between the “libres” and the Ligue du Sud-Ouest. The dirigeants of the *scolaires libres* do not want to allow their “pupilles” to play in teams other than those of the establishment. But the majority of reasonable people would have the *scolaires* play on Thursday “at home” and on Sunday in the Clubs, since it is absolutely established that a player cannot make serious progress in a *scolaires* team. Let the schoolkid play on Thursday “at home” and on Sunday “at the Club”, that’s what needs to be achieved. The Ligue du Sud-Ouest which seems to want to be interested in sport has understandably this season a wonderful opportunity to remedy this dispute. The *scolaires* have some excellent elements. For pity’s sake, in the name of Sport, let the Ligue intervene and thanks to a useful and skilful mediation, the dirigeants of the *libres* no longer disqualify poor true sportsmen on the banal pretext that they will have played in a real club a real league match, and no longer sanction them with these bloody punishments which can make our young schoolkids have horror of the beautiful sport of association football. Ligue du Sud-Ouest of association football, I beg you to speak.”²⁹

This is perhaps what gained him the position of inaugural LSO *scolaires* secretary in the following weeks.

Despite his commitment and enthusiasm, he was unceremoniously relieved of his secretarial responsibilities less than a year after having been named.³⁰ It is unclear what was exactly at the origin of the conflict. The big issue in school football in the spring of 1921 was the non-registration of the season’s regional scholastic champions, the ‘*Muguets*’, for the national championship but this was clearly viewed as resulting

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 12 November 1921.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 2 October 1920.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 2 April 1921.

from Parisian incompetence and Dargein's name was not mentioned.³¹ Rather, it appears that the problem was some unexplained disagreement between Dargein and the president of the LSO's *scolaires* committee, Mr. Baudry.³² The *scolaires* committee work was essentially finished for the season and so no replacement was nominated.

Notwithstanding any potentially justified reproach to Dargein for his altercation with Baudry, the following season the LSO *scolaires* committee suffered from the absence of its former secretary who appears to have been the motor for the committee's activities. Dargein himself wrote a scathing editorial in mid-November of 1921 lambasting the LSO for its lack of action with regard to the *scolaires*. Not only had no official call been made for teams for the 1921-22 season, in contrast to the prior season when things had begun moving in October, but Dargein bemoaned the fact that the LSO had yet to even name a committee for a season already underway.³³ Ultimately, the LSO did get the *scolaire* league up and running in 1921-22 but with only five teams as opposed to the six the prior year.³⁴

During his career as a *scolaire*, Dargein was certainly not the only individual to wear multiple hats, but his story demonstrates some of the politics of voluntary sporting institutions and the difficulty with which school football was managed in this early period. In addition, it alludes to the transition that occurred as the younger generation moved into the managing roles as club, league and federation *dirigeants*. Indeed, Dargein was to move on to bigger things after playing regularly for V.G.A.M. until May of 1923 when his name appears among the probable departures for the end of the season, possibly because of military service.³⁵ He reappeared in Paris in 1926 while

³¹ *Ibid.*, 23 April 1921.

³² *Ibid.*, 2 April 1921.

³³ *Ibid.*, 12 November 1921.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 December 1921.

³⁵ *Ballon Rond.*, 19 May 1923. The text is slightly unclear but military service may well have been the reason for Dargein's absence in later years. Valetton, another previous *scolaire* player of note, played against Dargein in one of the annual *scolaires* versus *scolaires* libres matches and thus the two can be considered of a similar age. Both Dargein and Valetton were stated to be among those on their way out that summer with Dargein said to be head east possibly to the Alsace. Valetton apparently only changed clubs but not cities as he reappeared in Bordeaux at S.C. Bastidienne in the following years and was noted with regret and sarcasm as "having the most talent but using the least of it". Dargein disappears entirely from the Bordeaux football scene between 1923 and 1925. For Valetton, see *Ballon Rond.*, 10 January 1925.

playing with the C.A. Paris – he was listed as a former LSO league capped player – which is possibly where he met individuals who led to his future career in sport administration.³⁶

Despite his early frustrations with the LSO, Dargein was apparently a young man made for football administration. Working for Peugeot in the Bordeaux region he was solicited by Sam Wyler, Jean-Pierre Peugeot's right-hand man at the automobile factory's central offices in Sochaux, to conduct a survey in the surrounding Franche-Comté area to gauge the response to a plan to launch a professional football team in the late 1920s.³⁷ The club's 50th anniversary book paid homage to Dargein's role. The former LSO *scolaire* made the most of his opportunity in his new life in Sochaux and stayed on as the club's first sporting director, responsible for player recruitment and was closely involved in the discussions with Henri Delaunay and Jules Rimet of the FFF leading up to the acceptance of professionalism.³⁸

After this experience in the professional game, it appears that he rediscovered a passion for the youth game as he was one of the two delegates from the professional clubs on the first organisational committee for the FFF's newly launched Coupe Nationale des Juniors (Coupe Emmanuel Gambardella) in 1955.³⁹ Probably solicited for his considerable prior experience, he served for several years on the Commission Centrale de Propagande et d'Information from 1964-65 until the end of the decade.⁴⁰ With Paul Cabaud from Lyon, Dargein was one of the longest serving members of the committee for the youth game and thus was undoubtedly intimately involved in the discussions and planning for the introduction of the *poussins* age group in 1968 and the

³⁶ *Ouest-Éclair*, 23 December 1923.

³⁷ *Les 50 ans du F.C. Sochaux: d'hier à aujourd'hui 1928-1978*, (Montbéliard: Presse de la S.M.I., 1978), pp.8-9.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11. The 1931-32 Coupe de Sochaux, a precursor to the official adoption of professionalism included among its committee that year, honorary president Jules Rimet from the FFFA. Wyler was the committee's secretary and Dargein the deputy secretary. See *Ouest-Éclair*, 1 December 1931.

³⁹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire*, 1955-56, p. 19. The two representatives of the G.C.A. (Groupement des Clubs Autorisés) were Dargein and Georges Verju. By 1962-63 the committee had been merged with the Commission Centrale des Jeunes.

⁴⁰ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire*, 1964-65, p. 17. He was no longer listed on the committee in 1969.

major change to all categories for 1971-72.⁴¹ While not a player of national or international reputation, Dargein was recognised for his contributions to the sport when he was awarded the FFF's médaille d'or in 1966 along with other highly recognised names in French football.⁴²

As regards other 1920s *scolaires*, some were good players but never rose above regional renown and selection in the annual *scolaires* versus *scolaires libres*. Aside from Dargein, who continued in the running of the game and administration of youth competitions well beyond his days as a youth competitor, other youth were not all French while still others did reach national acclaim in the days before the 'Black, Blanc, Beur' discussed elsewhere by Geoff Hare.⁴³ In the 1923 annual *scolaires libres* versus LSO, the best player was Novoa who was noted as playing for several different teams. He played as a *scolaire* at Maîtrise Notre-Dame and was listed as playing with Vigo F.C. and the well-known V.G.A.M. Novoa's foreign status was clearly a source of regret for the correspondent who, after lauding him with praise as the best player, wrote "what a shame he is Spanish".⁴⁴ Playing directly opposite Novoa in that same *scolaires* match was another local player, Disdet who went on to national recognition.

As a member of the '*Muguets*' team, Disdet finished the 1923-24 season as French *scolaires* champion.⁴⁵ The scholastic champion continued to play in the South-West for Pellegrue during the following season and he was even stated to have represented France as a *scolaire*.⁴⁶ It is a pity that the reference to Disdet as an *international scolaire* is only made in passing and no further evidence in *Ballon Rond* is available to confirm this. Disdet had already been selected several years before to represent the entire South-West region in an international match between a representative side and a *scolaires* team from Guipuzcoa, Spain, planned for the end of

⁴¹ Dargein served on the committee from the mid 1950s until 1970 or '71. From 1970 or '71 he was no longer on the Commission Centrale des Jeunes but had moved over to the Commission Nationale de Promotion du Football as the delegate for the football pools and by 1976 was no longer involved in any of the FFF's committees. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire*, 1971-72, pp. 24-5.

⁴² Among the thirty individuals honoured by the FFF in 1966 were Jean Sadoul, longtime administrator and players Robert Budzynski, Jean Djorkaeff, Philippe Gondet and Jacky Simon who all played in the 1966 World Cup. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire*, 1968-69, p. 307.

⁴³ See Hare, *Football in France*, pp. 134-9.

⁴⁴ *Ballon Rond*, 31 March 1923.

⁴⁵ *Ballon Rond*, 19 April 1924.

⁴⁶ *Ballon Rond*, 24 January 1925.

the 1922-1923 season.⁴⁷ It is unclear, however, if the match actually took place, so maybe he was only an international on paper.⁴⁸

Returning to the organisation of *scolaire* football, the LSO was not the only regional league to struggle. The neighbouring *Ligue des Charentes* also had problems organising a league for school teams. The minutes of the league's meeting from the 26th of December 1920, as they were reprinted in *Ballon Rond* (which often reported on its neighbours) recorded "serious difficulties...in the organisation of this championship" but noted that the league would send one final letter in order to recruit school teams for the 1920-21 season.⁴⁹ The fact that there was a mention of another youth tournament organised by the *Ligue des Charentes*, the 'Patrick Hennesey' (more likely 'Hennesey') Cup for under eighteen players, during the same meeting suggests that even if the school game was struggling, there were other youth competitions ongoing. Was there a specific reason for these early difficulties aside from the political tensions of the organisations? Perhaps something of a more practical nature was at the source, but the weekly provided no answers.

At a time when the school week, and even less the work week, was not limited to Monday to Friday followed by the modern two-day weekend, much of *scolaires* football appears to have taken place on Thursday, the day or afternoon when school was off.⁵⁰ In theory, this should certainly have made it easy to reconcile club and school since the club game was principally a Sunday activity. Yet it appears that the calendar was in fact a point of contention and football in the South-West faced this challenge all while fighting for its sporting survival. While most *scolaires* match reports between 1920 and 1925 fail to specify the date of the contest, the many announcements of upcoming games or calls from *scolaires* clubs seeking opponents show a preference for

⁴⁷ *Ballon Rond*, 31 March 1923. Disdet was named among those selected from both the *scolaires* and *scolaires libres* as a true representative side of all *scolaires* in the region.

⁴⁸ Although the FFF does not record any official international youth matches prior to 1949, there were apparently representative junior teams which played in the 1920s. Disdet was certainly too old by then, but there was a junior match between French and Belgian sides in 1929. See *L'Echo Sportif de l'Oranie*, 3 November 1929.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 1 January 1921.

⁵⁰ The traditional weekly date of Thursday was in place from 1882 for primary school and from 1945 for secondary school. This remained the case until 1972 when the government officially changed the mid-week rest day from Thursday to Wednesday. See *Arrêté 12 mai 1972 sur l'interruption des classes au cours de la semaine scolaire*, (Journal officiel du 17 mai 1972).

Thursdays. This follows the initial wish of the LSO president when he first announced in 1920 the underlying principles of the *scolaires* competition to be launched:

“1° Scolaires and military societies [teams] will only take part in contests officially organised for their intent and never enter into rivalry with clubs; 2° No official scolaire or military event will take place on Sunday. Thursday will be specially reserved for them.”⁵¹

The neighbouring *Ligue des Charentes* also used Thursdays, but not exclusively, as in some cases return matches occurred on Sundays.⁵² For the LSO, however, Sunday was strictly for club play and this appears to have been of the utmost importance. In the spring of 1922 when the national federation wrote to the LSO with instructions that *scolaires* competitions should be played on Sunday, the LSO responded in energetic protest. The LSO’s league bureau minutes noted that the general secretary would write back to the federation and ask that all such matches take place on Thursdays.⁵³ Without agreement on these Thursday matches the LSO *scolaires* champion would be unauthorized by the LSO to compete in the national finals. Unfortunately, *Ballon Rond* offers no record of the outcome of the debate between the LSO and the national federation regarding the requirement of Sunday competition for *scolaires*.

Why was the Sunday competition date such a point of contention for the LSO? It may well have had more to do with the oval ball than the round one. The name of the weekly, *Ballon Rond*, was not a complex metaphor and the clear differentiation from a *ballon oval*, or rugby ball, was a perpetual reminder that the association code was not the only game in town. Furthermore, as noted by Bodis, the two games had a history of political divergences in the south-west and the handling game was associated with the Republican anti-clerical movement and was even banned in the seminaries.⁵⁴ While the competition faced by the *les soccers* was more a part of the subtext of the weekly, it was explicitly referred to in the announcements of big matches including use of terms like “Propaganda” in the heading or repeated phrases such as “the advancement of our

⁵¹ *Ballon Rond*, 24 October 1920.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 15 January 1921.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 18 March 1922.

⁵⁴ According to Bodis the political affiliation in rugby weakened and had largely disappeared by the Second World War. See Jean-Pierre Bodis, ‘Les catholiques et le rugby, en France et ailleurs : des attitudes contrastées’, in *Sport, Culture et Religion : Les patronages catholiques (1898-1998)*, Actes du colloque de Brest, 24, 25, 26 September, 1998, pp. 201-9.

cause”. Dargein himself hinted at this competition between oval and round games in his summary of the 1920 *patronages* football season:

“I am pleased to announce in closing the splendid resurrection of association football in our Patronages in the Bazadaise region [a term for the south-east part of the Gironde]. Honour to these youth who want to make **our sport** triumph over a “rugby” too much spread in this region. Honour to the dirigeants of the Union for this sporting endeavour which, this season, has won much success, **so legitimate** after so much effort.”⁵⁵

The debate about the *scolaires* and playing on Thursdays may have had something to do with this inter-sport and political-religious competition. With a limited pool of players for the dribbling game, supporters of football could not afford to further subdivide the talent pool between club and school if both were to play on Sundays. The *scolaires* teams themselves already suffered at times from losing players for representative matches as exemplified by *St. Genès* whose excuse for losing 2-0 to *La Flèche* was explained by the obligation of giving up several key players to the *Scolaires Libres* side who played against the LSO *Scolaires* on the same day.⁵⁶

The weekly makes only passing references to rugby but Augustin and Bodis provide an important reminder of the strength of the running game in this region especially in the period building up to the 1920s.⁵⁷ Indeed, some of the important schools listed for rugby were the same institutions which also participated in the LSO *scolaires* competitions.⁵⁸ Thus, when contextualising the debates printed in *Ballon Rond*, it is important to recognise the effects of inter-sport competition and the background of Church-vs-State politics which appear to have been a preponderant reality in the operations of football in the South-West. This is probably best exemplified in a speech by M. Baudry, LSO vice-president, at the banquet which followed an LSO versus *Ligue des Charentes* representative match and gala dinner in the spring of 1923. After the traditional congratulations and lauding of the players on

⁵⁵ *Ballon Rond*, 5 December 1920. Bold lettering in the original text.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 5 February 1921.

⁵⁷ See Jean-Pierre Augustin and Jean-Pierre Bodis, ‘Le rugby français, ses champs d’action et son autonomie jusqu’en 1939’, in Thierry Terret, *Histoire des Sports*, (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1996), pp. 87-100.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97. The list includes the ‘*Muguets*’, *La Réole* or *La Violette* which all can be found among *scolaires* competitions listed in *Ballon Rond*.

both sides, Baudry addressed the visitors from the *Charentes* and spoke directly of the difficulties faced by supporters of football in organising the sport during this period:

“May you never know the ill-fated undoings of sporting politics, of the struggle of individuals. I do not know if you are like us, but we are obliged to envisage vast reform in our organisation, as our scope is such that our current body has need of enlargement. Literally crushed by the weight of a labour greater each day, we are obliged to call on new collaborators. These facts are signs that our cause is useful and interesting. But let us not sleep on our laurels prematurely gathered; our adversaries from rugby, who see their accomplishments slightly in decline in these recent times, do everything to divide us. Let us not fall into their trap. Let us not give them weapons. We shall understand that our interest is to group together, to feel united, if we want the improvement of our regional football and its greater and further diffusion.”⁵⁹

Even taking into account the rhetorical language common in the writing of this period, Baudry’s speech underscores the challenges faced in the organisation of scholastic football competitions. These difficulties were part of the inherited political and ideological battleground of sport from the turn of the twentieth century that shaped the backdrop of inter-sport competition. Yet there were those who worked across the different factions in order to accomplish the essential task for interested participants and actually organise competitions. As the 1920s gave way and the older *scolaires* moved on in life, the next generation of players grew younger.

‘Les petits écoliers’ – younger school competitions on both sides of the Mediterranean – from the 1930s to the 1960s

The groundwork for *scolaires* football was laid, or at least solidified, thanks to the work of organisations like the LSO, the URPSO or the UGSEL during the years following the First World War. But what was the state of *scolaires* football beyond the confines of the south-west? What kind of school competitions existed in the region near the Mediterranean? From the evidence in the 1930s, it should be noted that, in contrast to the prior decade in the region around Bordeaux, the material refers to *scolaires* of a different age. While much of the earlier period in the south-west covered primarily those under twenty, the next decade included a younger section of the population in

⁵⁹ *Ballon Rond*, 19 May 1923.

competitions. The OSSU (Office du sport scolaire et universitaire) was founded in 1937 under the Popular Front regime of the Third Republic, but the following examples demonstrate already-existing sport competitions even before this national office.⁶⁰

A first example comes from a school competition organised by the *Union Scolaire Sportive de Nice* in 1930. The article covered the final of the inter-school tourney played between the *écoles* Vernier and Saint-Sylvestre on a Thursday morning in April. As regards the participants, on several occasions they are referred to as *petits écoliers*, or loosely translated as little schoolboys and elsewhere the correspondent wrote about *jeunes écoliers*, or young schoolboys, and even uses the more maternal word *poussins* for little chicks. The best player of the final, Masséna, was praised for playing with “an intelligence rare for a footballer so young”.⁶¹ A report from several years later on an extensive tournament for schools in the area around Nice offers further evidence for this younger segment.

Apparently in its ninth year since the inaugural edition with nine schools in 1928, the tourney brought together some forty-nine schools and over six-hundred participants for the 1936 edition.⁶² The photos provided of some of the finalists and champions suggest that these boys were significantly younger than the under twenty age group frequently reported during the 1920s in *Ballon Rond*. Most striking is a photo of one small boy next to two towering professionals from nearby O.G.C. Nice who were on hand to help with the tournament.⁶³ While the term used in the headline, ‘*scolaires*’, is the same as in the south-west a decade prior, the age focus of the actual competition appears to have come down.

While Thursday appears to continue to be an important day of the week for *scolaires* football, there is no mention of a distinction in Nice between *scolaires* and *scolaires libres* as was the case in the south-west. The spring tourney in 1936 was for the *écoles publiques de Nice*, and made no mention of another category of scholastic

⁶⁰ Crubellier, *l'enfance et la jeunesse*, p. 203.

⁶¹ *La Côte d'Azur Sportive*, 20 April, 1930. *Ibid.*

⁶² *Match*, 10 March 1936.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 18 August 1936. The headline read ‘LE CHALLENGE « MATCH » des scolaires azuréens’.

institutions.⁶⁴ If the evidence of competitions for younger boys near the Mediterranean is convincing, a quick survey of thirteen photos provided by some *scolaires* teams ranging all across the country reminds the reader that this was not at the expense of the older age group which had not disappeared.⁶⁵

In the years after World War II, inter-school competition continued and even across the sea in French Algeria where competitions had been thriving since the start of the twentieth century. Didier Rey has recounted how the sport flourished among a diverse population of Muslims, French *pieds-noirs*, Jews and a prominent number of Spanish immigrants.⁶⁶ However, he has said virtually nothing about the youngest players across the Mediterranean, the most famous of which may be writer Albert Camus whose photo as a *junior* at Racing Universitaire d'Alger in the 1920s was featured on the cover of his autobiographical novel published posthumously by his daughter.⁶⁷ A number of examples from various newspaper reports, photos and oral testimony help fill in this gap. For instance, the online archive of the association of former members of *Club Athlétique Liberté*, known as *CALO*, offers at least one visual reference to a school competition in North Africa. The team photo of the *école Pasteur* is stated to be from 1949 and this appears to be a more than reasonable conjecture given the style of dress. The image is accompanied by a short recollection including the names of all eleven players in the photo and describes the competitions for which the institution's director served as *sélectionneur* to pick the school's representative side.⁶⁸

Other Franco-Algerian associations supply additional examples of school-based football in this period. The Mekerra archive which covers the city of Sidi-Bel-Abbès includes an article from the newspaper *l'Echo d'Oran*. The clipping describes tour taken by the school team from the *Collège moderne* across the Mediterranean to Nice; a successful tour as they defeated the *Lycée de Nice* and the *juniors* from the professional

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 10 March 1936.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 26 May 1931. These include Saint-Aignan (in Brittany), Millau (near Montpellier), Grenoble, Saintes (just off the Atlantic coast), Sens (near Paris), and Amiens (in the northern Picardie region).

⁶⁶ For a review of the origins of the game and clubs in Oranie, see Didier Rey, 'Naissance et affirmation du football en Oranie Coloniale (1897-1918)', in Didier Rey, ed., *Football en Méditerranée occidentale 1900-1975*, (Ajaccio: Editions Alain Piazzola, 2010), pp. 79-113.

⁶⁷ Albert Camus, *Le Premier Homme*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1994).

⁶⁸ Club Athlétique Liberté, *École Pasteur*, retrieved from 'Les Anciens du CALO', <http://anciensducalo.free.fr/annees4.html> (accessed January 19, 2010).

club O.G.C. Nice.⁶⁹ The clipping is accompanied by a comment from one of the boys who participated in the tour and later played professionally for Nice, Jean-Paul Lacasa. According to him the latter match was not just *juniors* but actually against a number of amateurs who played with the professional side.⁷⁰ Bathed in nostalgic hindsight, such memories assist in reconstructing the past even if they should be read with critical distance.

In parallel to these competitions, more or less organized and for what appears to be an age group in between the ones mentioned in the previous paragraphs, the national competition – *la Coupe des Académies* – for the *lycées* and *collèges* mentioned in the south-west in the 1920s continued during the post-war years. The final of what is likely to have been the regional tournament for the Mediterranean region was played on Thursday, the 27th of March 1952, according to a photo from the ‘Charles Andreani’ album of the online Corsican football archive.⁷¹ The notes from an interview of Andreani describe the player’s recollections of a wet day and a pitch without much grass on which “our shoes stuck to the claylike grass”.⁷² Andreani’s memory appears to concord with the photo of the team on the matchday where the grass surrounding the playing surface abruptly ends upon crossing the white lines and entering the pitch.⁷³ The line-up is written on what is almost certainly the back of the scanned photo and lists Andreani among the eleven starters.⁷⁴ Born on 23 January 1936 Andreani would have

⁶⁹ *L’Echo d’Oran*, ‘Les footballeurs du Collège Moderne honorent le football algérien’, in <http://www.mekerra.fr/pages/ecoles/leclerc/page%20football%20nice%20lycee%20leclerc%20sidi%20bel%20abbes.html> (accessed April 2, 2010).

⁷⁰ Having interviewed Lacasa during the course of this research, it is clear that the tendency is towards nostalgia and some exaggeration. As such, and despite Lacasa’s undisputed technical level as a former professional, comments such as these which are made forty years later should be interpreted with caution. Interview with Jean-Paul Lacasa, April 23, 2010.

⁷¹ Unnamed photo, in Album Charles Andreani, http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-00380-album-charles-andreani_6811.html (accessed March 5, 2010).

⁷² Unnamed handwritten interview notes, in Album Charles Andreani, http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-00380-album-charles-andreani_6811.html (accessed March 5, 2010).

⁷³ Unnamed photo, in Album Charles Andreani.

⁷⁴ *FINALE DU CHAMPIONNAT D’AÇCADEMIE*, in Album Charles Andreani, http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-00380-album-charles-andreani_6811.html (accessed March 5, 2010). The spelling of ‘*académie*’ with the second letter ‘c’ as crossed out (ç) is exactly as it was written by hand on the photo and may reflect the Italian influences in Corsica since the word *accademia*. When comparing the two images, the team photo and the scan of what appears to be the reverse, both bear the same central fold and tear marks. In addition, the imprint of the ‘X’ which appears just below Andreani on the team photo (presumably added later to indicate where he was on the photo) is

been sixteen at the time and this would have placed him in the second year *cadet* age range.⁷⁵ This is strong evidence to argue that even if school-based competitions appeared for younger age groups from at least the 1930s, the older groups continued to contest for the *Championnat d'Académie* in regional and probably national competition into the early 1950s.

Two final news articles, also from the vast online Corsican football archive, cover inter-school football competition into the decade of the 1960s. Both articles are assigned to the 1960s though without specific dates but most likely come from either the 1963-64 or 1964-65 season. In neither article does the reporter use the term 'scolaires' but rather employs the terms 'minimes' for the older of the two age groups and 'benjamins' for the younger.⁷⁶ When recounting the *minimes* final, the correspondent describes one player as twelve years old which presents more evidence for continued school competitions for younger and younger age groups.⁷⁷ At the same time as more age layers were added to scholastic competitions during the period from the end of World War II to the late 1960s, the seeds were being sown for another important development outside the school environment. Preparation for the competitive setting at the youngest ages shifted from school to the club at *l'école de football*.

Football goes to school - l'école de football between the 1950s and 1980s

As discussed above, between the 1920s and 1960s school and football in France established a link through inter-school competition locally, regionally and nationally. The nature of this link was impermanent however. Gradually the relationship between

clearly visible on the reverse scan opposite and equidistant from the central fold. There can only be microscopic doubts that the images come from the same source.

⁷⁵ Album Charles Andreani, http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-00380-album-charles-andreani_6811.html (accessed March 5, 2010).

⁷⁶ 'Le Challenge U.S.E.P. "NICE-MATIN" GAUDIN REALISE LE DOUBLE EN FINALES DE LA VILLE DE BASTIA' and 'MINIMES : L'école Saint-Joseph de Bastia trop forte pour le C.E.G. d'Ajaccio', in Album José Graziani, http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-graziani-jose-album-n-32_3587.html?pn=5 (accessed November 12, 2010). The scanned articles are both from the 'Album José Graziani'. Several signs, including the player's birthdate in 1950, point to the school articles dating from either 1963-64 or 1964-65.

⁷⁷ 'Le Challenge U.S.E.P. "NICE-MATIN" GAUDIN REALISE LE DOUBLE EN FINALES DE LA VILLE DE BASTIA', in Album José Graziani.

the two would shift from the playing of the sport at school to a new paradigm in which football became a school of its own. The new school *for* football blossomed through the medium of the club, both amateur and professional. This final section of school-related football should be read as a causeway bridging the two worlds of institutionalized youth football in France: the school and the club. In one sense, it is here, on the narrow footbridge between sport and education, that the singularity of the French game at the turn of the twenty-first century rested.

Two aspects are important to remember here. Firstly, the postwar era did not witness a unilateral decline in school related football (or sport for that matter) in favour of the club as Attali and Saint-Martin recount so comprehensively. From 1958 to 1967 the number of *licenciés* across all sports in the three principal associations for school sport rose by nearly one hundred percent.⁷⁸ Then again between 1966 and 1981 the same school sport federations saw their membership double.⁷⁹ Secondly, it is important to remember the particular nature of the relationship between the educational world and the sporting one in France. On the basis of its ‘mission of public service’ to quote Faure and Suaud, the national sporting federation was held responsible to society as a whole.⁸⁰ This was precisely one of the key aspects that characterize French football as different from America for example. For the purpose here it will suffice to maintain this difference in *bas relief* in addressing the following two points regarding the *école de football* phenomenon between 1950 and 1980: the trend of decreasing age seen elsewhere with age categories and *licences* which was visible in the *école de football* and, secondly, evidence to support a shift in focus of the youth game away from the school and towards the club. With these two issues in mind, this last piece of the French football and school puzzle will address the evolution of the club-based *école de football*.

⁷⁸ The three associations were l’Union Sportive de l’Enseignement du Premier degré (USEP), l’Association du Sport Scolaire et Universitaire (ASSU), and l’Union Générale Sportive de l’Enseignement Libre (UGSEL). Michaël Attali and Jean Saint-Martin, *L’éducation Physique de 1945 à nos jours : les étapes d’une démocratisation*, (Paris: Armand Colin, 2009, 2nd edition), p. 98.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 160-1.

⁸⁰ Faure and Suaud have noted that “it should be remembered that the delegatory federations-become trustees of a ‘mission of public service’ are held to a certain number of obligations...they also have as a priority the production of a sporting elite responsible to represent France in international competition”. See Jean-Michel Faure and Charles Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel à la Française*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), pp. 39-40.

As noted above, ‘football school’ as a term appears rarely prior to the end of World War II and according to Martial Gergotich’s recollections about the youth game during the interwar years, in the 1920s and 30s “...there were no football schools”.⁸¹ Gergotich’s retrospective statement referring to the 1930s is undated but it is likely that it comes from an interview after the 1950s and thus he was comparing his youth with the contemporary environment of that time in which the *école de football* had become common. However, the term “*école de football*” is in fact mentioned beginning at least as early as 1935. Before spreading nationally from the 1950s, it appears to have referred to different age groups at different times and, as was the trend with the *licences*, the ages relevant to the term *école de football* seem to have decreased over time.

Two examples from the earlier period provide a starting point. An initiative at Stade Lavallois in 1935 saw the creation of its first *école de football* as reported by *Ouest-Éclair* in May

“Stade Lavallois has just founded an école de football-association for youth between the ages of 13 and 18. First of all, there will be theoretical teaching and individual practice: control, blocking, passing, shooting, heading, dribbling, etc...; teamwork will follow accompanied by some jumping and running events. The school is already open and the sessions take place at the Stade Jean Yvinec, Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 18h30, and Sunday mornings from 8h30. All youth interested in practicing football-association are cordially invited to follow this course. Registrations are taken at the field on the days of the sessions.”⁸²

The second example of the term *école*, as it is applied to football, can be found in the AS Brestoise archive that contains a transcribed article from 1945 referring to the club’s youth teams. Writing for *Le Télégramme*, Noël Kerdraon interviewed the club’s coach, Georges Le Vergos

Kerdraon: “How many teams do you hope to field this season?”

⁸¹ AS Brestoise archive, ‘Anciens Joueurs’, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/gergo.htm> (accessed January 12, 2010).

⁸² *Ouest-Éclair*, 18 May 1935.

Le Vergos: “Three séniors, one juniors, one cadets and at least two minimes. It is my friend [Philippe] Prédour who will continue to direct l’*école des minimes* and cadets.”⁸³

While Le Vergos does not mention *per se* an *école de football*, it is interesting to note the use of the term *école* for the *minimes* and *cadets* and covering an age range of about thirteen to seventeen roughly the same as the Stade Lavallois example ten years earlier. Less than a year later the yearly report in the ASB archive notes that Sarkis Garabédian, who came to the club after playing at and coaching Stade de Reims in the 1930s and 40s, “studied plans for the creation of an *école de football* which would be open for children from ten to thirteen”.⁸⁴ The project was to be discussed at the club’s general assembly in August before the start of the 1950-51 season. The project for the *école de football* took off in the following years and soon the youth vastly outnumbered the adults. From Le Vergos’s total count of youth teams in 1945 – four youth teams to the three senior sides – the club had almost twice as many youth teams than adult sides within just three years of Garabédian’s plan.⁸⁵

The 1950s were a time for starting the modern *école de football* and the age focus was reaching out to the lower end of the spectrum. A number of other clubs note the creation of an *école de football* over this period. In Normandy, Edmund LeBrun started the first school at Périers Sports in 1950 under the supervision of first team coach Georges René.⁸⁶ FC Lingolsheim in the Alsace started a section for youth in the 1950s headed by a number of volunteers from the club.⁸⁷ Pacy Vallée d’Eure Foot, another Norman club refers to 1953-54 as the first season it held organised an *école de football*.⁸⁸ L’Association Familiale de Soum de Lanne started their school in 1957 for

⁸³ *Le Télégramme*, September 4, 1945, in AS Brestoise archive, 1945, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/45.htm> (accessed January 15, 2010).

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, July 26, 1950, in AS Brestoise archive, 1950, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/50.htm> (accessed January 12, 2010).

⁸⁵ In 1953 the club fielded two teams each in the *juniors*, *cadets* and *minimes* categories along with one *pupilles* team. The seven youth teams were almost twice the adults which had three *séniors* teams and one *vétérans* side. See *Cahiers de l’Equipe 1953*, p. 148.

⁸⁶ Périers Sports, ‘Historique’, <http://www.clubmanche.com/periers-sports-foot/?contenu=rubrique&rubrique=historique> (accessed January 30, 2010). The club history refers to Wednesday afternoons, but this is unlikely as primary sources reveal that it was Thursday not Wednesday when children had the afternoon off from school at least up to the 1970s.

⁸⁷ FC Lingolsheim 1911 archive, *Historique du Club*, p. 2.

⁸⁸ Pacy Vallée d’Eure Foot, ‘Historique – Les grandes dates du club’, <http://www.pvef.fr/Historique.htm> (accessed October 6, 2009).

local youth in southwest Lourdes.⁸⁹ One of the few pieces of visual evidence uncovered for this period comes from across the Mediterranean in Sidi-Bel-Abbès. The first image shows an *école de football* of more than forty young boys ranging from what appears to be ten to fourteen years of age.⁹⁰ A second photo portrays some of the boys in action with several young players practising juggling and trapping skills.⁹¹ Though there is no written date on either photo, it is more than likely that they date from the early 1950s.⁹²

The transition to younger ages which appears to have begun in the start of the prior decade was fully developed by the early 1960s. Interviewed by *Football Magazine* in 1963, AS Brestoise's first team coach, Martial Gergotich, explained how training was organised at the club, first for the senior players, and then for the youth:

“All my [senior] players work, so no problem, training is in the evening at the end of the workday. On rare occasions at midday, especially in winter, but it is difficult since the [lunch] break time is short. The minimes come on Thursday mornings and the afternoon is reserved for the poussins and pupilles at l'école de football.”⁹³

Indeed, by the early 1960s, the phenomenon appears to have followed the same trend for the various categories of *licences* as described in the previous chapter: a shift in the *école de football* towards the youngest age groups from the 1960s. A video documentary from 1961 provides a detailed picture of the several hundred strong *école de football* organised weekly by the Stade de Reims during their heyday as one of the top French clubs. Interviewed by journalist Robert Chapatte, the director Claude Prodoscimi explained that the club took in boys “as of ten years of age, from ten to

⁸⁹ FC Lourdais, ‘Histoire du Football Lourdais’.

⁹⁰ *Ecole de foot dirigée par M. LACASA*, photo provided by Jean-Paul Lacasa, in ‘Sporting Club de Bel-Abbès 1906 – 1962’, <http://www.mekerra.fr/pages/sports%20sba/scba/scba%2002bis.html> (accessed April 2, 2010).

⁹¹ *Ecole de foot dirigée par Maurice LACASA*, photo provided by Jean-Paul Lacasa, in ‘Sporting Club de Bel-Abbès 1906 – 1962’, <http://www.mekerra.fr/pages/sports%20sba/scba/scba%2002bis.html> (accessed April 2, 2010).

⁹² The entire archive covers material up to 1962 and Algerian independence. Almost all the football-related photos and newspaper articles date from prior to the mid-1950s. Both photos of the *école de football* include written text which states that the school was coached by a M. or Maurice Lacasa, who is likely to have been the father of Jean-Paul Lacasa and would have been coaching his son Jean-Paul in the early to mid-1950s.

⁹³ *Football Magazine*, April 1963.

fourteen”.⁹⁴ In the Rhône valley, CASCOL’s archive traces its first *école de football* to the same year as the documentary and provides a photo of the school where, throughout the 1960s, approximately one-hundred and fifty youngsters attended every Thursday for training and intra-club play but also competed in at least two cups, the *Coupe Raffin* and *Coupe Bergeron*.⁹⁵ One photo shows a number of boys with the oldest appearing to be of the *minimes* age range and no more than fourteen.⁹⁶ The AS Brestoise archive contains three images of the *école de football* headed by Jean Lars in 1969. The first two are group shots with between sixty and eighty boys whose age range appears to be from around ten to fourteen.⁹⁷

By the 1970s the *école de football* clearly included the youngest footballers to date. For the fortieth anniversary of the CS Cheminot Nimois in 1971, a news article describes in detail all of the club’s teams from *sénior* to *pupilles*, a club structure which

“is nourished by l’*école de football* which Mr. Almeras, Mr. Dorions and first team players oversee every Thursday bringing together over fifty children.”⁹⁸

Interestingly, the *pupilles* (aged ten and eight months to twelve and eight months) were considered part of the club structure but separate from the *école de football*. Thus, the *école* itself was for an even younger age group (bereft of a specific category name) under the *pupilles*. But a category name came soon as the *poussins*, an official age group for the first time in 1968, became widely accepted in the youth game by the end of the decade as testified by another article about the same club from 1978. This *école de football*, which was claimed to have been, aside from Nîmes Olympique, the “most important in the Gard”, took place on Wednesdays but not only in the afternoon:

“But the youth are so numerous in the club, that the training for the *poussins* has been detached to Wednesday mornings, in order to free the stadium for the other

⁹⁴ Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, ‘Place aux Jeunes’, video archive, (November 4, 1961; Institut National de l’Audiovisuel). The film shows training exercises for the many young boys whose age appears to conform to Prodescimi’s description and consistent with a maximum age of fourteen; the boys worked on ball skills under the supervision and guidance of adults.

⁹⁵ CASCOL, ‘Histoire de l’Ecole de Football’, <http://cascolfootball.free.fr/spip.php?article18> (accessed October 6, 2009).

⁹⁶ CASCOL, *École de Foot 1961/62 avec Gras, Tissot, Paccard, Romanas*.

⁹⁷ *École de foot avec Jean Lars* [1] and *École de foot avec Jean Lars* [2], in ‘Historique : 1969’, <http://jean-guy.moreau.pagesperso-orange.fr/69.htm> (accessed January 18, 2010).

⁹⁸ Marc Santel, ‘Plus grande Société Omni-Sports du Gard – Le Club Sportif Cheminot Nimois a 40 ans !’ in *Sport Magazine*, (CS Cheminot Nimois archive, 1971).

categories. There is an average of eighty youth...who train Wednesday afternoons at the Stade Jean Michel.”⁹⁹

The article’s author did not clearly differentiate between all age groups which were considered under the term *école de football*. Nonetheless, the fact that the volunteer coaching staff included eight *juniors* and the mention of results were limited to only the *poussins* and *pupilles* teams suggests that the term *école de football* was applicable only to the youngest age groups.

This illustrates the different treatment of the term *école de football*. Even if the general trend was away from the older age groups and towards the younger kids, the age range of an *école de football* was not a defined science and different clubs appear to have qualified the term and the age limits around it in different ways. A series of news articles about *US Ribécourt* which covered the *école de football* testify to its wide interpretation. For the articles between 1972 and 1982 only the *juniors* are clearly disassociated from the structure of the *école de football*.¹⁰⁰ At the other end of the age ladder, the youngest player in the *école de football*, Xavier Lagathu, at seven years of age, is stated to have already been playing for two seasons.¹⁰¹ In contrast, the focus on only the younger age groups was reflected in changes to the annual club bulletin which listed all the teams and coaches at the historic mining club of La Combelle Charbonnier. By the 1976-77 season the youth categories from *pupilles* up to *juniors* were listed separately from the *école de football* which later encompassed both the *poussins* and *pupilles*, the youngest age groups mentioned, by 1981.¹⁰²

⁹⁹ ‘Le Club Sportif Cheminot Nimois : Un exemple pour le sport français’ in *unnamed newspaper article* by N. Almeras, 4 February 1978, (CS Cheminot Nimois archive, 1978).

¹⁰⁰ Five scanned articles from local newspapers generally mention the following age groups when referring to the club’s *école de football*: the *benjamins*, *poussins*, *pupilles*, *minimes*, and *cadets*. See the entries for 1972-73, 1977-78, 1979-80, and 1981-82 in the US Ribécourt archive at <http://usribecourt.centerblog.net/> (accessed March 15, 2010).

¹⁰¹ ‘Ribécourt – A l’école de football’, from *unnamed newspaper*, in US Ribécourt archive, <http://usribecourt.centerblog.net/> (accessed March 15, 2010).

¹⁰² The archive for *La Combelle Charbonnier Association Breuil* includes a comprehensive collection of official scanned club bulletins which include the list of committee members, club officials, coaches and teams. The first edition was from 1949 followed by every year from 1953 to 1982, and finally the editions for 1983-84, 1988-89 and most of those since 2004. The first time the youth teams (*juniors*, *cadets*, *minimes*) were listed was 1967-68. The *pupilles* were first recorded in 1975-76 while the *poussins* appeared in 1978-79. See La Combelle-Charbonnier Association Breuil, ‘*Equipes Jeunes*’, <http://ccab.footeo.com/galerias-photo.html> (accessed January 12, 2010).

But the general trend was to a reduction in ages at the *école de football*. Two further articles from the latter half of the 1970s about the Anjou-based club, Intrépide Angers, illustrate the move from the inclusion of the *minimes*, *pupilles* and *poussins* under the *école de football* to a separate status independent of all youth categories even outside the *poussins*.¹⁰³ A similar differentiation was found at a club in the Parisian region. The call in the club's 1984 newsletter for player registration for the upcoming Entente Sportive de la Forêt season provided the birth years for the various categories and made a clear distinction between the *école de football* which was for *débutants* and *poussins*, and the other youth teams of *pupilles*, *minimes*, and *cadets* and the *sénior* level.¹⁰⁴

There is clear evidence that by the turn of the 1980s, two things had changed regarding the *école de football*: the use of the term and, possibly more importantly, its focus. The application of the term itself in articles or club documents appears to have been progressively restricted to younger age groups. In parallel, its target group, as seen in the visual evidence of club and team photos, also decreased in age towards the younger segment of those well under the age of fourteen if not much younger. This does not mean that the younger age groups did not participate prior to this period or that older age groups were never considered as part of the *école de football*; indeed, several examples above testify to this. Rather, what this suggests is that by the 1980s the term *école de football* became more exclusively associated with younger players since the older age groups, the *juniors*, *cadets*, *minimes* and even *pupilles*, were fully involved in organised interclub competition.

Was there a conscious move away from the term *scolaire* as initiatives such as the *école de football* grew in the post-war years? Was this the result of a trend in which the club was gradually becoming the epicentre of the youth game? There does appear to

¹⁰³ The 90th anniversary archive DVD contains hundreds of scanned newspaper articles, photos and club documents. A local news article from 1975 explained the time and day of the *école de football* which included *minimes*, *pupilles* and *poussins* while a later article from 1979 listed the number of registered players in the various youth categories *cadets* through to *poussins* in addition to the "forty-five youth from the *école de football* who do not enter in the diverse categories". See 'L'Intrépide d'Angers en marche vers sa révolution culturelle', *Ouest-France*, 1975; and 'L'Intrépide: d'abord la qualité des jeunes', *unnamed newspaper*, 1979. Both in '1970-1980', *90 ans de football à l'Intrépide Angers*, (2010), DVD ordered from the club.

¹⁰⁴ Entente Sportive de la Forêt, *ESF Informations*, n° 19, September 1984, p. 4.

be a connection between the two. If the school, both formally, through interschool contests, and informally, on the playground, was an important forum for the youth game in France between the 1920s and 1960s, its role as an actor in youth competition generally appears to have faded in the growing shadow of the club from the 1970s onwards. The numbers boom in the registration of young players in the different categories of club-based football described in the previous chapter attests to the growing youth club sector. By 1971 registered youth in French clubs numbered 350,972 and represented forty-six percent of all registered players.¹⁰⁵

Nonetheless, with the rise of the professional game in terms of media importance as well as the booming numbers of youth in the clubs, both amateur and professional, the school game had not disappeared. In a televised round table on the topic of youth football in 1976, several guests from professional football clubs were invited to speak about where youth were to begin the game. Pierre Alonso and Jean Pierre, directors of the youth teams at Paris St-Germain and Paris Football Club respectively, explained how the first step for a young player was to come to a club's *école de football*. In response to a question about whether a young boy who aspired to play for a big Parisian club should begin his career in the game at school or if the preferred route was rather through the clubs, Pierre replied:

“I think that it should be the same path, in my opinion. I am in physical education since I am a physical education teacher as well. I think that the sporting organisations [at school] should live in parallel with the clubs. It is not always the case. Why? It's because physical education teachers put together good and strong teams. They need their students, their players on Wednesday afternoons. On Sunday, we need ours. But our *école de football* falls precisely on the day for school competitions, on Wednesdays.”¹⁰⁶

So if school competitions did not disappear, they may have simply faded in importance as the real football competitions were those to be had at the club beginning with the *école de football*.

¹⁰⁵ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Pierre's comments were all the more relevant as he was active as a physical education teacher as well as with his professional club and thus wore multiple hats. For someone from the school sector to intimate the relative superior importance of the club over the school is telling indeed. See Télévision Française 1, 'Le football et les jeunes', video archive, (September 22, 1976; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel). From 2 minutes 49 seconds to 4 minutes 47 seconds.

A generational shift illustrates this point rather well in tracing the earliest parts of the playing career for three players born at twelve year intervals. Born in Brittany in 1943, Yves Fercoq first played the game at school before signing his first *licence* to play for the local Rostrenen club at age thirteen.¹⁰⁷ Maxime Bossis was born twelve years after Fercoq but first played with his local club at around the same age. School competitions played an important part of his sport upbringing and he recounted his time playing for his *lycée* around the turn of the 1970s.¹⁰⁸ Born in 1967, some twenty-four years after Fercoq and essentially one full generation later, Philippe Bernier took his first steps in the game among the *poussins* of his local club, *AS Verson*, while attending their *école de football*.¹⁰⁹ Interestingly, the regional educator and coach Bernier made no mention to any involvement in football at school and everything was centred on his club experience. Sometimes, silence can speak louder than words and, in this case, it may demonstrate the shift in importance from school to club.

In hindsight, Gasqueton was rather clairvoyant when he identified the question of competition between school and club in the 1920s. This was bathed in the political and organisational tensions discussed earlier, but had a direct consequence on the competition sphere. The problem did not go away and was exacerbated as more and more youth at younger and younger ages flooded French clubs during a period in which the elite level was in significant crisis. Indeed, following tensions between players and management in the late 1960s and the drop in number of professionals, the FFF and its

¹⁰⁷ As an amateur Yves Fercoq played for USM Malakoff in the 1960s and 70s. Under his captaincy, the club finished second in the third division in 1974-75 and, as a result, earned promotion to Division 2. See 'YVON FERCOQ LE BRETON DE MALAKOFF', *unnamed magazine*, 1975, pp. 62-4. The article was retrieved from the Forum section of Footnostalgie.free.fr in the club section for USM Malakoff, <http://footnostalgie.free.fr/forum/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=1770&start=135> (accessed May 9, 2010).

¹⁰⁸ Yannick Batard, *Football Club de Nantes Une équipe, une légende*, (Turquant, France: Editions Cheminements, 2005), p. 264-5.

¹⁰⁹ Interviewed by the *Ligue de Basse-Normandie* on the role of a club captain, a position he held apparently hundreds of times, Bernier is an example of an ordinary amateur player of his generation who played and then transitioned into a coach for a local club and head of the *école de football*. Interview by Serge Duval, 'Graine de leader', posted November 20, 2006, <http://bassenormandie.fff.fr/cg/1500/www/arbitrage/340503.shtml> (accessed December 10, 2009).

member clubs became more interested and focused on the youth who were seen as the future of the game.¹¹⁰

Mirrored by the subtle shift in grammar, the defining environment within which youth competition was organised moved away from the school. It shifted towards a club-based context in which the principal subject studied would be the sport itself. One no longer only played the game at and for one's school; that was *football scolaire*. Rather, by the last quarter of the twentieth century one would learn the game at a local 'school for football' and play for one's club; this became *l'école de football*. The future of the game in the 1920s may well have been, as hinted to by Gasqueton in the opening quote, the "development of school sport", specifically *le football scolaire*. However, by the 1980s the new future of the game shifted to a school *for* sport, or *l'école de football*. The importance of grammar indeed.

Soccer Americana: the evolution of youth football competitions in the United States c.1920-c.1980

If this country is ever to stand on its own foundation as a producer of soccer players, instead of calling on old country stars, it will have to begin at the bottom and start a campaign of soccer education among school boys. The future of soccer rests upon progress and improvement from the bottom of the ladder. It is not intended to decry the influence of foreign-born players on football here...But it is evident that no sport can long be dependent on another country for its playing talent. The answer is: teachers for the junior players... The principle reason for the lack of progress is the want of capable coaches.¹¹¹

In 1923 John E. Wray reported to the USFA and his words in the above quote were a clarion for action centred on the youth game. Long-time sports editor for the *St. Louis Dispatch*, Wray was certainly well versed with the city's football culture found in the different parochial school leagues, junior teams and at the place where many boys

¹¹⁰ For a treatment of the crisis in French football, see Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, (Paris : Hachette, 1995), pp. 177-85 and Faure & Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel*, pp. 35-49, 80-90.

¹¹¹ Tony Cirino, *US Soccer vs. the World* (Leonia, New Jersey: Damon Press, Inc., 1983), p. 26. While Cirino quotes Wray and briefly covers this early period, there is no extended discussion or questioning of the history of youth development. His focus is strictly on the American national teams.

and young men learned the game, the Christian Brothers College.¹¹² Thus, he would also have been aware of the link between the young players and the future of senior teams through junior competition, especially in a city and during a period when the game commanded a following and semi-professional status. Perhaps his call was more directed to other parts of the country which did not have the extensive grassroots presence in St. Louis. His words came at a time when the East coast's professional American Soccer League was fully formed and growing, so the search for new talent was certainly on all major clubs' minds.¹¹³ The subsequent demise of the ASL after the so-called 'soccer war' and the stock market crash left the country without major national professionalism from the 1930s onward.¹¹⁴ Thus, those involved in the youth game over the following decades were not necessarily linked to an elite sector of the sport until the rise of the NASL.

This section will seek to address several questions regarding youth competitions throughout twentieth century America in the context of this 'missing professionalism'.¹¹⁵ Were these competitions based in clubs or in schools? What type of approach did the organisers have toward the game and were there tensions between those who held different visions of the sport? Were the competitions ethnically targeted or driven by immigrant communities? Was there a shift in their nature during the rise of the NASL which brought the game under the national media spotlight?

¹¹² Wray's name has been attributed to an award for outstanding performance in sports "other than baseball" by the St. Louis Baseball Writers. See Meriden, Connecticut's *The Journal*, 2 January 1975. The Christian 'Brothers', mainly of Irish origin, founded the Christian Brothers college preparatory school in 1850. The secondary school graduated 40-50 students annually in the second half of the 19th century. For a full treatment of the history of the game in St. Louis, see James Robinson, 'The History of Soccer in the City of St. Louis', (St. Louis University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1966).

¹¹³ In 1923 the ASL was in its second season and had expanded to eight teams and a longer league schedule. This growing league needed playing talent and consequently sought footballers from overseas. For more on the foreign implications of these transfers see Matt Taylor, *The leaguers: the making of professional football in England, 1900-1939*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), pp. 227-8.

¹¹⁴ For more on the 'soccer war' see especially pp. 74-81 in David Wangerin, *Soccer in a Football World: The Story of America's Forgotten Game*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006). See also pp. 7-14 in Colin Jose, *The American Soccer League: The Golden Years of American Soccer 1921-1931* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1998).

¹¹⁵ This is not to say that there was no professional football in between the first ASL and the NASL. The second ASL league, while undoubtedly paying players, could not however be considered fully professional on a national level and where players' only jobs were as paid athletes. What is meant here by 'missing professionalism' is a national, media supported professional league in which players made their living exclusively from the game.

Beginning with the early decades of the twentieth century, this section will sketch out the development, or lack thereof, of a national policy for youth football. Despite a fragmented structure spread across different pockets of the country, the sport managed to organise one national junior competition from the 1930s onwards. Through the lens of this competition, the identity of the youth game is explored here in terms of the links with immigration, ethnicity and the role of religiously supported sporting structures. Finally, this section addresses both the exponential growth in the game in schools as well as in clubs as the 1970s took the sport west and out to the suburbs.

Football at School and the lack of national policy – the first decades of the 20th Century

After the turn of twentieth century, Foulds and Harris note that local authorities and school boards included the sport in their provision of physical education.¹¹⁶ The push for P.E. within the school environment was widespread by the 1910s and coincided with specific approaches to health and the relevance of physical activity.¹¹⁷ In parallel, the recorded violence and injury that was ever present in the code played by the colleges, the ‘gridiron game’, was under scrutiny. In Benjamin Grove’s article on ‘Foot ball in Philadelphia’, he noted plans for the introduction of association football to boys in the city’s schools in 1910 under the direction of William Albin Stecher, director of physical training:

“‘The elimination of Rugby foot ball and the introduction of the soccer style of the game,’ said Mr. Stecher, in explanation of his attitude, ‘will undoubtedly

¹¹⁶ New York City was the first municipality to include the sport in its physical education/athletic curriculum in 1905. The Spalding Guide from 1910 includes a photo of the trophy listing the competition’s winners with Morris High School as the inaugural champions in 1906. See Sam Foulds and Paul Harris, *America’s Soccer Heritage*, (Manhattan Beach: Soccer for Americans, 1979), p. 101; and *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1910), p.116.

¹¹⁷ Written by Lee F. Hanmer, Associate Director, Department of Child Hygiene of the Russell Sage Foundation, the entry entitled ‘Educational Value of Athletics’ lists several values for athletic games the first of which states: “Exercise secures organic development, *i.e.* the development of those organs and functions during the growth of the individual from infancy to maturity that gives vitality, vigor, functional power for health to the limit of inherited possibilities”. See L. F. H., ‘Athletics, Educational’, in P. Monroe, ed., *A Cyclopaedia of Education*, volume 1, (New York: MacMillan, 1911), volume 1, p. 266. The Russell Sage Foundation was founded in New York City in 1907 for “the improvement of social and living conditions in the United States”. For more regarding the Russell Sage Foundation, see <http://www.russellsage.org/about> (accessed 16 June 2011).

prove of the greatest benefit to the school children. In the soccer game every muscle of the body is brought into play, and the beneficial effect on the system is probably greater than is secured in any other single sport. In the soccer game is combined all the interest and activity of football without the liability of injury, as in the Rugby game.”¹¹⁸

But the violent nature of the ‘college game’ was not the only reason that prompted schools to play the association code as noted by Gabe Logan in the development of the game in Chicago. In the Windy City, while some football proponents reacted to the violence of the gridiron game, other local officials and school leaders adopted football in support of a sport which was already played in the wider community.¹¹⁹

The diffusion of the game in schools leading up to 1920 was such that the *Spalding Guides* were full of articles from across the country describing the continual “growth” of the sport which was well summarized by USFA President George Healy in his annual report to the national body’s annual general meeting in May of 1922:

“This improvement in play [in the national cup], and especially in the latter two qualities [speed and stamina], is undoubtedly due to the fact that our leagues are now beginning to absorb the boys who learned the game in school, and who, held to it by an enthusiastic appreciation of its merits, are clinging to it. Every day, too, sees other boys taking up the game on the playgrounds and in the school yards, or athletic fields, and it is now a common sight to see groups of boys playing the game on vacant lots after school hours. Even the newest recruits to the game who will read this message can remember how rare such a sight was as recently as five years ago.”¹²⁰

The promising tone of the annual’s contributors and editors raise several questions, only some of which can be addressed here.¹²¹ The game always seemed to be “growing by

¹¹⁸ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, p. 51. It would be interesting to consider to what extent attitudes like Stecher’s were due to safety concerns or simply different visions of the role of sport in society. In his case, he appears to have come out of the gymnastic tradition of the late 19th century. He was secretary of the Committee of Physical Training of the North American Gymnastic Union and he wrote and edited a number of texts on gymnastics, games and dances for school children in part based on the “German system of gymnastics”. See W. A. Stecher, ed., *Gymnastics – a textbook of the German-American system of Gymnastics*, (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1896).

¹¹⁹ Gabe Logan, ‘Lace Up the Boots, Full Tilt Ahead: Recreation, Immigration, and Labor on Chicago’s Soccer Fields, 1890–1950’ (Northern Illinois University: unpublished PhD dissertation, 2005), pp. 118-9.

¹²⁰ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1922), p. 27.

¹²¹ What would prompt the writers to boldly announce the imminent rise of association football? The language in the *Guides* suggests that the association and gridiron games were not unequal in support despite the fact that the ‘college game’ dominated the press, drew the crowds and economic interest evidenced by the \$56,440 in income for Yale gridiron football for 1902-03. While the college season was

leaps and bounds” and regularly “adding converts”. It was continually said to be not far off from inevitably becoming *the* fall-to-spring sport. Yet American sport history retrospectively pleads otherwise, as the gridiron game monopolised attention for several weeks during the fall season while baseball would not be displaced as the spring to summer sport. They both played the dominant roles in the United States’ theatre of sporting dreams during this period. Football was nevertheless an activity worthy of a place within physical education in schools. Rather than the fruit of guided policy from one all-responsible national body, football’s vast presence, or at least its significant growth, appears to have been more the result of combined, though not necessarily coordinated, efforts by interested individuals.

Various leaders shared essentially the same view: despite great progress in the diffusion of the game in schools and among boys, the organised leadership had not done enough. In Dr. Manning’s farewell address at the 1914 annual meeting (he was retiring as USFA President but continued with his involvement with the Public Schools Athletic League in New York), he set out two issues of the utmost importance for the game that his successor should consider. The first of the two issues related directly to the youth game:

“In the first place, the question of further introduction of foot ball into schools and colleges is paramount; methods must be devised and all opportunities accepted to teach the younger generation the game; instructors and referees should be furnished by this Association and all affiliated organizations to the public, preparatory and high schools and an earnest effort be made through the proper channels to induce gradually the colleges to make Association foot ball a major sport. Men well versed in the rules of the game should come forward all over the country and offer their free services to the Public School Athletic Leagues.”¹²²

restricted in time and only commanded attention for several weeks of the year, there was undoubtedly time for other sports in the calendar. But to what extent was the writing in the *Guides* bathed in propagandist undertones, either openly admitted or unrecognized? Insofar as they were written for the ‘soccer community’ and not the wider media or those not already won over to the game, perhaps the tone was coloured by a desire for mutual encouragement for fellow supporters of the cause; or alternatively a shared disdain for the gridiron game? For Yale’s sporting income and its debated distribution, see *New York Times*, 28 February 1904.

¹²² *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1914-15*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1914), pp. 13-4.

In 1916, subsequent President, John Fernley, repeated the general call for work on the youth game and recommended that the USFA form “a special committee, whose work would be the dissemination of literature among our schools and smaller colleges”.¹²³ While the federation did nothing to form a committee the following year, it did, however, purchase three banners for schools that accounted for a measly \$11.25, or less than three percent of all bills paid by the Finance Committee for that fiscal year.¹²⁴ Finally, in 1920 the USFA appointed a committee but it unfortunately ended its first year as an utter failure. This was regrettably described by the address to the USFA membership by its President George Healey:

“While I am pleased at what we have accomplished during the year just ended, I must express my regret at opportunities we have failed to grasp—duties we have failed to fulfill. To my mind, our outstanding fault of the year has been our neglect of school and junior soccer. In my last annual report I recommended the establishment of a standing committee for this development. I appointed on this committee some of the most eminent gentlemen in the country in school athletics, and I hoped for great things. I received acceptances from the gentlemen appointed, but the committee was never even organized, and consequently never functioned.”¹²⁵

The following year for the 1921-22 season the committee appears to have actually functioned, but made little progress. USFA Secretary Thomas Cahill noted in his report before the start of the 1922 annual meeting:

“[w]e have been milling around for a great many years over the question of school and junior soccer. We are all agreed that the game should be encouraged to the limit amongst the junior players, and that some provision should be made to keep the schoolboys in the game after they leave school. We have a committee now which has come in with some recommendations and which will come before this meeting with a request for an appropriation to further their plans. But I have neither seen nor heard anything from the committee which gives even the shadow of a practical idea as to how to accomplish the end we are seeking.”¹²⁶

¹²³ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1916-17*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1916), p. 29.

¹²⁴ All expenses for 1917 were listed at \$422. See *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1917-18*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1917), p. 20.

¹²⁵ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1921-22*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1921), p. 19.

¹²⁶ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, p. 30.

Perhaps the call made by former England international, Fred Spikesley, in 1921 for a national schoolboy competition was in the minds of the newly formed committee which embarked on a relatively more successful second year.¹²⁷

In the eyes of President Healey, the committee held much hope and its work was anxiously awaited. Healey was among those who saw the importance of the youth game for the future of the sport. In his address to the 1922 Annual Meeting he wrote:

“This state of affairs leads naturally to a consideration of a means of coalescing and mobilizing this youthful element so that it can be held to the game for the recruiting of the teams of five and six years hence. What has been accomplished thus far has been through the work of state associations, and it is a matter of regret to me that our national association has not found a means to materially help in this development. We have talked about it a great deal, and we have had committees to think and talk it over, but no practical plan has yet been evolved. I am hopeful that the committee I appointed last year for this purpose will, in its report, which has not yet been submitted to me, have some concrete plan to propose.”¹²⁸

The committee thus issued its report to the membership which apparently included a mention of a proposed ‘Schoolboys’ Challenge Cup Competition’, yet it does not appear that any such competition ever got off the drawing board.¹²⁹

Was there a reason for this ongoing failure to promote the game in schools and among juniors? Several factors may have worked against the organisation of a national schools’ competition in the 1920s. Aside from the geographical distances which did not favour the shipping to and fro of schoolboys from Boston to Philadelphia (three hundred plus miles), let alone to St. Louis (well over one thousand miles), the preoccupation with the other issues around the professional game (the ‘soccer-wars’) may have taken much of the organisational energy.¹³⁰ Besides the ongoing strife between the USFA and

¹²⁷ See Spikesley’s written contribution, ‘Expert Advice on American Soccer’, in *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1921-22*, pp. 32-4. Spikesley may have been inspired by the vast Sheffield schoolboys’ football scene that he certainly would have known of during his time as a professional at Sheffield Wednesday in the 1890s. For more on Sheffield schools’ football see pp. 165-9 in Kerrigan, *Teachers and Football*.

¹²⁸ *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, p. 27.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.16.

¹³⁰ See Chapter 2 – ‘Tangled Roots’ in David Wangerin, *Soccer in a Football*. The well-developed schoolboys’ competitions in England at the same time were generally restricted to one city with some regional play for the finals. It took a number of years to get such inter-city competitions going despite

the American Soccer League throughout the 1920s, there may have been a fundamentally philosophical reason as well. Were leaders of the USFA overtly influenced by underlying national conceptions about government and federal democracy?

Historian Daniel Boorstin has described the notion of ‘community’ in lieu of institutionalised governance as “one of the most characteristic, one of the most important, yet one of the least noticed contributions to modern life”.¹³¹ He continues to explain how, in contrast to Europe, “in America, even in modern times, *communities* existed before governments were here to care for public needs”.¹³² Or to quote Alexis de Tocqueville who observed in 1831 America that “the state governs, but it does not administer”: a subtle yet fundamental point to keep in mind when reflecting on the institutional structure of football in America.¹³³

Indeed, in this pre-New Deal America the political reform history of which is well captured by Goldman, perhaps a particular view of the role of a governing institution helped to form a frame of mind about how to administer public and private life including sport.¹³⁴ Immediately following his above comments on the lack of ideas on how to tackle the “question of school and junior soccer” secretary Cahill reported in 1922 to the USFA membership

“The more I see and think of the matter, the more thoroughly am I convinced that this is a matter which should be handled by the state associations alone. Each state knows its own problems and can measure up its own opportunities. The state associations, too, owe it to themselves to take up this duty. It is to their immediate interest to develop this phase, for it will enable them to recruit their

distances much shorter than those in the USA. In England competitive matches took place between London and Birmingham (almost one-hundred and twenty miles), London and Sheffield (some one-hundred and sixty miles). For more on English schools’ football see Kerrigan, *Teachers and Football*.

¹³¹ Daniel J. Boorstin, *Hidden History*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), p. 195. Boorstin explores the notions of ‘sovereignty’ and ‘community’ in two insightful chapters covering technology, the history of the US political system and the nature of American philanthropy, see pp. 184-209.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 197, italics original.

¹³³ Alexis de Tocqueville, *De la Démocratie en Amérique*, (Brussels: Société Belge de Librairie, 1835), pp. 148-9. The original French reads: “La commune et le comté sont donc chargés de veiller à leurs intérêts spéciaux. L’État gouverne et n’administre pas. On rencontre des exceptions à ce principe, mais non un principe contraire.”

¹³⁴ For an extensive review of the history of American reform politics and Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal, see especially pages 248-89 of Eric F. Goldman, *Rendezvous with Destiny: A History of Modern American Reform*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1956).

leagues, to develop the amateur side of the game, and to increase tremendously the general interest in the contests, with a resulting increase in their gate receipts. I cannot conceive how the national body can create any machinery for the handling of the school and junior soccer situation that would not be too slow and cumbersome, unless it went to an expense that is far beyond its means.”¹³⁵

Rather than dictate to the state associations, perhaps leaders in the national governing body preferred to leave the administration of the game to the local playing communities themselves? Words such as these say a great deal about the respect for local authority over national mandates, if not the primacy of *community* over government referred to by Boorstin.¹³⁶

As a consequence, the absence of a directed USFA policy in schools and for youth left the door open to the forces of individual historical agency, in the form of individual teachers, coaches and club organisations across the country. Elementary schools, and to some degree high schools, included the sport in the school curriculum throughout the 1920s.¹³⁷ One example is Alfreda E. Iglehart and her twenty-three year legacy as an athletic director and sports coach in Baltimore.¹³⁸ Iglehart, who was the first woman to be inducted into the National Soccer Hall of Fame in 1951, taught “soccer fundamentals to more than 1,200 boys” as part of the physical education programme at the Francis Scott Key School in Baltimore.¹³⁹ After her first decade of work in the game, she was credited for having introduced the sport to many young

¹³⁵ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, p. 30.

¹³⁶ Cahill was born of Irish parents in New York in 1863 before his family moved to St. Louis when he was a child. He was the real executor of much of the USFA's activities since its inception almost a decade earlier. In one sense, Cahill's words would have made the Jeffersons, Madisons and Hamiltons proud as such an approach to the USFA and its state associations was a testament to states' rights and the true nature of a federal democracy. However, with the objective to deliberately promote and develop the sport, perhaps a more defined national policy would have been more successful? For a detailed biography of Cahill, see Chapter 3 in Dave Wangerin, *Distant Corners – American Soccer's History of Missed Opportunities and Lost Causes*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), pp. 58-88.

¹³⁷ Foulds and Harris, *America's Soccer Heritage*, p. 101. This included cities all along the eastern seaboard (Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Newark) and across the country in St. Louis, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

¹³⁸ A trained sporting educator (and crack athlete herself in especially field hockey) who grew up in the area of Baltimore, Iglehart attended Cornell before coming back to her home town to take up an athletic director role at School No. 76 which she held from 1920 to 1943. *The Baltimore Sun*, 3 January 1960.

¹³⁹ Iglehart was honoured by the Philadelphia Old Timers Soccer Association, the forerunner to the Hall of Fame, in 1951 as the only woman of the first round of inductees in recognition for their role in the development of the game. After the national honours, Iglehart was feted by the Maryland state chapter of the 'Old Timers Soccer Association' the following year. Some three-hundred athletes, many of whom were her former players, gathered to present their old coach with a plaque. See *The Boston Globe*, 22 February 1951; *The Baltimore Sun*, 14 November 1952.

people in the city and was honoured by the USFA at the 1932 National Convention held in Baltimore.¹⁴⁰ According to the local papers Iglehart proved that “coaching boys isn’t difficult”.¹⁴¹ Under her tutelage, school teams competed regularly in the 1920s and 30s in various age categories and won city titles on an almost annual basis.¹⁴²

Despite the lack of one national school or youth competition during this period, additional research could shed more light on the school game in other areas and its adult organizers, since cities such as Baltimore, Philadelphia or Chicago were certainly not unique in this respect. At first glance it would appear that competitions such as the Pittsburgh ‘Scholastic Cup’ may have been largely in the shadow of the local gridiron game, both college and high school. Merit must go to neighbouring South Hills High and Scott Township teams which played the 1929 association football schools’ final on Saturday, January 12 in front of a handful of spectators who braved the “frigid blasts” on the day.¹⁴³ But the school game was only one piece of the sporting puzzle, and the 1930s witnessed real development in the area of the clubs as well with the creation of a national junior cup competition.

Ethnics, Catholics and the Islands of ‘Soccer Americana’ all united under a National Junior Cup – 1930s to the late 1960s

The youth game over the next forty years had multiple facets. It was a marginalized game for youth in ethnic clubs, an educational and social tool in some Catholic communities while being locally supported in pockets of the country all at the same time. One unifying element of these distant and diverse sporting communities was the national junior club competition. Perhaps in response to the variety of local junior cups for youth, the USFA decided to sponsor the National Junior Challenge Cup for the first time in 1935. The competition’s list of winners reflects some of the life of the youth game leading up to the arrival of Pelé and the NASL’s move into the big-time.

¹⁴⁰ *The Baltimore Sun*, 7 June 1932.

¹⁴¹ Iglehart also coached basketball, athletics and baseball. *The Baltimore Sun*, 12 February 1939.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 19 February 1924.

¹⁴³ This is further evidence that football continued to be played in the unfavourable winter weather only after the end of the autumn months when ‘American football’ dominated the local press and the fall sporting season. See *The Pittsburgh Press*, 13 January 1929.

This section will illustrate some of the aspects of the youth game through the eyes of this annual contest. In addition, it will address the nature of youth football competition in reference to wider questions about their “ethnic nature” from both inside and outside the sport.

The Cup’s first champions in 1935 were the ‘Reliable Juniors’ though the record is unclear exactly from which city they hailed. The USYSA lists them from industrial and immigrant-filled New Bedford, Massachusetts though the Maryland State Soccer Association lists the team among their former national champions.¹⁴⁴ One contemporary account is more specific and credited the ‘Reliable Stores Juniors’ with the title.¹⁴⁵ The two following titles in 1936 and 1937 were won in reliable fashion by what was likely to be a club linked to the Jewish community of Brooklyn, ‘Hatikvah Juniors’. The 1938 winners hailed from farther south and more specifically from one of the strongholds of the native game, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The Lighthouse Boys’ Club travelled over three-hundred miles west (still within the same state), certainly no small distance for one junior football match. At Bridgeville Park, a few miles south-west of Pittsburgh, the Lighthouse Boys defeated the prior year’s runners-up and local favourites, Beadling, 1-0.¹⁴⁶ This was a symbolic start of the Lighthouse Club’s

¹⁴⁴ US Youth Soccer, ‘Past US Youth Soccer National Championship Winners 1935-2010’, <http://championships.usyouthsoccer.org/PastNationalChamps/PastUSYouthSoccerNationalChampionshipWinners19352007.asp> (accessed January 17, 2011); ‘National Championship Titles – Maryland Teams Making History’, msysa.org/tourn/SCS/index_E.html (accessed January 22, 2012).

¹⁴⁵ *The New York Times*, 29 December 1935. If actually from New Bedford, then the team was a relatively recent addition to the junior football scene given that the 1922 *Spalding Guide* does not list them among the twelve-team ‘New Bedford Junior Industrial League’. More research could reveal whether they were a junior ‘works’ team or a side sponsored by a chain of retail stores or a mix of the two. The *New York Times* Stock Exchange listings in the mid 1930s included a company called ‘Reliable Stores’ which had a stock asking price one-half that of Bloomingdale’s. In addition, the Massachusetts State corporate records list a company called ‘Reliable Stores Corporation’ which was first incorporated in the state of Maryland in December 1925 but only registered in MA in 1974. The Reliable Stores Corporation’s founder, Aaron Straus born in Baltimore of German Jewish descent, founded the Straus Foundation in 1926. His retail store business stretched from New England to New Mexico so it is certainly possible that the company operated a store in New Bedford, MA. See *New York Times*, 15 May 1938; ‘Secretary of the Commonwealth, Corporations Division’, <http://corp.sec.state.ma.us/corp/corpsearch> (accessed June 19, 2011); ‘The Aaron and Lillie Straus Foundation: About The Foundation: History’, www.strausfoundation.org/about_history.htm (accessed January 22, 2012).

¹⁴⁶ *The Pittsburgh Press*, 5 June 1938. Beadling, a mining hamlet south of Pittsburgh, is one of oldest clubs still in existence today. The club’s juniors lost two consecutive finals in 1937 and 1938 but were vindicated in 1954 when the senior team won the National Amateur Cup. The town may be the smallest to ever have won the trophy with their reported population of 350 at the time. See the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 5 July 1954.

omnipresence in football from the 1930s to the late 1960s.¹⁴⁷ The youth football programme was but one part of a Philadelphia social club called ‘The Lighthouse’.¹⁴⁸ The football section first came to national prominence in the 1920s and 1930s under its director, Elmer Schroeder, who served as one-time president of the USFA and managed the US Olympic team several times over this period (which not surprisingly included seven former Lighthouse boys).¹⁴⁹ According to Len Oliver, whose first organised football experiences were at this club during the 1940s, the ‘Lighthouse Boys’ were rather unique in the ethnic landscape of football in America:

“Now there were really exceptions...There were Americanized clubs like Lighthouse Boys which happened to be an exception because soccer was a low budget sport for wayward kids...Philadelphia was a hotbed, but there were few Americanized teams [elsewhere].”¹⁵⁰

After the Lighthouse Boys’ first title in 1938, Avella Juniors engraved their name on the cup by claiming the following two titles, an impressive feat for a small mining town and immigrant community in south-western Pennsylvania.¹⁵¹ The names

¹⁴⁷ In the twenty-seven finals between 1938 and 1967, the Lighthouse juniors won the title on five occasions and lost at least two finals in 1961 and 1965. In the entire history of the competition, four other clubs have won three titles, but the Lighthouse club is the most successful individual club of all time in the competition.

¹⁴⁸ The social movement was started in 1893 by Esther Kelly (later married name was Bradford) to help men overcome alcoholism through weekly Bible classes and provide an alternative to saloons. Quickly becoming the leading community organisation, ‘The Lighthouse’ worked for numerous causes including women’s suffrage, against child labour and low wages as well as supporting music and the arts. Through membership in boys’ and girls’ clubs youth participated in a variety of sports including football, baseball, basketball, tennis and swimming. While football was only one part of the sporting palette, the archive’s abstract notes that most of the sporting materials concern football and baseball. See the abstract paper in The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, ‘The Lighthouse Records 1893-2000’, especially pp. 1-5, and the organisation’s history, The Lighthouse, ‘Timeline - History of the Lighthouse 1893-2000’, pp. 1-6, 17-19. The involvement of temperance societies in sports is certainly an area worthy of more research as ‘The Lighthouse’ was certainly not the only case. For example, the Young Men’s Catholic Total Abstinence Society in New Bedford, MA, formed a soccer team in 1910. In their first four seasons the ‘Temps’ won the city league four times and won \$100 in a cup sponsored by Nowell and Lethbridge (and subsequently lost their amateur status). See *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1914-15*, p. 103.

¹⁴⁹ The Lighthouse, ‘Timeline - History’, p. 5.

¹⁵⁰ Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

¹⁵¹ The area around Avella was settled by significant numbers of Italian and Eastern European immigrants from the end of the nineteenth into the early twentieth century. The railroad was only completed in 1904, the year after the Post-Office was opened and the small town flourished for several decades. The mine was connected to Pittsburgh through the railroad, and once it was completed the immigrant workers began to bring families from Italy. By 1910 the population of the two neighbouring townships was 2,000. The difficulty in establishing population records are due to the fact that Avella lay on the border of two townships, Independence and Cross Creek whose combined population in 1940 was 4,600. See Catherine Cerrone, ‘Come on to America’: Italian Immigrants in Avella, Pennsylvania’, in *Pittsburgh History*, 78 (3) (Fall 1995), pp. 100-114; and ‘Table 28 – Race and age, by sex, with rural-farm population, for minor

of the junior eleven which played the 1939 final against Baltimore included D’Orio, Campanelli, Donelli, Gabrielli, Elonza, Soltesz and Kirschner.¹⁵² Despite names of such obviously European origin, what is interesting to note by 1939 is that these were likely to have been second-generation immigrants. Given that the 1920s virtually closed the door on immigration, this is probably not surprising. Ciolota has provided a collection of photos of similar mining town teams from the period with accompanying text that explains that, by the late 30s, the senior sides in this area were no longer exclusively filled with newly arrived players.¹⁵³ If the senior teams by this time were already second-generation, then the junior teams may also have been native born and learned the game in Avella. It is unclear exactly when the junior competition for the south-western Pittsburgh area was formed. However, by 1933 the ‘Panhandle Junior League’, as it was known in the press, was the largest of the regional leagues with no less than eighteen teams. The league’s secretary was August Carmazi of later national champions, Avella.¹⁵⁴

This raises a question about the so-called ‘ethnic nature’ of the youth game (and football in general in America). The issue is related to the changes in society after immigration sharply declined in the 1920s. The restrictions on immigration had effects all the way down to the local sports sector if we are to believe the account describing the re-launching of a junior league in the Pittsburgh area in the years after World War Two. The newspaper labelled the immigration reforms as the major reason for the

“shutting off of a much needed supply of talent since when there has come about – in qualified opinion – a decidedly lower standard and, most serious, a drastic shrinkage in junior ranks”.¹⁵⁵

The sporting communities which continued playing the game during the inter-war years until immigration picked up again in the post-World War II era (in part to accommodate

civil divisions, by counties: 1940’ in US Census Bureau, *Sixteenth Census of the United States – 1940 – Population, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population-Part 6*, pp. 130-1.

¹⁵² *The Pittsburgh Press*, 19 June 1939.

¹⁵³ This includes several photos of the W.W. Riehl, Gallatin and Avella teams from immigrant mining communities of Western Pennsylvania. These teams regularly appeared in the leagues reported in *The Pittsburgh Press* during this period. See Nicholas P. Ciotola, *Italians of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania*, (Charleston: Arcadia, 2005), pp. 86-9.

¹⁵⁴ *The Pittsburgh Press*, 16 September 1933.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 7 November 1952.

the influx of Displaced Persons and Refugees) were regenerated by their children who were born in the United States.

Consequently, how really ethnic then was the competitive youth game? And what constituted the qualification ‘ethnic’? Oliver explained that the structure of the game was generally based on the ethnic social club network which included extensive youth programmes:

“Most of the soccer in the country including the west coast was ethnic based....I was stationed in Monterrey [for military service] and played with the San Francisco Mercury which were Russians. We played against the Greeks, the Scots, and the Irish. And if you went to NY it was all Hungarian and Eintracht, they all had junior teams. That was an European model. If you were going to have a senior, top, semi-pro amateur team, then you really had to have a club structure where the kids have somewhere to go and support the kids coming up. So they all had junior teams.”¹⁵⁶

Illustrated by the winners of the Junior Cup in the 1940s, the names of the clubs have a strong ethnic feeling: Baltimore Pompeii, Schumacher Juniors, Heidelberg Juniors.¹⁵⁷ But were these teams ‘ethnic’ in name and ‘American’ by birth as would likely to have been the case in Avella? Oliver, who played with the Pompeii senior pro squad in the early 1960s, recalled that the Baltimore team was based “in Eastside, Patterson Park, all Italian guys”.¹⁵⁸ Was this a case of Italians or Italian-Americans, Germans or German-Americans, Ukrainians or Ukrainian-Americans?

Oliver himself was born in America and noted how there was a shift when he and his teammates from the Lighthouse Juniors were finally old enough to play with the

¹⁵⁶ Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

¹⁵⁷ The winners included Our Lady of Pompeii of Baltimore, MD (1945), the Schumacher juniors of St. Louis, MO (1946), and Hiedelberg juniors from Hiedelberg, PA (1947) before the Lighthouse boys (Philadelphia, PA) returned to the podium again in 1948 and 1949. The Pompeii team in 1945 included players with clearly Italian names like Massaroni, Trotta, Piccione, Terzi, Isadoro, Di Pasquali, and Di Fonzo but also non-Italian names likes Meagher, Benzing, Cox, and Surock. This Surock was more than likely the same Lawrence Carmen Surock from Baltimore who played with the Pompeii senior side in the 1950s as well as on the 1952 US Olympic team. See *The Sun*, 25 June 1945, *The Baltimore Sun*, 6 May 1992, and USYS, ‘Past US Youth Soccer National Championship Winners 1935-2010’, <http://championships.usyouthsoccer.org/PastNationalChamps/PastUSYouthSoccerNationalChampionshipWinners19352007.asp> (accessed January 17, 2011).

¹⁵⁸ Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

club coached by his Scottish father, the Kensington Blue Bells.¹⁵⁹ For a society which continually saw new immigrant communities arrive, the notion of ‘immigrant’, ‘foreign’ and ‘ethnic’ were possibly interchangeable, something which led to attaching such a label to the sports they played. Yet when their children were born in America and continued playing these games with last names so definably ‘ethnic’, was the game (and in particular its youth) really as ‘foreign’ as is often suggested in the historiography? Oliver recalled the “clubs who brought their language, their schools, their food, their culture, and their soccer”.¹⁶⁰

The tensions between what constituted a native sport and an ethnic one were certainly complex and illustrated the contrasting view of those who probably wished to vehicle a certain image of the game as “native”. In the traditional year-ending article on sport in the press, the *Daily Boston Globe* reported that

“Soccer – the international game – kept plugging right along during 1949...1949 may also be regarded as a year of the ‘native born’ soccer player. Formerly the sport was supposed to be played only by those of ‘foreign’ birth – that myth like many others was exploded. Today close on 90 percent of the players playing the game in the United States were born here.”¹⁶¹

Obviously such press stood on its own without any real statistical basis but there was evidence that more than some in the game were indeed born on American soil.

Returning to the Avella teams of 1939 and 1940, it would not be unlikely that the junior champions were all born in Avella, already quite an accomplishment for such a small town.¹⁶² In the case of Avella, the population of surrounding Washington

¹⁵⁹ Oliver explains how “some of us first-generation Scots-Americans” moved up to play with the first team and “were thrown into competition with seasoned players of Italian, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Armenian, and German descent”. See Len Oliver, ‘American Soccer didn’t start with Pelé: Philadelphia Soccer in the 1940s and 50s’, in *Journal of Ethno-Development*, 1992.

¹⁶⁰ Len Oliver, correspondence with the author, April 2, 2012.

¹⁶¹ *Daily Boston Globe*, 25 December 1949.

¹⁶² It is interesting to note that Avella, an un-incorporated township, was not independently listed in the 1940 Census. While initially listed in the 1910 Census, Avella was not listed separately again until the 1950 Census. Then, the population was split as a subset of the two townships for a combined 1,356 persons. If the trend for the two townships was any indication, the population of the area was decreasing. Ten years prior, when the juniors won national acclaim, the population may have been slightly higher. See ‘Table 6 – Population of counties and minor civil divisions: 1930 to 1950’, in US Census Bureau, *Census of Population: 1950 Pennsylvania-Volume II Part 38 - Characteristics of the Population*, p. 38-26.

County was over two-hundred thousand in 1940 (one half of all inhabitants were under the age of twenty-four) and only twenty-eight thousand were foreign-born persons.¹⁶³ More specifically, the foreign-born population in the two townships on either side of Avella, Independence and Cross Creek, was less than twenty-percent by that same year.¹⁶⁴ Ten years later, according to the 1950 Census for the state of Pennsylvania, the percentage of native-born citizens rose from seventy-nine percent in 1930 to eighty-nine percent in 1950.¹⁶⁵ All the Avella former junior champs would have been without a doubt over twenty-one years of age in 1950. If the 1950 census is any indication of the general decline in new immigrant arrivals and the rise in native-born citizens, then the Avella boys were probably almost all born in the small mining town.

But how can “American-ness” or “ethnicity” be measured? Birth is, of course, only one aspect, but perhaps the identity of the sport as ethnic and foreign was actually a more nuanced concept than qualified in the game’s history and could be further explored. The Ukrainian experience provides a compelling tale of immigration, football and illustrates the difficulties in understanding “American-ness” or “ethnicity”. Ukrainians, by no means the largest immigrant group, first arrived in several waves beginning in the late 1880s up to the Immigration Act of 1924 and then beginning again during the Second World War into the 1960s.¹⁶⁶ Ukrainian immigration and their ethnic communities in America are interesting for a number of reasons due in no small part to wide coverage in *The Ukrainian Weekly*. Printed by the Ukrainian National Association in New Jersey, the English-language paper began as a supplement to the major Ukrainian newspaper, *Svoboda*, meaning ‘freedom’ or ‘liberty’. As the regular headlines reminded its readership, emigration from the Ukraine in the early to middle twentieth century, though not only to America, was shrouded in persecution, with people fleeing the Bolshevik and later Nazi regimes and caused Ukrainians living in the

¹⁶³ See ‘Table 28 – Race and age, by sex, with rural-farm population, for minor civil divisions, by counties: 1940’ in US Census Bureau, *Sixteenth Census of the United States – 1940 – Population, Volume II: Characteristics of the Population-Part 6*, p. 130.

¹⁶⁴ There were 908 foreign-born persons in the two counties out of 4,600 total inhabitants in 1940.

¹⁶⁵ ‘Table 17-Citizenship and Nativity of the Population 21 years old and over, for the state, urban and rural, 1950, and for the state, 1940 and 1930’, in US Census Bureau, *Census of Population: 1950 Pennsylvania-Volume II Part 38 - Characteristics of the Population*, p. 38-77.

¹⁶⁶ See Maria Woroby, ‘The Ukrainian Immigrant Left in the United States, 1880-1950’, in Paul Buhle & Dan Georgakas, *The Immigrant Left in the United States*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), pp. 185-187.

USA to protest.¹⁶⁷ Following the Second World War, many of these “Displaced Persons”, or DPs as they are referred to in the newspaper, arrived in the United States.¹⁶⁸ Upon arrival, many DPs were quickly connected to well-established Ukrainian ethnic communities in New York, Philadelphia, Detroit, Chicago and other cities.

Several aspects of the sports news coverage in *The Ukrainian Weekly* provide an interesting example and raise the question as to these notions in some communities. When considering *The Ukrainian Weekly*, Ukrainian-Americans at this time may have been relatively ‘Americanized’ with their sports and only became reconnected with ‘ethnic’ sports (football) when new immigrants arrived in waves of Displaced Persons. For example, football-related news coverage only began to increase in the early 1950s as the DPs started to settle in America. The sports that the newspaper focused on before 1950 always included those in which ‘Ukes’ were playing. The fact that featured athletes were involved in ice hockey, ‘American football’, and basketball strongly supports the idea that the interests of older established Ukrainian communities were in mainstream ‘American’ sports. Furthermore, neither the 1950 World Cup, nor the US victory over England, got any press in the paper. The 1950 Stanley Cup did receive mention since a twenty-one year-old ‘Uke’ made his debut with Detroit’s team. Notwithstanding the pull of assimilation, Dushnyck and Chirovsky have argued that, in response to the immigration waves, the Ukrainian community used sports, mainly football and volleyball, to maintain its cultural identity.¹⁶⁹

So what were the changes to youth competition with the massive influx of immigration? With the end of the Second World War, growing numbers of DP’s began to make their way to the United States and they provided a sort of rejuvenation of the

¹⁶⁷ See *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 24 November 1933 and 8 December 1941.

¹⁶⁸ Following the 1948 Displaced Persons Act and the 1953 Refugee Relief Act which extended immigration above the quotas fixed in the 1920s, between 1948 and 1960 some 660,000 DP’s and refugees arrived in the USA including over 40,000 directly from the USSR. As Ukrainians were not recognized as a separate nationality in the various census reports during this period and some of them arrived via other countries (Germany and Belgium for example), it is difficult to establish exact figures for Ukrainian DP’s. See ‘Section 3 – Immigration, Emigration, and Naturalization’ in US Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1961*, pp. 88-102.

¹⁶⁹ Walter Dushnyck and Nicholas L. Chirovsky, *The Ukrainian heritage in America* (New York: Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, 1991), pp. 580-593.

‘ethnic soccer scene’ as they started up teams at the senior, but also junior level. By 1951, a Ukrainian sport club had formed a team in the Eastern District League (primarily located in New York).¹⁷⁰ While no mention is made of the division in which they played, the enthusiastic but hardly impartial newspaper account strongly hints at a junior competition:

“If anyone wishes to see a junior team with a future, they should go and watch the Ukrainian S. C. It is the finest team, as far as ball playing ability is concerned, seen by us in this country. Good positional play, fine ball control, first grade team work and fair play, all factors which are only too often missed in senior games, are displayed. The only weakness of the team is their physical condition. Their players are not nearly as strong and tall as most of the other teams. But this will undoubtedly come in the future, as most of these youngsters are immigrants of recent date.”¹⁷¹

In the Midwest, another Ukrainian club, the ‘Lions’ was set up in 1949 and it was not long before their junior team won a number of honours.¹⁷² The ‘Lions’ juniors took the state title in 1952 over the ‘Slovaks’ before advancing to win the Mid-Western finals of the National Junior Cup.¹⁷³

Junior leagues for boys eighteen and under were not the only competitive space for these young immigrants. By the mid 1950s, the Ukrainian S.C. of New York had entered the German-American League’s “Pupil Soccer League” which included other

¹⁷⁰ The Eastern District League was originally formed in 1928 during the tensions of the ‘Soccer War’ between the professional clubs of the ASL and the USFA. Thomas Cahill formed the league with several ASL teams which had been banned by the USFA. See Wangerin, *Distant Corners*, p. 82. The league still exists today and Ukrainians continue to play. In 2001, the Yonkers Ukrainians won the Division 1 title, the same year that the ‘Stade Breton’ club won the 2nd division and earned promotion. While not the first Ukrainian club to play in the league, Yonkers ‘Krylati’ (or ‘Youth’) began in 1963 while the French expatriate ‘Stade Breton’ appear to have begun play as early as the 1956-57 season. See *The New York Times*, 26 November 1956; *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 29 October 1978; Eastern District Soccer League, ‘Archives’, http://www.edslsoccer.com/edsl_arch.htm (accessed 27 June 2011).

¹⁷¹ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 5 March 1951. One of the players, by the name of Pankewych, may have continued playing. An M. Pankewych appeared in the Ukrainian ‘Sich’ team in nearby Elizabeth, N.J. at the turn of the 1960s with the New Jersey State Cup losing finalists. *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 9 April 1960.

¹⁷² The Lions were the foundation for the Ukrainian-American Sport Club of Chicago which was formed in 1949 with some thirty-three members. Within ten years the club had grown to over one-hundred and fifty individual members. See *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 21 February 1959.

¹⁷³ It appears that their match against the Craigs of St. Louis in May of 1952 was the Western Final. Only more research would reveal who were the losing opponents in the National Final which saw Kollsmann Juniors of Brooklyn crowned champions. *The Ukrainian Weekly* made no mention of the Final which may not be surprising since second place in history often means *no place* in history. See *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 9 June 1952; *The Chicago Tribune*, 28 April 1952; 26 May 1952; and *The New York Times*, 21 December 1952.

ethnic based clubs such as Kollsman, Lithuanian AC, Pfalzer FC.¹⁷⁴ In early December 1954, the young Ukrainians were last of seven teams having given up eighteen goals in three matches; this is probably what prompted the editorial note in which the absence of several definite articles betray more than a hint of an Eastern European accent:

“In the future, Ukrainian SC will play in GAFA’s [German-American Football Association] Little Boys’ Soccer League as the other theams [sic] of Pupil Soccer League have proved to be much more advanced in age and physical superiority than little Ukrainians [sic].”¹⁷⁵

The “Pupils” grew up and their study of sport apparently paid off when the juniors from Ukrainian S.C. won the Eastern final of the National Junior Cup in 1959.¹⁷⁶ Over the 1950s and 60s, the *Weekly* noted the regular league participation of Ukrainian clubs in junior leagues in other cities such as Elizabeth, Trenton and Newark (New Jersey), Rochester (New York), Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), New York City, and Cleveland (Ohio).

The ethnic club scene was not the only place for youth competition and high school leagues began to grow in the post-World War II era. Oliver recalled that in the middle of the twentieth century the game was also popular in “NE [New England] prep schools, they did not have the money for [American] football”.¹⁷⁷ Indeed, football games between private boarding schools such as Andover, Exeter, Fieldston, Woodmere Academy, Hill School, Lawrence, Mount Hermon and Williston were reported in the press as early as 1942.¹⁷⁸ A number of other school representatives organised competitions in a formalised league in 1948 when the *Boston Globe* reported that

“[a]n eight team prep school soccer league has been formed including Brooks, Browne-Nichols, Gov. Dummer, Tabor, St. Mark’s, Belmont Hill, Noble-Greenough, and Milton...Coach Warren Koehler of Milton was chief organizer.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 December 1954.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 6 June 1959.

¹⁷⁷ Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

¹⁷⁸ *The Boston Globe*, 15 November 1942.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 8 October 1948.

Some of the schools came together across four sports (soccer, hockey, baseball and basketball) to form a ‘Private School League Council’ two years later.¹⁸⁰ While it is interesting that ‘American football’ was not mentioned, this does not mean that these elite private schools did not play the gridiron game.¹⁸¹ The archives of the educational institutions listed above and those of the ‘Independent School League’ of New England should be considered as a potential source for a wider understanding of school competitions during this period.

In the public school sphere, young immigrants also played with school teams throughout the 1950s. However, the sport was not on offer in all high schools. This may have been a missed opportunity for some recently arrived youth to integrate socially into a new environment, as illustrated in the case of Antonius Navikas.¹⁸² Another young immigrant who arrived the same year, but in upstate New York, was Zenon Snylyk. Rochester was his new home after his family arrived as Displaced Persons.¹⁸³ He immediately began attending high school and won honours on the school football team before becoming a very young captain of the Rochester Ukrainians.¹⁸⁴ Snylyk’s fellow immigrants were prominent in the Rochester All-City High School

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 14 April 1950.

¹⁸¹ For example, at the start of the season the *New York Times* printed the full ‘American football’ schedules of some one-hundred and eight prep schools in the East including all the schools listed in the ‘Private School League’ except Browne-Nichols. *New York Times*, 22 September 1940.

¹⁸² A young Lithuanian immigrant to Hartford, Connecticut by the name of Antonius Navikas arrived with his family (all DPs) in 1949. During his first few days of school, the ten year-old was described by the Union Grammar school principal as “an excellent soccer player”. Unfortunately for Anthony (using a new Americanized version of his name), it appears that football was not yet on offer at East Hartford High School, from which he graduated probably in 1957. Despite having had a football team at one point in the 1930s, it appears that the sport at East Hartford was only for girls in the mid-1950s. Other schools in the area like West Hartford did have football teams for boys. But sometime in the late 1930s or 40s, East Hartford appears to have “dropped” the kicking game and “picked up” the handling one. It is unknown if Navikas dropped soccer and played another sport in school. After graduating from high school Navikas had several run-ins with the law for reckless driving and a dropped charge for gasoline theft. It appears that Navikas learned from the experiences, however. He matured and married a local girl, Carol Ann Puntty, in 1960, before embarking on a twenty-five year career as a local police officer. With regard to football, perhaps Navikas was just unlucky and immigrated to the ‘wrong’ side of town. Had there been a high school team in the East, who knows whether he would made it with the Hartford professional team that played in the American Soccer League in the 1960s, rather than maybe just being a regular in the crowd? See *The Hartford Courant*, 10 October 1930; 20 May 1949; 11 December 1955; 11 January 1956; 16 November 1956; 23 August 1959; 5 August 1960; 14 September 2000.

¹⁸³ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 8 May 1977.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4 September 1951. Snylyk was a bit more fortunate in his football than Navikas, as he went on to play in college and even captain the US Olympic team.

teams with five recently arrived ‘Ukes’ named to the squad in 1957.¹⁸⁵ In other places like Bethlehem (Pennsylvania), high school boys, William Kovacs, Zenon Balaziuk and Oleh Balaziuk – all three of Ukrainian descent – formed the core of the squad and helped “to maintain the tradition of the team which since 1932 had thirteen unbeaten seasons, five of them unbeaten and [untied].”¹⁸⁶ Four Ukrainian boys helped Haaren High School obtain its first ever Public Schools’ Athletic League (of New York City) championship in any sport. The ‘ethnic’ flavour of the team was well described:

“Keeping in tune with the international flavor of soccer...the Haaren team coached by Mr. Murray Schwartz, is composed of all foreign-born boys. The team members are Horacio Abaroa of Argentina, Antonio ‘Chico’ Acosta of Columbia [sic]. Daniel Sailer of France, Peter Konowsky of Germany, Alex Perrault of Haiti, Philip Bessios and John Kokoris of Greece, and Walter Katynsky, Andrew Mycak, Nicholas Skirka and Peter Shalaiko of Ukraine.”¹⁸⁷

Yet for those boys who attended schools which did not play football, the path to continue playing went through local clubs, and in many cases, ethnic ones. Like the Lithuanian-born Navikas, Alex Guild was also a young immigrant to eastern Hartford, Connecticut. He was just as unlucky that East Hartford High School did not offer the sport for boys, but he was able to play in local leagues with Scandia.¹⁸⁸ This provided him the opportunity to play competitively which had no doubt a role in developing his skills to a level good enough to be selected for the 1959 US Olympic team.¹⁸⁹

Returning to the question of ethnicity, one of the youth game’s interesting aspects to consider is how football was represented within other sectors of childhood culture in America during this period. While largely disconnected from football, the Boy Scouts organisation has had close involvement with many youth since Baden-

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 16 November 1957.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 February 1961.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 29 May 1962.

¹⁸⁸ One wonders why East Hartford High School officials did not decide to sponsor the sport during this period given the influx of immigrants who played the game. Aside from Guild and Navikas, Ukrainian Myron Krasij (also written Krasiy) attended East Hartford and played in local ethnic leagues in the mid 1950s. He was selected for the US Olympic team which went to the 1963 Pan-American Games in São Paolo. With West Hartford being a soccer breeding ground, it is unclear why on the other side of town football was not also on offer especially with talented players at the school. But the wait came to an end by the 1970s when East Hartford held a first varsity squad practice in late August for the fall season. See *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 20 April 1963; *Hartford Courant*, 25 August 1973.

¹⁸⁹ Guild arrived as a twelve-year-old from Scotland in 1951 and attended the school in the mid 1950s. See *The Hartford Courant*, 15 November 1959.

Powell founded the movement in 1908.¹⁹⁰ The American organisation's monthly magazine, *Boys' Life*, provides an interesting outside reading of how football was viewed as a sport in the country at different times.¹⁹¹ Aside from a modicum of presence on the cover (only after 1974) few articles made reference to the sport until the late 1960s. In the 1920s and 30s the word 'soccer' was generally limited to the margins and appeared only in crossword puzzles and the philately sections. The sport was the subject of its first lengthy piece in 1927 in a fictional story entitled 'The Price of a Pennant' about leadership, values, and education.¹⁹² In the same issue Knute Rockne, head coach of the Notre Dame 'American football' team, wrote a piece which featured tactical diagrams, hints about the game and a photo of the famed 'Four Horsemen'.¹⁹³ The objective of the former article (soccer) was clearly moralistic and educational while the second (American football) focused on the sport itself. A similar fictional story, 'The Spectre at the Game', appeared again in 1935, but no article covered the finer points of the sport (in a tactical or technical way) until the 1950s.¹⁹⁴

During the 1950s and 60s several short pieces appeared that covered introductions to the game, training, basic explanations of tactical issues and rules; this suggests that this was for an audience relatively unfamiliar with the sport of football.¹⁹⁵ A number of these pieces were written by Philadelphia area high school coaches.¹⁹⁶ This is not altogether surprising given the area's link as one of the homes of

¹⁹⁰ In America, the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) have a legacy which boasts a membership of well over 50 million 'boy scouts' and 62 million 'cub scouts' since the founding in 1910. Nearly sixty-percent of NASA astronauts (including 11 of the 12 who walked on the moon) to date, seventy-two percent of Rhodes scholars and 212 of the 533 individual senators and representatives of the 111th US Congress have been involved in the organization either as scouts or leaders. See Allen Salzman, 'The Boy Scouts Under Siege', in *American Scholar*, 61 (4) (1992), pp. 591-7.

¹⁹¹ The magazine, *Boys' Life*, appeared for the first time in March 1911 and has been published monthly almost without alteration in since (two issues were published in March 1911, the third in April and the fourth in June, then monthly). It would be interesting to conduct a similar reading of the Girl Scouts.

¹⁹² *Boys' Life*, October 1927, pp. 22, 32, 34.

¹⁹³ *Boys' Life*, October 1927, pp. 7-8.

¹⁹⁴ *Boys' Life*, September 1935, pp. 10-1, 28.

¹⁹⁵ This is in stark contrast to other sports like baseball, basketball or American football for which there are no similar explanations or introductions to the game. Instead, there are a plethora of stories about star athletes who were former Boy Scouts.

¹⁹⁶ Frank Giles (Ridley Park High School coach, near Philadelphia, PA), and Bob Aiken, (Ridley Township High School, near Philadelphia, PA) both provided short articles with photos designed to teach specific aspects of the game. Marvin Allen (soccer coach at University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) also supplied the first very 'introductory' piece in November of 1951.

Americanized club and vibrant scholastic competition in the city.¹⁹⁷ However, what is surprising in *Boys' Life* during this period is the absence of any written pieces on football by St. Louis based coaches, especially since the historiography often labels the city as the epicentre of the American game.

St. Louis cannot be considered as anything less than a stronghold for the sport at the senior level but also for youth. As a city, it provided no less than twenty-two national junior champions, a number twice that of any other entire state, let alone any other city.¹⁹⁸ The sporting hegemony of this island of 'Soccer Americana' was the fruit of a booming youth scene at all levels in no small part due to the Catholic Youth Council (CYC). The CYC official history recalls the educational goals of the organisation of sports for parish youth "through a program of spiritual, athletic, cultural, civic, social and physical development" and a programme in which sport was to be used to "develop character, make a man courageous, a generous loser and a gracious victor".¹⁹⁹ The importance of such educational goals – very much in line with the tradition of English public school muscular Christianity – did not, however, impede the organisation of competition.²⁰⁰ Robert Baptista has argued that, by 1957, Fr. Peter Dooley and others in St. Louis had built "the most extensive soccer program in the country" through the organisation of soccer leagues between parish schools.²⁰¹ It was an extensive programme, and contributed significantly to football's development in the city. For example, the hosting of clinics held on Saturdays throughout the 1940s drew several thousand players and coaches over the twelve-week sessions.²⁰² The parochial leagues, but also the Khoury association, included a wide variety of age groups and

¹⁹⁷ Len Oliver recalled his own experience at Northeast High School during the late 1940s as an example of the city's scene during the post-war years. Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

¹⁹⁸ Between 1946 and 1996, St. Louis junior teams won twenty-two national titles including nineteen championships in the twenty-eight years from 1956 to 1984. See US Youth Soccer, 'Past US Youth Soccer'.

¹⁹⁹ CYC History, Chapter 1, <http://www.cycstl.net/history/cyc-sports-history> (accessed June 16, 2009).

²⁰⁰ For a treatment of 'muscular Christianity' and the ideology of competition, see Richard Holt, *Sport and the British*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp.92-8.

²⁰¹ Robert Baptista, 'A History of Intercollegiate Soccer in the United States of America' (PhD thesis, Indiana University, 1962), p.134.

²⁰² Robinson, 'The History of Soccer', pp. 241-242.

grew massively from the early 1940s to the 1960s.²⁰³ This groundwork finally provided its first national junior champion in 1956 when St. Engelbert defeated Heidelberg in the final.²⁰⁴

In several other areas including cross-border Vancouver (Canada), as well as Los Angeles (California), Baltimore (Maryland) and Milwaukee (Wisconsin), competitions for youth were also organised under the umbrella of Catholic parishes and the related schools. As early as 1951, the Knights of Columbus, a Catholic men's organisation were sponsoring "midget soccer" tournaments for youth in Vancouver parishes while similar competitions were reported between various Catholic parishes in the mid 1960s in Wisconsin.²⁰⁵ The Baltimore Catholic Youth Organisation (CYO) also had its own competitions in at least two age groups, and the winners played Philadelphia junior teams in an inter-city final in 1963.²⁰⁶ The impetus for youth leagues in one part of the Los Angeles Catholic community came from Father Mathias Lani who arrived in the city in 1928 to found St. Stephen's Parish after one year working in the Hungarian community on the East Coast in Bridgeport, Connecticut.²⁰⁷ He was known locally for his passion for football and up to several weeks prior to his death the fifty-six year-old had been coaching three youth teams in the parish.²⁰⁸ His legacy was such that the Greater Los Angeles League honoured the priest as "one of their greatest benefactors" in a special programme and later named a tournament in his

²⁰³ Robinson noted that the CYC, in its modern form, began in 1941 with forty-six parishes. Not all had football teams, but by 1947 over seventy parishes had football teams in some categories - senior, intermediate, junior and juvenile. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

²⁰⁴ *The New York Times*, 24 June 1956. Goal-scorer in the final, George Endler, went on to co-captain St. Louis University in the late 1950s and was among the finalists in Olympic tryouts for the 1959 Pan-American Games. St. Engelbert's Catholic Church was founded in 1891 as a parish for German immigrants. *The Hartford Courant*, 15 October 1959; *The Hartford Courant*, 11 April 1959; John Ernest Rothensteiner, *History of the archdiocese of St. Louis*, (St. Louis: Blackwell Wielandy, 1928), p. 509.

²⁰⁵ See *The Vancouver Sun*, 4 October 1951; *The Milwaukee Journal*, 10 June 1965.

²⁰⁶ *The Sun*, 15 July 1963.

²⁰⁷ *Los Angeles Times*, 22 November 1954. St. Stephen's parish, in south central Los Angeles, began as a community for Hungarians which had grown as a significant ten-thousand strong immigrant community by the late 1930s. Father Lani was instrumental in assisting the relocation of thousands of DPs in the late 1940s. Following a six-week trip through DP camps in Europe, as Secretary of the Archdiocese's Resettlement Council, Lani worked to assist the sponsorship of Displaced Persons in order to bring them to California. By August of 1949, the National Catholic Welfare Council, driven by efforts such as those of Father Lani, had brought some 20,000 DPs to America. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1937; 5 November 1948; 1 August 1949.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 24 November 1954.

memory.²⁰⁹ It would be interesting to uncover to what extent churches in other parts of the country organised football and how these efforts interlinked with other activities like Father Lani's Displaced Person relocation efforts.

If St. Louis does not appear to be a unique case of church and youth sporting competition, the city was, however, the only church-related football movement to garner numerous national titles beginning with the St. Engelbert's Juniors in 1956 and followed two years later by St. Paul the Apostle Juniors.²¹⁰ The domination of St. Louis teams and ethnic clubs continued up to the 1970s.²¹¹ Being from one ethnic community may not have been a problem, but others may have had more difficulties. One of the 'ethnic' teams to win were the New York Ukrainian Juniors in 1959 who included Schmotolocha, Popovych, Kozdoba, Sholudko and Katynsky.²¹²

In the political climate of the Cold War it may not have been socially easy to be of Eastern European origin, and the fact that they played football would only have further marginalized the youth game from mainstream America. Indeed, an example from the 1963 issue of *Boys' Life* illustrates this rather well. In an article on 'Russian Youth', the magazine mentioned that football was the top sport for boys.²¹³ Even if done for educational purposes to inform American boys about their Russian equivalents, the connection of football with the 'Comms' in the years following McCarthyism could not have put the game or Ukrainian youth footballers in the best light.²¹⁴ But the

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 5 December 1954. The 'Father Lani Memorial Trophy' appears to have been a summer tournament held in the late 1950s. *Ibid.*, 27 July 1958.

²¹⁰ In between the two St. Louis Catholic teams, who else but the Lighthouse Juniors won the 1957 final. On the road to the 1958 final, New York-based Blau Weiss Gottschee defeated Umberto Nobile juniors of Baltimore in the Eastern final while out west, St. Paul the Apostle Juniors defeated Chicago's Schwaben. Following St. Paul's victory which they repeated two years later, Catholic teams from St. Louis went on to win five national junior titles in the 1960s. Blau Weiss' unique claim to fame was that they were the club with which Pelé's son, Edinho, played in the 1980s. See *The Baltimore Sun*, 23 June 1958; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 14 April 1958; US Youth Soccer, 'Past US Youth Soccer'.

²¹¹ Between 1956 and 1972 every National Junior title was won either by a St. Louis club (13 times), Philadelphia's Lighthouse Boys (twice) or ethnic club teams (twice).

²¹² *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 27 June 1959.

²¹³ *Boys' Life*, March 1963, pp. 14-5.

²¹⁴ Overcoming ignorance in America was an ardent objective for the Ukrainian-American community who regularly lobbied for public officials to annually recognize "Ukrainian Independence Day" which made the front page of the *Ukrainian Weekly* every year in early January. It was not until 1992 that Ukrainians were actually listed in the US Census as separate from immigrants from other former Soviet states. See Section 1, 'Table 8 – Immigrants by Country of Birth: 1971-1992', in US Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994*, p. 11.

association of football as ‘foreign’ was changing as the game pried at the door of mainstream consciousness.

In November of the same year in which the scouts read about their Russian equivalents, the first of a handful of fictional stories about high school student exchanges appeared in the Boy Scouts magazine. The first story, ‘The Fullback from Liechtenstein’, recounted the fictional visit of Heinrich from Liechtenstein and his one-year visit to Wisconsin hosted by a boy of similar age, Taylor, and his family. On Heinrich’s first day of ‘American football’, the high school coach asked the exchange student whether he had “ever played football” to which the boy from Liechtenstein responded affirmatively. One American boy piped up: “He means soccer, coach, that’s what they call football in Europe”.²¹⁵ At the end of the year capped by this rewarding American gridiron experience in Wisconsin, the boy from Heinrich’s host family, Taylor, asked “I wonder what this soccer is all about”.²¹⁶

In a subsequent story, the fictional Taylor left Wisconsin to go abroad the following year and he would indeed discover what “soccer was all about” while playing with Heinrich’s *gymnasium* team.²¹⁷ Upon his arrival in Liechtenstein, the boys discussed Taylor’s knowledge of the sport:

Heinrich - “You have never heard of soccer?”

Taylor - “Oh, sure,” [Taylor] said, “Every Sunday in the sports section of the paper back home, on page 12 or so, there’s usually a paragraph about how the Bavarian Tigers and the Serbian Lions had themselves a game in O’Malley Park. I think they’re the only teams in the league. But I never actually saw a game.”²¹⁸

Taylor finished his year abroad by alternating as starting goalkeeper for Heinrich’s school team and was even carried off the field by his teammates after an outstanding performance.²¹⁹ Young Taylor’s fictional comments were not far off from the truth and

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, October 1965, pp. 29, 63, 65. The story was entitled ‘Look Ma, no hands’ and covered the fictional experiences of Taylor who went to spend the following school year in Liechtenstein while staying Heinrich’s family.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, October 1965, p. 29.

²¹⁹ *Boys’ Life*, October 1965, p. 65.

the state of the game in Wisconsin was reflected in real newspaper coverage of the sport at the same time.²²⁰ Fiction may not always become fact as the saying goes, but it certainly can reflect reality.

Up to the 1960s the portrayal of football in *Boys' Life* was overwhelmingly as a 'foreign' game, at least by the editors who presumably hoped to vehicle specific values or ideas of how an 'American' boy should view the world in the context of the Scouting movement. On the field, the real football competitions themselves were often organised within the network of ethnically linked clubs and teams, under the auspices of Catholic schools and parishes, and in the pockets of so-called Americanized clubs in places like Philadelphia which dominated the National Junior Cup. This was set to change, however, as the sport was moving away from an 'ethnic'-only association and into the mainstream. In one sense, just as the fictional Taylor returned from Liechtenstein having learned the game abroad in the mid 1960s, the real-world Taylor in Milwaukee would have finally seen a game, maybe even the 1966 World Cup final or a 1967 NPSL match on national television.²²¹ Indeed, the Boy Scouts' magazine itself illustrated the change in mentality when it asked the question 'Can Soccer Score in America?' in a lengthy feature article in 1967.²²² This shift was accompanied by growth in high schools, and not in the unquantifiable way that the *Spalding Guides* had evangelically proclaimed in the 1920s. The 1970s were to be the watershed years for youth football in America.

²²⁰ A Wisconsin newspaper, *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, did indeed regularly list on page 12 the results from the recent 'State Soccer Loop' in which the *real* Serbians drew 1-1 while the *real* Bavarian Blue Ribbons finished their match 0-0. Adolph Geiger's goal for the first-placed Sport Club was enough to seal a 1-0 victory over the Croatian Eagles. In an adjacent article, and certainly not the best publicity for the sport, the Associated Press reported that Milan and Naples soccer fans "hurled insults, firecrackers and stones" at each other. See *The Milwaukee Sentinel*, 11 October 1965. A real Ripley's 'Believe it or not' moment.

²²¹ The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) broadcast the two-hour delay footage of the World Cup Final at 12 noon in the US on Saturday, the 30th of July 1966. The *Chicago Tribune* ran an article with a tactical layout of the sport and explained some of the basics of the game. Following the match, West Coast sportswriter Sid Ziff, began his article with the title 'Hats off to soccer'. The event made enough of an impact to stimulate and accelerate the negotiations of three different investor groups which started, for the first time on a true national basis, two rival professional leagues. See *The Chicago Tribune*, 29 July 1966; *The New York Times*, 30 July 1966, *The Los Angeles Times*, 1 August 1966.

²²² *Boys' Life*, October 1967, pp. 32-4, 36-7. In a lengthy article accompanied by colour photos of Pelé and World Cup matches in packed stadiums, the story was the first time *Boys' Life* entertained the idea of football succeeding in the USA as a mainstream sport.

The American 'youth soccer boom' in the 1970s: to boldly go where no ball has gone before...something's afoot in suburbia

*At present soccer is one of the fastest growing organised sports in American schools. It has shown both longitudinal and vertical growth, from the old-entrenched high schools and colleges of the East and Mid-Atlantic states, longitudinally into the far reaches of the Mid-west, South and Far-West states, and vertically into junior high schools, the little leagues, the midget leagues and the youth leagues of many communities.*²²³

The state of the youth game in schools and leagues at the turn of the 1970s was well captured by Schmid and McKeon in their 1968 coaching text printed by educational publisher Prentice-Hall. As both had been involved in the game for several decades by this time, they were well-placed to comment on the game's growth.²²⁴ Yet their words read much like the predictions of various USFA leaders who were similarly well-placed to predict a grand future in the 1920s. What was different this time about the youth game and, by extension, the sport in general? Was there a real shift happening in the nature of the youth game in America? This final sub-section argues that the traditional tides of ethnic-association in football were changing specifically through a revolution in the youth game.

Three interlinked forces joined together in a process of changing youth football from its prior isolated minority sporting status: a distancing from the sport's condition as an ethnically marginalized game; a groundswell of local grassroots football that had never before existed; and finally the massive inclusion of girls into the competitive sphere. As distinct youth competition had officially separated juniors from seniors already beginning in 1935, youth football maintained and further developed a distinct competitive structure from the 1970s. But national club competition itself was not enough and youth football would soon have its own national federation, the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA). In line with wider tendencies in the game,

²²³ Melvin Schmid and John McKeon, *Skills and Strategies of Successful Soccer*, p. 7, in Tyson, 'A study of the factors', p. 21.

²²⁴ McKeon was from the field of physical education and served within the USSFA for the sport at the collegiate level. He coached football for over twenty-five years beginning in the late 1950s at East Stroudsburg, Bridgeport and Montclair State. Schmid had also coached widely at the collegiate level at Lyndon State, and Trenton State. He was a regional chairman of the National Soccer Coaches Association's (later NSCAA) Collegiate All-American selection committee in the early 1960s, before being elected the NSCAA's president in 1970. *Hartford Courant*, 3 January 1955; *Ibid.*, 11 January 1970; *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, 24 December 1962; *The New York Times*, 12 July 1970; 7 September 1977.

youth football also distanced itself from its ‘ethnic’ and minority moniker. The youth game moved beyond select East Coast inner cities (such as Philadelphia, the greater New York City area and Baltimore) and the old islands of the sport in the Mid-West (Chicago, St. Louis along with Detroit and Milwaukee). As many a historical American felt the pull to “go out West”, youth football did just that, and in so doing, built a new life from the ground up. Girls and boys swarmed the Saturday morning park scene. It was the birth of the ‘youth soccer boom’.

McKeon and Schmid were right about the “fastest growing sport” in 1968 and the trend they had observed continued. Over the following years the number of high schools fielding competitive teams increased exponentially.

Table 3 – High schools playing organised football in the USA (1968-1980)²²⁵

Year	Number of High schools
1968	1,700
1969	2,217
1971	2,290
1972	2,500
1973	3,356
1975	3,478
1977	3,455
1978	3,783
1980	4,555

This broadening of the youth game’s constituencies also became evident at the top of the youth pyramid in the National Junior Cup.²²⁶ In what was probably an effort to consolidate the organisation of the tournament, the final stages of the cup were held, for the first time in 1971, in a condensed format over several days at one site.²²⁷ After two years of the new format, a new entrant made its way into the elite junior winners’ circle. While not the first Baltimore team to win, St. Elizabeth’s title in 1973 was symbolic in

²²⁵ Compiled by author from National Federation of State High School Associations, ‘NFHS Participation Figures Search’, http://www.nfhs.org/custom/participation_figures (accessed June 3, 2009). It should be noted that it is unclear if the NFHS numbers covered all schools, public and private. The figures should be read as conservative estimates.

²²⁶ From 1976 to 2010 the winners of the cup came from fifteen different state youth soccer associations, while all winners between 1935 and 1975 were from only eight states.

²²⁷ *Chicago Tribune*, 31 May 1971. It appears that the 1970 final was still a single event in which St. Bartholomew from northern St. Louis defeated the Gottschee Blau Weiss Juniors of New York in St. Louis. *The New York Times*, 8 June 1970.

breaking, for the first time in the competition's history, the firm combined grasp of the various St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia and the greater New York area clubs. The tournament was made to wait three more years before the final brick of the old foundations was removed since St. Elizabeth's remained linked to the old guard through its affiliation with the church-based Catholic Youth Organization.²²⁸

From some two-hundred and twenty teams in 1974, the competitive field in 1976 had increased to three-hundred and forty-seven teams.²²⁹ From that large pool of teams in 1976 the 3-0 winners and new national champions were rising youth star and future NASL professional Gary Etherington's 'Annandale Cavaliers'.²³⁰ The team from the expanding suburbs of Northern Virginia emphatically defeated the representatives from the 'old world' of youth football, Chicago's Sparta juniors and emerged as the first national champions from the new order.²³¹

Somewhere between the suburban Annandale Boys' Club and St. Elizabeth's of Hungary in downtown Baltimore, a seismic shift was occurring and was reflected in the oldest youth competition in the country's history. Youth football was entering mainstream America and the nature of the organisations which were responsible for

²²⁸ The Baltimore team, which included players by the name of Brehm, Mach, and Kujawa, appears to have been based out of St. Elizabeth's of Hungary, a Catholic parish across the street from the famed Patterson Park where most of historic Baltimore football was played. *The Sun*, 10 June 1973; 11 June 1973.

²²⁹ *New York Times*, 3 February 1974; 21 June 1976.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* Despite representing the United States on a number of occasions and being referred to in the press as a "native born" player, Etherington was in fact born in Southampton, England in 1958 and immigrated with his family to the United States at age twelve. His father, an amateur player, was said to have started the boy at the game "as soon as [he] could walk", but Etherington really began playing in an organised fashion with the Annandale club. He turned down a scholarship to the University of Virginia and signed a two year pro contract with the Cosmos after his 1976 National Junior title. On his decision, he said "I know in America you need a lot of education, but I always wanted to play pro soccer. I guess that was a big decision for an 18-year-old to have to make." One newspaper noted that he was "a pleasure to listen to, not only because of his boyish enthusiasm but also because of the slight British accent he still retains." Accent aside, he was part of the 1970s generation of American players who learned the game in the new suburban non-ethnic club environment. See *Boca Raton News*, 24 August 1977; *New York Times*, 16 February 1977; *The Washington Post*, 22 August 1978.

²³¹ The Annandale club was started in 1959 by Everett Grant Germain Jr., a native of the Washington, D.C. area. As part of Fairfax County, Virginia, Annandale was in an area which saw enormous demographic growth through suburban migration in the decades following World War II. Fairfax County's population increased from 1950 to 1960 by 179% (from 98,557 to 275,002) and then again by 65% in 1970 (to 455,021). See US Census Bureau, 'Table 6 – Area and Population of Counties and Independent Cities, Urban and Rural: 1960 and 1950', *Census of the Population: 1960*, volume I – Characteristics of the Population, p. 48-12; and US Census Bureau, 'Table 9 - Population of Land Area and Counties : 1970 and 1960', volume I – Characteristics of the Population, Part A, Section 2, p. 48-15.

youth competition was also changing. Shortly after Joe Barriskill, long-time USSFA secretary, retired, the national federation had a new name (United States Soccer Federation) and lots of new children as youth competitions boomed under local and regional youth leagues. The *Boston Globe* described the new phenomenon with the 1977 headline “Something’s Afoot in Suburbia”.²³² But staying true to the history of the sport’s governance, the youth movement was just as fragmented as the adult level and even with a separate national youth association, the USYSA, youth competitions were not yet under one umbrella.

The USSFA claimed to have grandiose plans in 1970 to grow the sport across all fifty states. As reported by well-known journalist Brian Glanville, the plan included the goal to host the World Cup in 1986 and a national coaching plan under the direction of one national coach with an eye on Dettmar Cramer.²³³ As explained to the national associations in FIFA’s circular letter in April of the next year, the German was in fact a touring coach paid by the international governing body “whose services have been made available to English speaking countries in Asia, and Africa, and, lately, also in some countries of CONCACAF”.²³⁴ In the face of these plans, some in the Ukrainian sporting community remained sceptical and less optimistic than the USSFA leadership. Regular sports editor for the *Ukrainian Weekly*, Oleh Zwadiuk remarked:

“While this highly laudable plan is being executed by the officials, the USSFA once again promises more of the same... According to a USSFA news release, the convention’s high point was a forum of speakers who outlined the needs to make soccer a major American sport in what USSFA president Erwin Single called ‘the decade of challenge’. One still remembers the 1960’s being similarly designated...”²³⁵

²³² *Boston Globe*, 28 October 1977.

²³³ Glanville reported that well-known German coach and FIFA instructor, Dettmar Cramer, had been hired by the USSFA and sent on a six-month coaching missionary tour all across the country. Cramer prepared a report for the national federation which outlined some plans for a coaching programme. The German coach was eventually hired for a very short stint in 1973 before returning to coach Bayern Munich in midseason. *The New York Times*, 12 July 1970.

²³⁴ Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Circular No. 159*. Interestingly, the letter clearly states that he “he should not be involved in coaching National Teams of different levels, although the programme might include some tactical coaching sessions for demonstration purposes”. Did Cramer’s later hiring by the USSFA cause friction between the American leadership and the global body FIFA?

²³⁵ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 8 August 1970.

In regards to the federation's goal of "getting every boy in America kicking a ball", Zwadiuk was unequivocal about the organisational challenge that this represented:

"Mr. [Gene] Edwards [USSFA Development Committee chairman] should know that it is not hard to get boys to kick soccer balls, and millions do. The trouble begins when the young hopefuls grow up and begin to get into the mire of America's so-called 'organized' soccer that they are discouraged and fall by the wayside."²³⁶

Did these boys (note the absence of girls who had yet to seize the interest of the USSFA leadership) fall by the wayside or was it the fragmented structure of the system which was the problem? The system was expanding by leaps and bounds but from the ground up and not necessarily organised from the top down. The acceptance of the sport by 1970s mainstream America's parents had occurred at the same time as the youth football phenomenon moved westward. This expansion brought a whole new apparatus to the competitive spaces organized by the traditional national – largely East and Midwest focused – governing bodies. Disconnected from the institutional bastions of the sport – the state and national federations historically dominated by their ethnic links – the new 'youth soccer' associations and clubs were designed to serve their own constituencies: local youth under the supervision of volunteers and parents. The example of Colorado is a relevant illustration of this frontier spirit which was initially unconcerned with a national football structure to which it could, let alone should, adhere.

While a state association of some kind was in place as early as the early 1920s (the current body, the Rocky Mountain Soccer Football Association was incorporated in 1939), a group of four men and one woman formed the first board of directors for the Arvada Soccer Association in 1970 located in the greater Denver, Colorado metropolitan area.²³⁷ None of the addresses listed in the document were clubhouses or near parks or fields. All five directors' addresses listed are in the suburban townhouse developments of northwest Denver and the corporation's official business address was

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ The Colorado Secretary of State's online database provides a comprehensive listing of scanned versions of registered corporations' original business records. These records include a number of adult and youth soccer organizations dating as far back as 1939. See Colorado Secretary of State, Business Center, 'Business Search' <http://www.sos.state.co.us/>.

the same as one of the board members, Mr. Semp. The association was organised with the following aim:

“for the development and governing of the game of soccer for youth in the Arvada area who live within the boundaries of the North Jefferson County”.²³⁸

The Arvada Soccer Association was not the only organisation to designate a supervisory role to itself without any mention of an affiliation with a state or national body. In east Denver, the Skyline Junior Soccer Association was incorporated two years after Arvada and likewise made no mention of the USSFA or any other hierarchically superior governing body. The articles of incorporation went as far as appropriating a governing and regulatory role in its stated purpose which was to:

“organize and operate an association of junior soccer teams, arrange schedules; organise teams; select coaches and referees; promulgate rules and regulations; and provide a vehicle for its members to promote the sport of soccer”.²³⁹

The Arvada club did not live in isolation forever however. By 1988 it had re-filed its articles of incorporation that included a direct mention to its state and national affiliation (even if it was coloured by undertones seeking to preserve a sort of colonial autonomy). Section 1 of Arvada’s new Article III stated the purpose of the club as follows:

“to promote and develop the game of soccer among elementary and secondary school age children; specifically to teach, develop, promote and administer the game primarily among players under nineteen (19) years of age within the State of Colorado (specifically the city of Arvada, Jefferson County and surrounding areas). The corporation shall also foster national and international competition for such youth through affiliation with (but not control by) the United States Youth Soccer Federation, which is the youth division of the United States Soccer Federation, the Colorado State Youth Soccer Association, all of which are recognized by the international governing body of soccer, the Federation Internationale de Football.”²⁴⁰

Why was such an organisation not affiliated to the national governing body from the start? For the simple reason that in Colorado the local youth competition organisers

²³⁸ Aurora Soccer Association, Inc., ‘Articles of incorporation’, 1970.

²³⁹ Skyline Junior Soccer Association, ‘Articles of incorporation’, 1972.

²⁴⁰ Arvada Soccer Association, Inc., ‘Amended and Restated Articles of incorporation with Amendments’, 1988.

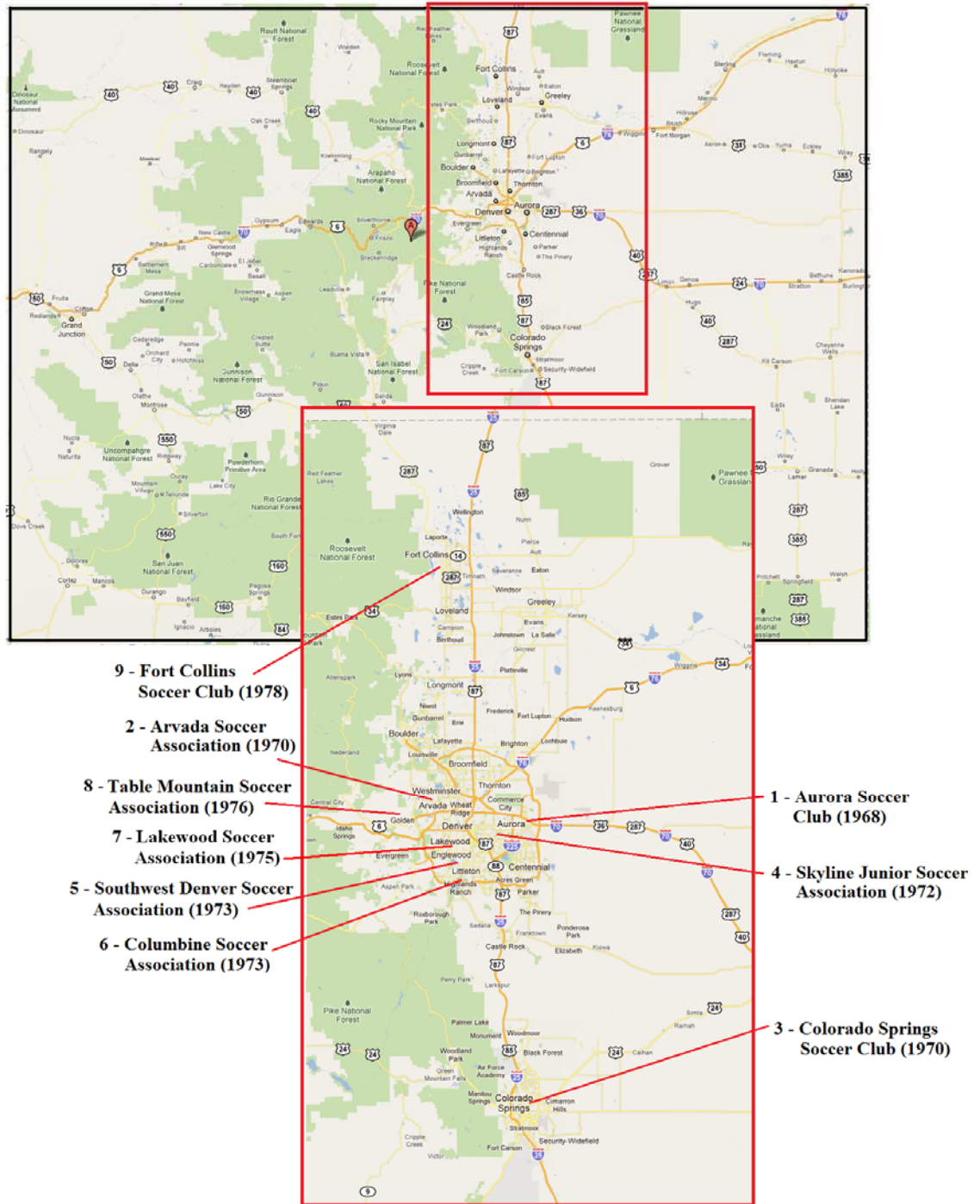
like Arvada and Skyline actually *predated* the state youth association. The Colorado Youth Soccer Association (CYSA) was not incorporated until 1978 a full four years after the national youth association, USYSA, was formed.²⁴¹ The state body's three founding board members hailed from areas which already had existing youth soccer programmes, Denver, Aurora and Colorado Springs. By the time of its founding there were a number of youth football associations in the state.²⁴² These competition organisers are mapped and numbered by their incorporation date below:

²⁴¹ Colorado State Youth Soccer Association, 'Articles of Incorporation', 1978.

²⁴² The Colorado State records include: Aurora Soccer Club (1968), Arvada Soccer Association (1970), Colorado Springs Soccer Club (1970), Skyline Junior Soccer Association (1972), Southwest Denver Soccer Association (1973), Columbine Soccer Association (1973), Lakewood Soccer Association (1975), Table Mountain Soccer Association (1976), Fort Collins Soccer Club (1978). These groups may well have played inter-association competitions before the officialising of the state youth body in 1978.

Map 1 - Youth football organisations by incorporation date prior to the Colorado Youth Soccer Association (1968-1978)²⁴³

State of Colorado with inset of Denver metropolitan area, Fort Collins and Colorado Springs



²⁴³ Source: compiled from the dates and business addresses stated in initial articles of incorporation which are listed in the Colorado State records. Nearly eighty percent of the state’s population in 1970 (1.7 million out of 2.2 million) and 1980 (2.3 million out of 2.9 million) resided within the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA’s) which roughly equate to the red outlined inset on the map. The only SMSA not included is Pueblo which lies south of Colorado Springs. See *US Census Bureau*, ‘Population and Percent Change by Type of Residence: 1980 and 1970’, in ‘1980 Census of the Population’, vol. 1 – Characteristics of the Population – Colorado, p. 7-4.

The new state youth association was thus formed on the basis of a number of existing groups which started as early as 1968 and continued sprouting up in different communities across the most densely populated areas. Local organisations, then, predated the regional and state body and only later adhered to a national structure in a manner that preserved their local autonomy. The CYSA's founding articles of incorporation stated its affiliation for the purposes of fostering "national and international competition... with the US Youth Soccer Association".²⁴⁴ It is the word "with" that is perhaps the most intriguing. The aim was *not* to foster competition *under the direct control or supervision of* a national association, but rather an approach like Arvada's affiliation "with (but not control by)" the state and national associations. Was Colorado unique in this regard or was this a national trend? It appears that, at least at a general level, the notion of respect of local authority was a fundamental part of the whole organisational structure. This becomes clear reading article 2005 of the USSF's 1978 rules on its membership:

"Each Youth State Association shall retain its own autonomy, but will adhere to the Constitution and Rules of this Association in all matters pertaining to inter-state, regional, national, and international competition, or in other competitions sponsored by this Association."²⁴⁵

Examples like these illustrate the fragmented, isolated and non-hierarchical approach in which 1970s youth soccer organisations sought to provide competitive spaces for their local youth.

The sporadic and uncoordinated formation of local first, and state and national youth organisations second, did not follow a logical hierarchical top-down path. Rather, these youth soccer communities were set up before any overarching governing body existed and also separate from any overtly ethnic club scene as indicated in the more geographically focused names. This suggests that these youth-focused organisations, at least initially, considered themselves autonomous and independent from any wider national or international sporting movement, especially that which was foreign or ethnically tied.

²⁴⁴ Colorado State Youth Soccer Association, 'Articles of Incorporation'.

²⁴⁵ United States Soccer Federation, *Official Administrative Rulebook July 1978*, p. 70.

In order for these youth competitions to exist in the mainstream American youth sphere, the perception of the sport had to shift so that football became an accepted American activity stripped of its ‘foreignness’. Emblematic of this shift were the sport’s appearance for the first time on the cover of two very American periodicals: *Sports Illustrated* and *Boys’ Life*. The former was a weekly sports magazine first published in 1954. After nineteen years, football made the cover of the September 3, 1973 edition with the telling headline “Soccer goes American” and full cover photo of the blond haired All-American Bob Rigby, goalkeeper for the professional Philadelphia Atoms.²⁴⁶ If the professional side of the sport obtained recognition as becoming American, it was probably just as important that the game gain a legitimate place in the world of adult-conditioned views about childhood. In 1974 football finally won its badge of merit on the vest of American boyhood with a cover story in the Boy Scouts’ monthly. After a sixty-three year wait (going back to the first printing of the magazine in 1911), Tony Garcia’s cover story turned the football playing boy into an all-American boy.²⁴⁷ A member of Boy Scout Troop 80 of Garden City, Long Island (New York), he was described in glowing terms that would make any American parent proud:

²⁴⁶ *Sports Illustrated*, 3 September 1973, cover. During the first two decades of the magazine’s publication up to the Rigby cover issue virtually every type of sport was featured including the heteroclit mix of baseball (first issue), American football, athletics, but also card games, rugby and scuba diving. While Rigby was indeed the first footballer to make the cover of the magazine after this near twenty-year wait, it was not the first time the sport was covered. Issue number 16 (November 29, 1954) was the first time the sport was the subject of a dedicated lengthy article about the 17th annual Army-Navy football match. The Army-Navy matchup is more widely known for its annual American football game which has attracted national attention for decades. This story was about the *other* Army-Navy and the headline read “Cadets battle Midshipmen to 1-1 deadlock in rain and fog—with tickets for the traditional game truly nonexistent. P.S. Match was at soccer, U.S. sport’s best-kept secret”. See *Sports Illustrated*, 29 November 1954, pp. 70-3.

²⁴⁷ Between 1911 and 1929 sport was the cover image on thirty-five issues (out of a total of over two-hundred and twenty issues) and ‘college football’ appeared eleven times. Baseball obtained the next highest number of cover appearances at six. By 1950, the American football had appeared on thirty covers, generally every year for the October issue, while the national pastime had garnered eleven total covers, always in late spring, just two more than skiing and three more than athletics over the same period. Soccer first graced the cover decades after the majority of other sports: ‘American football’ (1911); skiing (1912), athletics (1912), baseball (1912), ice hockey (1914), swimming (1913), basketball (1925), tennis (1937). Even lacrosse (1962) made it to the cover before association football. If this is any evidence of the cultural battleground for sports then this demonstrates the difficulty soccer had in being portrayed as an “All-American” sport in the Boy Scouts movement.

“[h]e does honors work in school, has won scholarships to study languages overseas, and made Eagle Scout...[p]ro scouts already are keeping a watchful eye on Garcia’s development.”²⁴⁸

Regretfully, the article does not go into detail about his ethnic heritage or whether he was a first or second generation American though it is more than probable that he was of some Hispanic or Spanish background.

This suggests a more subtle point: whether the question of heritage and ethnicity was becoming a moot point for some groups who had immigrated generations earlier or whether it reflected a change in perception within society as a whole?²⁴⁹ Was a youth named ‘Tony Garcia’ considered just as American as ‘John Smith’ because his family had immigrated many generations ago? When does a name lose its ethnic or foreign identity and become assimilated to a new “native” population and culture? While such questions cannot be answered here, Garcia’s feature as a football playing all-American boy suffices as an illustration of his implicit or explicit representation of values associated with the American Boy Scouts movement at that time.

That association football dethroned ‘American football’ for the cover of the October issue for a second time in four years says a great deal about the change in views about the game, at least in the minds of the *Boys’ Life* editorial committee. Indeed, football’s breakthrough into mainstream culture could not be better encapsulated than

²⁴⁸ *Boys’ Life*, October 1974, cover. Garcia grew up on Long Island a few miles from the heart of New York City and attended Garden City high school where he was the recipient of the school’s 1973-74 ‘Jim Steen Award’ for the most valuable football player. Fortunately for Garcia, he grew up in an area which had a thriving youth football scene even if it appears he never ultimately went the pro route as there are no mentions of a Tony Garcia in NASL team rosters of the era. By 1973 the Long Island Junior Soccer League had some one-hundred and twenty teams playing in various age groups up to nineteen years of age. Some of these teams were linked to clubs in the semi-professional German-American League but it appears that not all youth teams were of single ethnicity. One early 1960s ‘Long Island Juniors’ team appears to have relied on a mix of ethnic backgrounds. Juniors by the name of Zweihel, Maltese, Downey, Krauss, Masciatti, Gates and Amen all played (and lost bitterly 10-0 to Philadelphia’s Lighthouse Boys’ Club) in an exhibition match prior to a 1961 International Soccer League fixture between Karlsruhe and Bangu in front of some 7,000 at New York’s famed Polo Grounds. It is unclear whether these were native born youth, recent immigrants or a mix of the two. But with such a mix, it is likely that English would have been a uniting language. See *Boys’ Life*, October 1974, p. 8; *New York Times*, 25 May 1961; 17 June 1973.

²⁴⁹ The Boy Scouts’ organisation appears to have turned some of its attention in the late 1960s and early 1970s to appeal to the variety of ethnic groups including Ukrainian youth. The Ukrainian press reported that the Boy Scouts of America announced a “major objective to bring the Scout program to America’s ethnic groups”. A first step to implement this new policy was the naming of Ilmar Pleer, a refugee from Estonia, as assistant director of organizational relationships. See *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 22 August 1970.

by the 1977 October issue of *Boys' Life* that featured the glowing and blond suburban boy, Craig Meyers, from Annandale, Virginia.²⁵⁰



Image 4 - Source: *Boys' Life*, October 1977, cover

These examples illustrate rather well the tipping point at which the sport, both as a professional and a youth activity, was deemed legitimate enough to grace the cover of both a leading sports magazine as well as reflect the image of a major institution of American boyhood all within the span of three years. Yet the sport's qualitative representation as mainstream in periodicals such as *Boys' Life* and *Sports Illustrated* could not have come without some statistical basis to prove that many people's children were indeed playing the sport competitively. The efforts to federate youth football into one national body brought these interests together in the form of the USYSA in 1974. The body was approved by the USSF and its initial membership elected California's Don Greer as Chairman.²⁵¹ With the structure in place, the organisation set a focus for

²⁵⁰ Interestingly, Meyers admitted that he never was a member of the Boy Scouts. He graduated from Falls Church High School in 1981 and attended the University of Virginia where he played two seasons for then coach Bruce Arena, the first of which on scholarship. Sadly for him he did not play again with his Annandale team in the spring of 1982 when they won the McGuire Cup, the national junior trophy. See *The Cavalier Daily*, 21 October 1981; *The Washington Post*, 21 June 1982; and Interview with Craig Meyers, 17 September 2011.

²⁵¹ Born in 1925, Greer emigrated to California from England at the end of World War II and was instrumental in setting up clubs and associations including the California Youth Soccer Association in 1968. See California Youth Soccer Association, "Hall of Fame – Don Greer CYSA Founder - 1975",

increasing its membership and obtaining one affiliate member in each of the fifty states; though for historical reasons several states have two geographically separate youth associations.²⁵² The USYSA's registered player membership grew exponentially in its first decade. In parallel, its affiliated members finally covered all fifty states by 1980 when North Dakota made its official request at the 1980 Annual General Meeting as the last state not yet represented.²⁵³

Table 4 - USYSA – total registered players under nineteen years of age across state associations (1974-1985)²⁵⁴

Year or season	Total registered players	Number of affiliated state associations
1974	103,432	36
1977	300,000 (approx.)	41
1978-79	503,458	45 (August 1978)
1979-80	649,022	49 (June 1980)
1985	1,210,408	50

These players competed within their local clubs, leagues and associations. The USYSA sanctioned competitions were only part of the picture and these numbers did not include another burgeoning area: school based competitions.

Outside the national body's membership (though probably with some overlap since some USYSA players were also in high school) thousands of football playing boys and girls flooded their high school teams. Yet this growth did not occur in a sporting vacuum and many other high school sports also increased during this decade.

http://www.cysanorth.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=50&Itemid=182&limit=1&limitstart=2 (accessed 27 July 2011).

²⁵² The states of Ohio (North and South), California (North and South), Pennsylvania (Eastern and Western), Texas (North and South) and New York (North-western and Southern) all have two distinct bodies.

²⁵³ The youth association from North Dakota requested affiliation at the USYSA General Meeting in June 1980. To date, North Dakota is the only state to have a state youth association but still no adult or amateur state body. See United States Youth Soccer Association, *Annual Report 1979-80*, p. 7.

²⁵⁴ Source: compiled from United States Youth Soccer Association, *Annual Report 1979-80*; USYS, *Media Kit*, http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/media_kit/keystatistics.asp?print=y (accessed 24 June 2009); *New York Times*, 20 June 1977;

Table 5 – Number of High schools and players in organised sports in 1971-72 and 1981-82²⁵⁵

Team sports	Individual Sports	Number of High schools (1971-72)	Number of players (1971-72)	Number of High schools (1981-82)	Number of players (1981-82)
Boys					
American Football		14,004	878,187	13,926	904,808
Basketball		19,647	645,670	17,922	538,670
Baseball		12,896	400,906	14,001	415,353
Soccer		2,290	78,510	4,839	161,167
Ice Hockey		573	22,656	849	24,526
	Track and Field	16,383	642,639	14,405	477,650
	Wrestling	7,587	265,039	8,869	256,107
	Cross country	8,263	166,281	9,797	169,891
	Tennis	6,312	91,279	8,802	129,478
	Golf	8,645	120,078	9,251	110,431
Girls					
Basketball		4,856	132,299	17,089	415,381
Volleyball		1,550	17,952	12,164	282,651
Softball*		373	9,813	7,569	183,176
Field Hockey		159	4,260	1,923	53,137
Soccer		28	700	2,032	57,921
	Track and Field	2,992	62,211	13,925	357,414
	Tennis	2,648	26,010	8,478	124,289
	Gymnastics	1,006	17,225	2,682	47,310
	Swimming & Diving	853	17,229	3,621	78,765
	Cross country	77	1,719	7,475	90,265

* Softball was listed as fast-pitch after 1978.

On the boy's side, soccer was still a minority sport in high schools in 1971 despite the groundswell during the 1960s. Although these statistics should be read with caution, almost ten times more schools and eight times as many players competed in basketball than in soccer.²⁵⁶ While the number of boys participating in high school competitive sport generally maintained the same level of participation (with only track and field suffering a significant 24% drop), the only major boys' sport to drastically increase was football. Boys aside, what is probably most remarkable during this period

²⁵⁵ Source: compiled from National Federation of State High School Associations, 'NFHS Participation Figures Search'.

²⁵⁶ Admittedly, overlaps in these numbers were possible if players participated in multiple sports. Football, depending on the season in which it was played, was in direct competition with 'American football' (autumn), baseball (spring), cross country (generally in the autumn), softball (spring), field hockey (autumn) and track and field (generally in the spring) for potential players. As basketball was the only major sport played during the winter season it did not face the problem of losing youth who choose another sport during the same season. Its apparent dominance was due in no small part to its status as the monopoly sport for its season.

is the explosion of girls in competitive school sport. While the girls' game was a very minority sport in the first year for which statistics were available nationally, competitive girls' football increased more than any other sport over the same period (by a factor of eighty-two). This generation witnessed the rise of the competitive girl athlete and, in no small way, the growth resulted directly, as argued by Betsy Stevenson, from the adoption of Title IX of the 1972 Educational Amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act.²⁵⁷

This led to a situation in which the youth game was establishing its place in youth sporting culture at a national level but at the same time the opportunities to compete at a higher level were not following suit. The dearth of opportunities for American players in the NASL meant that there was no place to play professionally.²⁵⁸ The situation was not aided by the demise of the NASL which already began to slide in 1978 but especially after 1982.²⁵⁹ But the girls suffered just as much. In a telling quote from Diana Bohn, a key member of the Dallas Sting U-19 girls' club team (which played as a USA 'national' team in a 1978 women's world tournament in Taiwan), the desire to continue playing was growing strong into the late 1970s: "There's nowhere to go. Competitive girls in America shouldn't have to retire at age 20."²⁶⁰ Bohn was at the front end of the changes that Title IX would bring to college sport and while she may have not had the opportunity to play on at a later age, many younger girls would

²⁵⁷ Stevenson has argued for a correlation between increasing rates of participation by girls in school sports and the passing of Title IX in 1972 and its full enforcement in 1978. See Betsy Stevenson, 'Title IX and the evolution of high school sports', in *Contemporary Economic Policy*, 25 (4) (2007), pp. 486-505. For a specific treatment of women's football in the universities, see Jean Williams, 'The Girls of Summer, Daughters of Title IX', in *A Beautiful Game: International Perspectives on Women's Football*, (Oxford: Berg, 2006), pp. 33-82.

²⁵⁸ Even for star American players it was difficult to get on the field and retain a starting place. Shep Messing, goalkeeper for the New York Cosmos and Boston Minutemen recalled being among the "token Americans, a minority in our own land" who were signed more for "good looks, talk show talents and local birth certificate". Shep Messing with David Hirshey, *The Education of an American Soccer Player*, (New York: Bantam Books, 1979), p. 116.

²⁵⁹ For an account of the demise of the NASL see chapters 6 and 7 entitled 'California Gold' and 'Shot out in Jersey' in David Wangerin, *Distant Corners*, pp. 177-240.

²⁶⁰ Foulds and Harris, *America's Soccer Heritage*, p. 97. Such an opportunity to play in an international tournament in Taiwan 1978 (the 'Women's World Invitational Tournament' organised by the Asian Ladies Football Conference, or ALFC) was probably a rare one and most girls like Bohn would have been unable to continue playing at all. For the wider context around this tournament and the development of women's football, see Chapter 2 entitled 'The Iron Roses: Women's football in PR China', in Williams, *A Beautiful Game*, pp. 83-110.

benefit.²⁶¹ This coincided with the rising numbers of young women who attended college and university by the late 1970s.²⁶² Yet even with the college scene expanding, football's sporting pyramid was virtually without a head and in very different position from many of the sport's global powers: it possessed a massive youth competitive scene without an elite level of national significance to which it was directly attached and into which it poured new talent.

This left the youth game in the awkward position of largely serving its own ends. In this light it is helpful to remember the words of Markovits and Hellerman who have noted that

“[i]n their institutional presence and culture, American sports are like American education and American religion: independent of the state, market driven, and ultimately subject to few, if any, regulating bodies outside those of their own creation.”²⁶³

A youth competitive sphere which was organised by parents for their own children and for which they contributed financially, materially and with their time took on a whole new dimension in the 1980s and onwards. Clubs, leagues and associations were organised for the competitions and as a result spawned enormous amounts of bureaucracy but also resources. Despite being touted as an affordable sport (in comparison with ‘American football’ for example), the youth game generated significant revenues even at the local level.

²⁶¹ In a report for the NCAA, DeHass charts the vast growth in university participation in collegiate sports for women with an astonishing 450% increase in overall women's participation from 15,182 athletes in 1966 to 68,062 in 1981. The growth in women's football for the generations after Bohn were equally impressive. The number of college and university teams (80) and athletes (1,855) in 1981-82 exploded to 515 teams and 10,909 athletes in 1994-95 before doubling again by 2006-07 (941 teams and 22,077 athletes). See Denise DeHass, *NCAA – 1981-82 – 2006-07: Sports sponsorship and participation rates report*, pp. 87, 201. For a specific treatment of women's football in the universities, see the chapter entitled ‘The Girls of Summer, Daughters of Title IX’, in Williams, *A Beautiful Game*, pp. 33-82.

²⁶² The number of women over 25 years old having completed at least 4 years of college rose from 1.3 million in 1940 to 9.4 million in 1980. This reflected more general societal trends over the same period and the number of Americans over 25 years old having completed four years or more at college rose from 3.4 million in 1940 to 22.2 million in 1980. Those having obtained at least an undergraduate college degree rose from 4.6% to 16.2%. See US Census Bureau, ‘Years of school completed 1940-2008’, in *A Half-Century Of Learning: Historical Census Statistics On Educational Attainment in the United States, 1940 to 2000*.

²⁶³ Markovits and Hellerman, *Offside*, p. 46.

It is important to recall that while some public support was available through local departments of recreation that sponsored leagues, much of the club financing came through the private sector. As sport in America, unlike France, was not party to the same public-private linkages with attached government financing, fundraising was a crucial activity for any competition organiser.²⁶⁴ The USSF's *Handbook for Youth Soccer* which was regularly printed in the 1970s was aimed at parents, individuals and organisations in order to assist in understanding, starting up and managing youth leagues, clubs and associations and even provide advice on ways to raise money.²⁶⁵

One successful case were the regular 'bingo nights' held for the benefit of the Annandale Boys' Club during the 1970s. The bingo operation allowed the club to put aside some fifty-thousand dollars with the hope of one day purchasing "athletic fields and build its own sports headquarters" but came under investigation by the county's public prosecutor.²⁶⁶ The bingo operation drew criticism again several years later when it was reported that the proceeds were nearly one million dollars.²⁶⁷ While the club's bingo licence was nevertheless renewed by the county officials, it was strongly recommended that Mr. Germain, the club president, be paid a salary rather than be

²⁶⁴ The case of the US Olympic Committee is helpful here. The USOA, the forerunner to the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), had antecedents as early as 1894 with the first organised delegation of American athletes to the 1896 Olympic Games. While incorporated in 1921, the United States Olympic Association (USOA) was not chartered by the US Congress until 1950 – a largely symbolic act like that of the very few other federally incorporated organisations including the Boy Scouts. Business to a large extent is the matter of the states and thus regulated at a state level. The effect of the enacted law in 1950 was to grant the USOA non-profit status under the federal tax code, thus enabling it to solicit tax-deductible donations. This allowed the USOA to better utilize private philanthropy, a significant funding mechanism of American society. It was not until 1978 that the 'Amateur Sports Act' conferred upon its successor, the USOC, the role of the official coordinating agency for amateur sport in the United States and authorized a federal grant of USD 16 million – which apparently were not attributed at that time. See Comité International Olympique, *Bulletin du Comité International Olympique*, n° 61, février 1958, p. 67; International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Review*, n° 128, June 1978, p. 407; International Olympic Committee, *Olympic Review*, n° 134, December 1978, p. 742. For the incorporation see Pub. L. 81-805 (September 21, 1950), Amateur Sports Act of 1978, Pub. L. 95-606. Regarding the appropriation of funds and the legal evolution of the USOC see *DeFrantz v. United States Olympic Com.*, 492 F.Supp. 1181, 1189 (n. 19) (D.D.C., 1980) and *O-M Bread, Inc v. United States Olympic Committee*, 65 F. 3d 933 (Fed. Cir. 1995), http://bulk.resource.org/courts.gov/juris/j0102_02.shtml (accessed 9 June 2009). For the background on the USOC see United States Olympic Committee, *2008 US Olympic Team Media Guide*, 2008, p. 2.

²⁶⁵ The *Handbook for Youth Soccer* was printed in over twelve thousand copies for its first 1971 edition. It offers guidance on the organisation of the local youth league, youth league administration, equipment, insurance, public relations, fundraising and a lengthy section on coaching tips. USSF National Coach, Walter Chyzowych, was involved in the 1976 and 1977 revised editions. See United States Soccer Federation, *Handbook for Youth Soccer*, 1977.

²⁶⁶ *The Washington Post*, 16 January 1977.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 16 February 1982.

compensated indirectly through sports equipment sales to his own company.²⁶⁸ The youth organisations were in some way victims of their own success in drawing so much interest from youth participants. The growing bureaucracy demanded more time from volunteers like Germain and the flexible nature of the non-profit structure required only limited accounting and record keeping. But when so much money began flowing through and around the clubs, the original volunteer structures were unable to manage. Yet another illustration of the new state of youth football competitions.

If the historical challenge outlined by Wray in 1923 was for a focus on the youth game, to address the lack of coaches and competitions, as well as the development of the sport in schools and universities, the question came full circle sixty years later. The game struggled to get into schools from the 1920s onwards and suffered from the lack of nationally coordinated efforts by the game's leadership.²⁶⁹ This was probably not helped by football's regular association with foreigners or recent immigrants who would not have been in the decision-making positions as elementary and secondary school principals, athletic directors, or teachers let alone in the world of the universities and colleges. Despite youth competitions which continued to thrive, the sport's further diffusion may well have suffered following significant drops in immigration from the mid 1920s until after World War II. By the time the sport finally managed to get into schools beginning in the 1960s, youth football was almost entirely in the hands of ethnic clubs, Catholic schools and parishes (with their historical links to European immigration), and several islands of Americanized clubs.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 23 February 1982. The investigations continued one month later as the Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney Robert F. Horan Jr. obtained a search warrant to obtain financial records from the club. Nothing else about the case appears in the press subsequently, so it is unknown the outcome and whether there was proven embezzlement, which was the case for Stephen Sanders of California. Sanders was sentenced to one year in prison after embezzling \$32,000 from the Region 5 AYSO league. Mr. Sanders, whose wife was the association's treasurer, stole the money to pay off cocaine dealers who were threatening his family because he owed them for drugs. See *Los Angeles Times*, 12 September 1981; *The Washington Post*, 19 March 1982.

²⁶⁹ It is worth re-reading USFA Secretary Thomas Cahill's words from his foreword to the 1921 *Spalding Guide* when he laid out the natural course of evolution for the sport, linked to schools, then colleges and finally becoming a major sport: "Not only has the game developed immensely in popularity, but the skill of the American born players has grown. This is the natural development of the introduction of the game into the grade schools. This is nation-wide, and as these preparatory schools empty into the colleges and universities, soccer goes with them, and despite the wonderful appeal college football has to the young man in college, soccer is steadily forging its way to the domain of the so-called 'major sports.'" His vision only came to pass sixty years later. *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1921-22*, p. 5.

It is difficult to establish direct causality between the transition into mainstream America and the questions of immigration, assimilation, citizenship and naturalization. Yet it is nonetheless impossible to ignore that football's breakthrough in terms of cultural perception as 'all-American' occurred precisely at the same time that the generations of wartime and post-World War II immigrants were having native-born American children of their own. Reflective of this period of transition and assimilation into American society, the Ukrainian weekly newspaper changed significantly over the 1960s and 70s, reflecting a move away from Ukrainian and more towards a monolingual English speaking audience who did not have a mastery of the prior generation's language.²⁷⁰ The focus shifted then from a vibrant Ukrainian community centred on supporting a recently arrived immigrant population in the 1940s and 50s, thanks to a well-established and organised associative structure built in the first quarter of the century, toward a new generation bent on preserving its heritage while still contributing to mainstream American society.

In the midst of these social processes, these native-born youth continued to compete at a younger and younger age and sometimes still within the ethnic club structure. But the shift was complete and they competed as part of the million registered youth that the USYSA proudly flaunted. While some ethnic clubs became hotbeds for a new generation of players, other traditional bastions of the game went into decline symbolized by the closure of St. Louis parishes which provided the last Catholic teams as national champions.²⁷¹ When the peewee team from Detroit Ukrainian Sport

²⁷⁰ A number of subtle changes to the paper can be observed from 1933 to the mid 1980s. Firstly, the headline of the newspaper gradually changed its format. Over the 1950s and 60s the volume and issue number written in Ukrainian were moved down from the headline to a lower level, on par with the English information originally smaller and listed below. By 1974 the order was swapped as the Ukrainian moved from the left to the right side, a telling shift in a society which reads from left to right. A major alteration to the title occurred on July 4, 1976, the American bicentennial incidentally, when the paper's title "Svoboda" in larger Cyrillic letters switched places with the English title "The Ukrainian Weekly Edition" which had been the subjacent title of the weekly since its inception in 1933. Finally, by 1983 the Ukrainian title in Cyrillic letters disappeared entirely. The back pages which were often completely written in Ukrainian throughout the 1940s, 50s and well into the late 60s, disappeared as well by the mid 1970s. Oleh Zwadiuk's regular "Sports Scene" column disappeared after 1972, a moment when coverage of the Ukrainian football teams across the country significantly decreases. One final change of relevance is the appearance in mid-1976 of a new column entitled "How to read and write in Ukrainian – Lesson..." with basic images and words in the Ukrainian language.

²⁷¹ A number of St. Louis parishes providing national champions between the 1950s and 1970s had closed within two decades. Two-time champion in 1968 and 1969, St. Philip de Neri closed in 1993. 1956 national champion St. Engelbert closed in 1994 while St. Paul the Apostle (winner in 1958 and 1960)

Club ‘Chernyk’ defeated the Birmingham Bears 1-0 for the 1978 Michigan state championship, *The Ukrainian Weekly* made the connection with the past:

“The memories of earlier generations of Ukrainian super teams must have reminded many [of the spectators] of the days in Lviv, Mittenwald, Tryzub of Philadelphia, USC in New York, ‘Chernyk’ in Detroit and others.”²⁷²

In many ways this was symbolic of this new personality of youth competition in America by the end of the 1970s: very young footballers with ethnic last names but often Americanized first names, girls playing with the boys, and parent volunteers.²⁷³

‘Soccer Americana’ was alive and kicking, quite literally, and had a new face for the future.

Ukrainian peewee team wins soccer championship



The Ukrainian Sports Club “Chernyk” team poses for a photo after winning the state championship: first row, left to right, Robbie Onesko, Etian Shalay, Jefferey Onesko, Daniel Litkewycz, Natalia Litkewycz, Andrew Macielinski and

Ramon Kryzhaniwsky; second row, left to right, coach Chris Shalay, Paul Kinal, Chris Portalski, Alexander Fedorowych, Roman Kuropas, Taissa Kohut, Alexander Marticzak, Borys Kohut, Gregory Sobol and manager Jo Shalay.

Image 5 - Source: *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 19 November 1978

closed the following year. A decade later in 2005 St. Bartholomew’s, the last St. Louis parish-based club to win in 1970 closed its doors as well. See Archdiocese of St. Louis, ‘Closed Parishes’, <http://archstl.org/archives/page/closed-parishes> (accessed June 12, 2011).

²⁷² *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 19 November 1978.

²⁷³ The team was coached by Christian Shalay and managed by Jo Shalay. Among the players, the names read: Robbie Onesko, Etian Shalay, Jefferey Onesko, Daniel Litkewycz, Natalia Litkewycz, Andrew Macielinski and Ramon Kryzhaniwsky; second row, left to right, Paul Kinal, Chris Portalski, Alexander Fedorowych, Roman Kuropas, Taissa Kohut, Alexander Marticzak, Borys Kohut, Gregory Sobol. Given the presence of Etian Shalay in the team, it would not be beyond reason to believe that the coach Christian and Manager Jo were young Etian’s parents.

Conclusion

In several ways, the ‘competitive spaces’ for the youth game mirrored the “difficult beginnings” of UC Dieppe’s first *poussins*. The little chicks from Normandy struggled against their opponents just as proponents for association football in the early decades of the twentieth century sparred with competition of their own in America and France. For the former this was in connection with the ‘college’ game and the concepts of national identity through sport and football’s long association with immigrants and thus ‘foreignness’.²⁷⁴ Flowing out of the counter-culture 1960s ‘Peace and Love’, civil rights and anti-Vietnam movement, the “youth soccer boom” was reflected in a shift in the views about the game and embodied, as Franklin Foer has described, in its adoption by the late 1970s-1980s “yuppie parents” who sought the sport for its participatory focus, non-violence and self-esteem building, in contrast with baseball or American football.²⁷⁵ For France, the backdrop of the game against the “oval ball” was the political and ideological battles fought between two major agents of French history: *l’État* and *l’Église*. Over time, and especially after World War Two, these conflicts faded though the tension between club and school remained present as the age focus of the ‘competitive spaces’ dropped in both the *école de football* and the ethnic, Catholic and Americanized club scenes. By the 1970s, an important decade, French clubs were full of young players just as the American ones included the new faces of youthful suburban boys and girls.

This shift towards competitive spaces for younger ages paralleled the expansion of age categories described in the previous chapter. One aspect that did not expand at all, however, was the game itself. If the youth football phenomenon was shaped over the twentieth century by extending the age ladder further and further down and into younger competitions, it was also fundamentally influenced by a contemporaneous

²⁷⁴ To wit, the *New York Times* regular end of the year account of various sports for 1949 began its football coverage as follows: “Soccer – The invasion of five foreign teams greatly enlivened the 1949 soccer season.” *New York Times*, 25 December 1949.

²⁷⁵ Foer reflects on these aspects in an insightful chapter, ‘How Soccer Explains the American Culture Wars’. Franklin Foer, *How Soccer Explains the World*, (New York: Harper Collins, 2004), pp. 235-48.

‘sizing-down’ of the game. Indeed, alongside developments to ‘age’ and ‘competition’, youth football’s organisers adapted the core aspects of the sport to suit younger and younger players. Ball size, field dimensions, the number of players on the pitch and the duration of the match were each subject to significant modifications between the 1920s and the turn of the millennium and are the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter 3 - Scaling down football for a youth-sized game: “FIFA Laws of the Game shall apply, except for...”, c.1920-c.2000

Provided the principles of these Laws be maintained, they may be modified in their application.

1. To players of school age, as follows: (a) size of playing pitch; (b) size, weight and material of ball ; (c) width between the goal-posts and height of the cross-bar from the ground ; (d) the duration of the periods of play.

- from the ‘Notes’ of the *Laws of the Game* issued in July 1978¹

“The size of the balls, the regulations of the field, the stacking of teams, the lack of officials, there were many broken promises...There were a lot of disappointed kids and coaches...”

- Pat Howard, AYSO Region 53 Commissioner, on the youth soccer situation in August 1978 Eugene, Oregon²

Aside from its players, who are kids, perhaps the most obvious aspect of the youth game in comparison with the adult version is the game itself and its difference in size and rules. Today, when adults officially gather to play football in any one of the four corners of the globe they will undoubtedly be playing according to the same rules. This common acceptance of the basic elements of the sport – the rules about the ball, the field of play, the number of players and match length among others – was the fruit of codification and diffusion that began in the mid-1800s and stretched well into the following century. It was a process away from multiple ways of playing a kicking game, or ‘foot ball’, and towards one common code of football, a sort of Latinizing of the sporting language into one universal footballing *lingua franca*, that spoken by the IFAB.

Yet by the last quarter of the twentieth century these uniformly and internationally accepted *Laws of the Game* permitted specific exceptions or adaptations

¹ International Football Association Board, ‘Laws of the Game and universal guide for referees’, in Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Handbook 1979-80*, (FIFA: Zurich, 1979), p. 97.

² *Eugene Register*, 17 August 1978.

for young players. In contrast to the adult level, a youth match at the turn of the twenty-first century, depending on age, was shorter and played on a smaller field with fewer players passing a smaller ball. How did the established rules shift away from the accepted ‘senior’ game in the form of such different youth-specific interpretations? What was at the source of AYSO Commissioner Pat Howard’s frustration regarding the “broken promises” with respect to the agreed rules? Why was it so obvious to her that there were problems with ball and field size in the youth football played in the Pacific Northwest of America? Didn’t everyone have the same understanding of the rules of the game? To return to the analogy of football rules as language, how did the singular sporting vernacular, the *Laws of the Game*, come to accept such different youthful dialects?

This chapter explores some of the processes which led to a clear differentiation of youth rules and equipment from adult ones and in its conclusion addresses some of the potential reasons. The material change within the sport echoes similar changes in other areas of childhood, such as the initiatives by Pauline Kergomard that transformed nurseries and pre-schools in turn-of-the-century France into age-adapted environments.³ As presented in the above chapters, youth football progressively obtained a narrower set of younger and younger age categories as well as organized competitions dedicated to a distinctly separate playing population. But the youth game’s revolutionary *coup de grâce* in separating from the senior level may well have been in regards to changes to the sport itself. Beyond the *who* (younger and younger players) and the *where* (separate competitions) of youth football, the *how* (the rules and objects of the game itself) was just as important. In an evolutionary twist, the junior level finally got a ball of its own and truly branched off into its own genus: *youth* football.

In many cases, the process of establishing rules and enacting legislation proceeds from customary or societal change and sport is no exception. The IFAB, and

³ Appointed by Education minister, Jules Ferry, as Inspector General for the French public school system for nurseries and pre-school, Kergomard served in the post between 1881 and 1917. She is credited with many of the changes that founded the twentieth century French nursery and pre-school structure including the wide adaption of classrooms and spaces to different age ranges for children. See Chapter 3 ‘Les débuts des écoles maternelles de 1881 à 1921’ in Amigues and Zerbato-Poudou, *Comment l’enfant devient élève*, pp. 33-50.

the evolution of its *Laws of the Game*, is a case in point. Between the establishing of the FA in 1863 and the incorporation of the phrase “[t]he game should be played by 11 players on each side” in the IFAB’s revised *Laws* of 1897, over thirty years had passed.⁴ In the meantime, a full array of cup and league competition was thriving and even professionalism had the time to be debated at length and finally approved. One could be led to believe, if restricted to a reading of the rules alone, that the well-developed sporting phenomenon did not decide on the number of players until after a full decade of professionalism. The rules do not always reveal the complete picture. Indeed, one of the most fundamental rules of the game, the number of players, was not carved into the IFAB’s stone tablets until its second decade of existence, well after the custom had been accepted as unwritten law.

This chapter juxtaposes rule changes in organised football on both sides of the Atlantic all while keeping in view the IFAB’s *Laws of the Game*. The focus here is on four specific aspects of modifications to the rules: the ball, the field of play, the number of players and the duration of the match. Each corresponds to one of the seventeen modern *Laws of the Game* whose development has been subject to comprehensive treatment in two detailed accounts of the history of the *Laws of the Game*. Interestingly however, mention to youth-related changes to or adaptations of these four rules is entirely absent from the discussion. Sir Stanley Rous, a figure well known for his support of the youth game, made only one passing mention to youth at all in his 1974 history of the rules.⁵ Equally silent on the topic were Furrer, Godoy and Blatter whose book covered the changes to the Laws and was published for the 100th anniversary of the IFAB.⁶

⁴ International Football Association Board, *Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, June 14, 1897, in ‘Archives of the International Football Association Board’, DVD, (Zürich: FIFA, 2004).

⁵ Donald Ford and Stanley Rous, *A History of the Laws of Association Football*, (FIFA: Zürich, 1974), pp. 76-7. The only mention to youth in the entire text covers a change to the substitution rule for the International Youth Tournament made by the IFAB in 1956 for a one-year trial.

⁶ Günther Furrer, Paulo C. Godoy and Joseph S. Blatter, *Football History, Laws of the Game, Referees*, (FIFA: Zürich, 1986). The only mention to youth was in a photo illustration from 1886 in a sporting goods catalogue that displayed the footballs sold by William G. Bell and included five different “Youth’s sizes”. See page 37.

Yet the *Laws* included references to youth before the date of these two publications and contained, as they appeared at the national level, specific mentions of youth as early as the 1920s. By the time of the aforementioned 1978 introductory ‘Notes’, the game’s rules had come to have a different interpretation for youth and had begun to be a hotly debated philosophical ground. Over the course of the twentieth century, the four *Laws* examined here were scaled down in one way or another to fit a youth size. Along with the distinction from the adult game according to ‘age’ and through separate and organized competition, the youth game obtained its own rules and equipment.

Law 1: A Smaller Field of Play

The dimensions of the field of play shall be maximum length, 130 yards; minimum length, 100 yards; maximum breadth, 100 yards; minimum breadth, 50 yards.

- from Law 1 of the *Laws of the Game*, 1932⁷

Before the field was scaled down in size, it had the clearly defined dimensions listed above in Law 1. Over time, as the game’s playing constituency included younger and younger age groups for officially organised competition, these minimum and maximum dimensions shrank in proportion to the size of the different categories of juvenile players. Once an age category was firmly in place, the sport’s organisers reduced field size and repeated the process with each younger age group who were given an even smaller field. This reduction was present as early as the 1930s but only really gathered steam in the post-World War Two era before accelerating significantly in the 1970s.

This enquiry into the history of the youth-sized pitch begins in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. Regrettably, the situation is difficult to clarify. One of the best sources for the state of the game in America at that time, the *Spalding*

⁷ International Football Association Board, ‘Laws of the Game and universal guide for referees’, in Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Handbook 1932-33*, 5th edition, (FIFA: Zurich, 1932), p. 49.

Guides, made no mention of the size of fields used for the many school and park competitions for youth. Also silent on the issue is the 1920 edition of the regularly published *How to play soccer*; it provides only some educational photos on technique and hints for the young player. Thus the early picture in America is a cloudy one.

The situation in France was clearer at least as far as official regulations are concerned. In 1930 the FFF required the younger of the two youth age categories, the *minimes* (aged fourteen to sixteen), to play on a field no larger than eighty metres and no wider than forty-five metres.⁸ Furthermore, article 5 of the ‘Statut des Juniors et Minimes’ prescribed that the goals be seven metres wide and two meters high; this was significantly smaller than the 8 x 2.44 metres for senior level.⁹ The rules were one thing and the reality another, however. It is unknown how many clubs and municipalities were actually able to provide a different set of goals for younger players. Perhaps such logistical and certainly economic challenges were behind the rule change by the mid-1950s that stated that the smaller fields for the *minimes* were required “in so far as it was possible”.¹⁰

The FFF showed some flexibility with the application of the rules, but the federation continued to adapt them down to size. By the 1950s, the rules shortened the width of the goals to a maximum of six meters, one full metre less than in 1930.¹¹ While the youngest age group, the ten to twelve year-old *pupilles*, was not subject to any specific set of field conditions in 1955 (they were not, in theory, allowed to play official competition), by 1958 article 4 had been amended and the field was to be the same size as the *minimes* (80 x 45 meters).¹² That the limitation of the field dimensions was concomitant with the removal in 1958 of the ban on organised competition for *pupilles* is probably not surprising. A further point of interest is that the *minimes* retained the “in so far as it was possible” clause while the younger *pupilles* were “obliged” to play on the smaller fields.¹³ The gradual restricting of playing space both

⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 44.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, p. 70.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1959-60*, p. 73.

¹³ *Ibid.*

for the field and the goals was slow to reach the international level however. If the 1950s were important for changes at the national level particularly in France, the IFAB did not adopt any youth-specific measures for field or goal modifications until 1963.¹⁴

If the post-World War Two years ushered in the notion of smaller fields and goals for younger players it was not until the 1970s that the phenomenon truly expanded (in a figurative sense of course). With the booming interest in youth football in America during the late 1960s and 70s, the local and national press began to provide details about this sport so new to many of its adult readership who were also potentially interested parents. The *Los Angeles Times* reported regularly on one of the fastest growing youth soccer organisations, American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO). Founded in 1964 with some three teams, AYSO had boomed by 1970 to a membership of almost 1,400 boys along with a new growing population of girls between ages eight and twelve who were to play on a field that was two-thirds regulation size as explained by Ron Ricklefs, AYSO area commissioner, for the new Grenada Hills League girls' programme.¹⁵ It is not entirely clear if this reduced size field was also in use on the boys' side of the AYSO sponsored league.

Up to that time all the rule modifications in France had been strictly applicable to boys since the French federation did not officially recognise women's and girls' football until the turn of the 1970s through the formal adoption of the 'Statut Fédéral Féminin'.¹⁶ The first two years of the 1970s were important indeed as they saw the FFF not only assume control of the feminine game but also mandate reduced field and goal sizes for some *pupilles* and *poussins* who were finally allowed to officially compete.¹⁷ The regulations grouped all girls together as *jeunes féminines* (young girls) but article 6 made no special provision for smaller fields or goals, at least not yet.¹⁸

¹⁴ International Football Association Board, 'Laws of the Game and universal guide for referees', issued July 1963, in Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Handbook 1965*, (FIFA: Zurich, 1965), p. 67.

¹⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, 18 January 1970.

¹⁶ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1972-73*, p. 133. The initial decision was taken in 1969. See Xavier Breuil, *Histoire du football féminin en Europe*, (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2011), p. 173.

¹⁷ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p. 127.

¹⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1972-73*, p. 133.

The scaling down trend continued on both sides of the Atlantic during the late 1970s and early 80s. In 1977 the youngest of the age categories for French girls between eight and twelve years, the *benjamines*, were required to play on the same smaller size field as the boys' *poussins*, an age group entirely under age ten.¹⁹ That same year, the USSF's regulations noted field sizes very similar to those for the youngest age groups in France:

“For players under 12 smaller fields are recommended but these should not be less than 40 x 80 yards so far as possible...For players under 12, smaller goals of 7 yards wide and 7 feet high are recommended.”²⁰

The minimum limits in the USA made for a marginally larger field than the minimum size allowed in France for the same age group.²¹

The question, probably more relevant in the United States due to its institutional fragmentation, was to what extent these guidelines were respected by those adults who actually organised play? In the Northeast, Bruce Golden, a high school coach in Meriden, CT was among the founders of a local youth league in 1979 and he specifically “designed a smaller playing field and goals”.²² The local newspaper reported that he had “been studying United States Youth Soccer Association recommendations and that the field would measure 40 x 80 feet [sic]” while the goals would measure 7 x 15 feet.²³ From his own first-hand experience among those who started the DC Stoddart league in northwest Washington D.C., Len Oliver recalled hosts of parents in the late 1970s who rushed off to hardware stores to buy materials to build their own goals.²⁴ For the many parent volunteers of the ‘youth soccer boom’ who were new to the game, such guidelines probably seemed a proportional modification to the NASL games broadcast on national television. Yet if the smaller fields truly were the norm, then what would have prompted Gordon Hill, one of the travelling “soccer educators” hired by the NASL’s Tampa Bay Rowdies, to voice his discontent and claim

¹⁹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1977-78*, p. 217.

²⁰ United States Soccer Federation, *Handbook for Youth Soccer*, 1977, p. 56.

²¹ The minimum size field in the USA (40 x 80 yards) was equal to 35 x 75 meters for a total surface area of 2625sq. meters while the minimum size in France was 40 x 50 meters for a total of 2000sq. meters.

²² *The Morning Record and Journal*, 16 June 1979.

²³ *Ibid.* The fact that the paper mistook feet for yards for the field both youth and full regulation size (60 x 125 feet according to the article) belies the newness of the sport to the mainstream at the time.

²⁴ Len Oliver, interview by the author, Washington D.C., January 23, 2006.

that young players under age ten “should play on smaller fields, perhaps half regulation size”?²⁵

One possible answer is that despite promotional material with recommendations for youth, these efforts did not have the sufficient reach to match the accelerated pace of the game’s growth as a kid’s sport. The 18,000 copies of *Illustrated Soccer Rules* printed by the USSF youth promoter D.J. Niotis in 1977 could not have covered the near annual increase of 100,000 plus youth players during the period 1974-1985.²⁶ There is no doubt that an official handbook may well have been a welcome aid to volunteers like Bruce Golden. Yet the fragmented nature of the sport in America and the exponential grassroots push behind the ‘youth boom’ may not have allowed for such educational material to have the reach necessary to convince well-meaning but football-ignorant parents that ten year-olds should not play on Pelé’s full sized field.

Hill’s ideas about a scaled-down game may well have come from his experience in the sport in his native England and would have been well received in France at the time he made his comments.²⁷ Indeed, the French footballing authorities further reduced the size of the field for *pupilles* and *poussins* playing seven-a-side. The new dimensions of 50 to 75 metres long by 45 to 55 metres wide may also have been inspired by the same practical idea suggested by Hill for the simple reason that it easily allowed for two equal-sized youth fields on one regulation size adult pitch.²⁸ The goals, which were smaller than regulation size (6 metres wide and 2.10 metres high), certainly appeared more proportional to the youth player as well as a bit small for the adult as seen below with a team photo of *pupilles* from Intrépide Angers in 1983:

²⁵ *St. Petersburg Times*, 15 May 1980.

²⁶ *Chicago Tribune*, 16 August 1978. Niotis was an engineer from Chicago who served as national chairman for the USSF’s Youth and School Promotion Committee. For the membership of USYSA see ‘Table 2 - Some examples of key changes to legislation and age limits in education (1870-2008)’.

²⁷ Hill was a schoolteacher and former Football League referee in England before emigrating to the USA in the mid 1970s.

²⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1981-82*, p. 227.



Image 6 – Pupilles, 1983 with adapted goals²⁹

This phase of scaling down field size in France was essentially complete by 1983 when the newest and youngest age category, *débutants*, were permitted to play on the smallest pitch yet: 35 to 45 metres long and 20 to 25 metres wide.³⁰ Similar to the 1981 alteration, this new rule provided a simple way to organize four fields on one full sized pitch.

USYSA took longer to complete its full scale re-sizing of youth fields and goals. Certainly in connection to the revolutionary changes to the number of players per team according to age group (discussed below), the recommended ‘Modified Rules’ for smaller fields were only made mandatory in August of 2002.³¹ By this time, youth on both sides of the Atlantic were playing on smaller fields. Indeed, when the Under-12 Blauweiss Gottschee ‘Real’ team from New York (representing the USA) and FC Nantes’ *benjamins* (representing France) were paired together in Group B for the 2005

²⁹ *1983 Pupilles*, in ‘1980-1990’, *Intrépide Angers 90 ans*, DVD, (Angers: Intrépide Angers, 2010).

³⁰ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1983-84*, p. 224.

³¹ United States Youth Soccer Association, ‘Small Sided Games 2003’, <http://web.archive.org/web/20021026144922/http://www.usyouthsoccer.org/scripts/runisa.dll?m2:gp::15040+mediacenter/display+E+44503+A> (accessed October 26, 2002 via <http://wayback.archive.org>).

Danone Nations Cup, an international youth tournament held in France, the scaled down field was a familiar concept to youth from both countries.³²

The process of scaling down the size of fields and goals ultimately took the standard full pitch through numerous makeovers. The field and goal size shrunk repeatedly over time from two-thirds of a regulation pitch, to one-half and so forth. The process continued until the original adult sized field was segmented into as many as eight separate fields as illustrated below.³³

³² Email from Peter Solon, coach of Blauweiss Gottschee U12 team and father of James Solon (goalkeeper), 21 September 2011. See also FC Nantes, 'Les Canaris représenteront la France à la Danone Cup', <http://www.fcna.fr/formation/20052006/danonecup310805.php> (accessed October 12, 2005).

³³ For Image 1: International Football Association Board, 'Laws of the Game and universal guide for referees', issued July 1963, in Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Handbook 1965*, (FIFA: Zurich, 1965), p. 68. For Image 2: 'Règlementation de la Coupe Nationale de Football à 7' in Fédération Française de Football, *Règlementation des compétitions nationales 1989-1990*, p. 2. For Image 3: USYS, 'U6 Fields' in *Small Sided Games Manual*, revised May 27, 2005, p. 17.

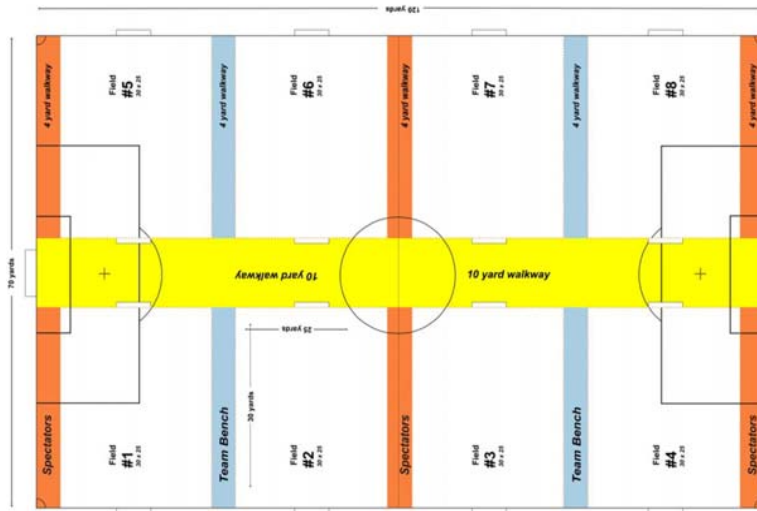


Image 9 – The Field of Play for eight Under-6 fields, 2005

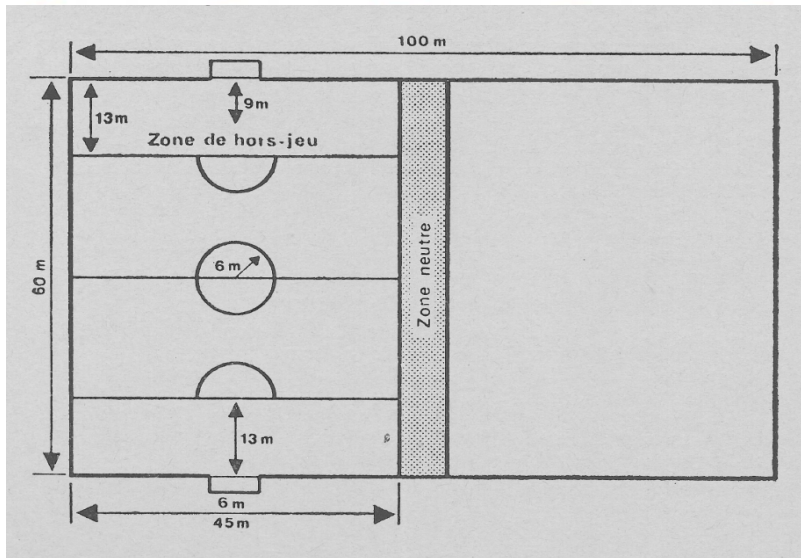


Image 8 – The Field of Play for Poussins 7-a-side, 1989

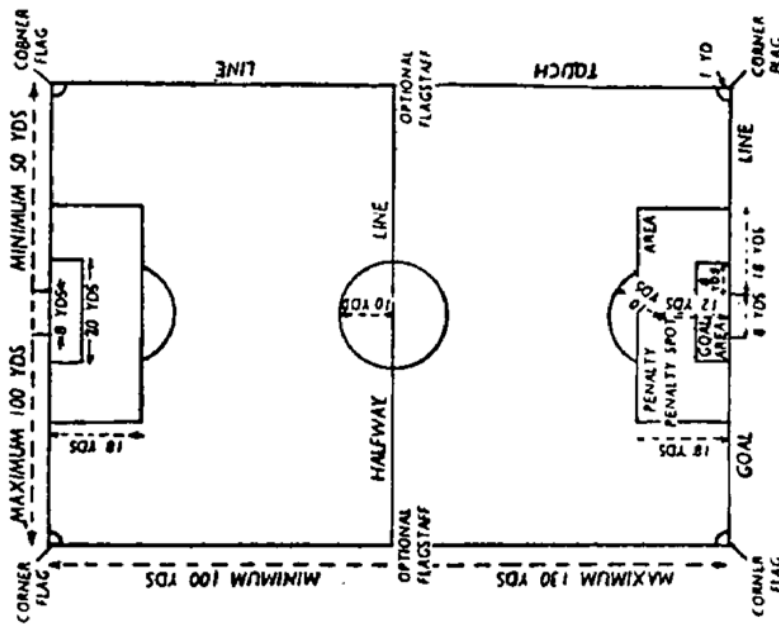


Image 7 – The Field of Play, 1963

Beyond the practical considerations and increasing demand for playing space due to larger numbers of youth players, the sizing down of fields and goals may have had one profound effect on the youth game. In no small way, these smaller fields surely addressed children and adults' frustration at field and goal dimensions that were not adapted to the youngest age groups. At long last the aspiring young goalkeeper no longer hopelessly watched the ball sail well over his extended hands but neatly under the crossbar. At the start of the new millennium the youthful goalkeeper appeared far more imposing while guarding a smaller goal on a field scaled down to his or her size.



Image 10 - Jean Lars coaching at the *école de football* at AS Brestoise as a header flies well beyond the reach of the young goalkeeper³⁴

³⁴ AS Brestoise Centenary online archive, 'Historique : 1969', <http://jean-guy.moreau.pagesperso-orange.fr/69.htm> (accessed March 26, 2010).

Law 2: The Ball - Do you have that in size 3?

Image 11 - The youngest AYSO players with a small ball (1975)³⁵

If fields and goals underwent significant change in their size over the twentieth century, adaptations to the ball were in some ways less pronounced. In general, younger players were frequently required to use footballs smaller than the normal size of twenty-seven to twenty-eight inches in diameter. The ball specifications were not necessarily scaled down in a progressive manner as was the case with the dimensions of the field of play and evidence for the modern sizes of junior footballs can be traced back to before the turn of the twentieth century. But not all the rules stipulated the use of smaller balls. It was only as younger categories were included in the organised competitive structure that the rules required a ball more proportional to the players' size. In consequence, it was not until the end of the twentieth century that ball size had officially been scaled down for the youngest of participants in organised competition. The effect was undoubtedly that the kids themselves were more comfortable kicking a ball their own size as illustrated by player number four shown above.

Well before the California youngsters kicked a size 3 ball the production of a variety of sizes of footballs had been in the works for nearly a hundred years. English-based manufacturers like Duke and Son produced and sold “junior” balls – described as twenty-six inches in diameter, or one inch smaller than the regulation sized ball – around the turn of the century. Others such as William Shillcock from Birmingham

³⁵ *Sports Illustrated*, 3 November 1975.

sold footballs numbered 1 to 5 through catalogues during the inter-war years.³⁶ Certainly in a reflection of the reach of youth football at the time, American sporting goods giant A.G. Spalding's catalogues printed in London circa 1907 offered the standard sizes 1-5, but the same company's catalogue printed for the American audience interestingly only sold two sizes of association footballs: "regulation size" (No. "L", "G" and "O") and "slightly under regulation size" (No. "Y").³⁷ In the production of early smaller sized footballs, the English appear to have been leagues ahead and were copied by their neighbours. Indeed, the French were not shy in looking across the channel to resolve such sporting questions.

France's blossoming relationship with the association game was inscribed in what Holt has called "the long and honourable tradition" of 'Anglophilia' – and its counterpoise 'Anglophobia'.³⁸ The adoption of English specifications for ball size is perhaps an illustration of the victory of new French fervour over the old Gallic tendency to be wary of perfidious Albion.³⁹ As early as 1930, article five of the FFF regulations for *juniors* and *minimes* stated that for category 'B' players, the *minimes* aged fourteen to sixteen, "a ball number 4 which will have a diameter of 25 inches (10 cm minimum) and 26 inches (22 cm maximum) will be used".⁴⁰ These Imperial measurements were slightly smaller than the 27 to 28 inches in diameter required by the IFAB laws in 1932.⁴¹

³⁶ The author is indebted to Alexander Jackson of the National Football Museum in Preston, England for providing the photographs and information about these football manufacturers' catalogues. Email from Alexander Jackson, 30 April 2011.

³⁷ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1916-17*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1916), pp. 233-4. While the American catalogue did not sell the full gamut of footballs (sizes 1-5), it did offer a variety of equipment tailored for youth as early as 1910. *Spalding's* sold youth boxing gloves, boys' dumbbells, youth cricket bats at \$2.75 (significantly cheaper than the men's sizes) and balls weighing 4 and $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces (1 and $\frac{1}{4}$ ounces less than the senior ball) for a cost of \$1.75. See *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1910*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1910), pp. 169-70, 176, 182.

³⁸ For more on the effects of Anglophilia in French sport around the turn of the twentieth century, see Richard Holt, 'English Influences on French Sport: "Anglomania" and National Revival, 1870-1914', in *Stadion: International Journal of the History of Sport*, 27, (2001), pp. 179-189.

³⁹ The early enthusiasm for things sporting and 'Anglo' was later reflected in a two page lexicon of the English terms that was regularly printed in the FFF's regulations until the 1969-70 season. The section entitled 'Le Vocabulaire Anglais des Footballeurs' disappeared thereafter.

⁴⁰ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 44.

⁴¹ International Football Association Board, 'Laws of the Game', in Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Handbook 1932-33*, p. 49.

One written reference during this same period to ball size for juniors playing on the other side of the Atlantic is dated 1937. In his exposé on how to play football, Douglas Stewart explained in his section entitled ‘Playing the Game’:

“As to playing the game, the first essential is a good ball. Small or half grown boys should not attempt to play with a full size ball, because it is too large for them, requiring more strength than they have to propel it. For small boys, a small size ball should be used and for those boys who are between the small and adult sizes, a medium sized ball should be used. When a boy attains adult size and growth he will be then able to use a full size ball, but not before.”⁴²

As a Scot and having played for teams in Glasgow and London, Stewart would almost have certainly been familiar with the smaller ball sizes used in English schools’ football early in the century.⁴³

Unsurprisingly, as the 1950s saw the rise in competition for younger age groups, the regulations did not fail to impose appropriately sized equipment. While the 1955 edition of the FFF’s regulations did not yet refer to the *pupilles*’ twelve to fourteen age group, by 1958 article 4 of the revised ‘Statut Fédéral des Jeunes’ was crystal clear for this new entrant to the competitive scene: use of a size 4 ball was “obligatory”.⁴⁴ This raises the question about such rule changes for the “obligatory” use of a specific size ball. Was the decision for safety reasons hinted at in Stewart’s observation that a full size ball was too large and potentially dangerous? Perhaps the reasons were educational from a technical point of view to better teach skills?

Aside from organisational regulations, the paucity of direct references to ball size in the press make it difficult to fully answer this question. Yet perhaps the answer to historical changes to ball size lay in the advancement of coaching. Football’s educators may well have realised the relevance of a smaller ball in order to teach skills. In this respect it is somewhat surprising that the quintessential element of football, the ball itself, was not among the modifications to the equipment and laws of the game, as

⁴² Douglas Stewart, *How to Play Soccer*, (NY: American Sports Publishing Co., 1937), p. 25.

⁴³ After arriving in America, Stewart was a long time university coach at Pennsylvania and an active member in administrative circles of intercollegiate football and the USFA after its inception in 1913. See David Wangerin, *Distant Corners – American Soccer’s History of Missed Opportunities and Lost Causes*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2011), pp 102-3.

⁴⁴ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1959-60*, p. 73.

proposed by the FA's Director of Coaching, Walter Winterbottom, in his *Soccer Coaching*.⁴⁵ Was the size of the ball such an obvious point that few thought to mention it in writing just like shoe size for example?⁴⁶ Obvious or not, the practice of using a smaller sized ball corresponding to age was widespread enough in the footballing consciousness to be accepted as a legitimate rule modification to the IFAB's *Laws* by 1963.⁴⁷

Returning to the national level where football's organizers officially recognised younger age groups within the competitive structure throughout the 1960s and 70s, these governing bodies' national regulations reflected the organisers' desire to see youth play with a smaller ball. At the turn of the 1970s, the youngest categories for boys (*poussins*) and girls (*jeunes féminines*) were both required to use size 4 balls.⁴⁸ By 1977, when the USSF released its revised version of its initial 1971 handbook, the Americans were one step ahead of, or one age group down from, the French since the US regulations covered ball size for every age group down to 'Under 8'.⁴⁹ The French may have been behind in administrative depth covering the youth football phenomenon, but they were ahead on the field as evidenced by the 5-0 drubbing inflicted on the American under-14 team at the 1978 Montaigne international youth tournament.⁵⁰ The French were not to be outdone in prescribing rules for the youngest age groups for long however. By 1983 the FFF's regulations stipulated that the *débutants* should play with a size 4 ball.⁵¹ These requirements for a size 4 ball for all young players under the age of fourteen in France and under twelve in America stayed in force until the turn of the

⁴⁵ Walter Winterbottom, *Soccer Coaching*, (London: The Football Association, 1960), p. 226. Winterbottom makes specific mention to smaller fields and goals for primary school football but nothing of the size of the ball.

⁴⁶ Printed in 1920, John Cameron's 'Advice and Hints to the Young Football Player' included a humorous anecdote about not borrowing one's older brother's shoes two sizes too large. But with an ample supply of appropriately sized shoes from manufacturers like Spalding's, appropriate shoe size was an obvious aspect barely worth mention unless in jest. See J.A. McWeeney, ed., *How to Play Soccer*, (New York: American Sports Publishing Co., 1920), p. 79.

⁴⁷ International Football Association Board, 'Laws of the Game and universal guide for referees', issued July 1963, in Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Handbook 1965*, (FIFA: Zurich, 1965), p. 67.

⁴⁸ See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1968-69*, p. 106; Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1972-73*, p. 133.

⁴⁹ United States Soccer Federation, *Handbook for Youth*, p. 56.

⁵⁰ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1979-80*, p. 620.

⁵¹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1983-84*, p. 224.

millennium. But in the lived experience of football, was there a different reality than the one inscribed in the hallowed regulations and laws of the game?

The push for even smaller balls (size 3), though not reflected in the national federation requirements until recently, was at work much earlier at the grassroots level. A number of photos from the press, club online archives, and some patent records all attest to this process towards a scaling down of the most important element of the game: the ball. Several newspaper and magazine photos from the 1960s and 70s sample the booming youth scene and depict what rather strikingly resembles a size 3 ball (given the size of the children).



Image 12 – AYSO boys, 1970⁵²



Image 13 – AYSO boys, 1971⁵³



Image 14 – AYSO girls, 1978⁵⁴

⁵² *Los Angeles Times*, 18 January 1970.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 19 December 1971.

A similar example from France portrays the use of what appears to be three different sizes of footballs. The 1980 photo from *Bleuets de Pau* in the French southwest shows the seventy-plus young players that participated in the weekly *école de football* and related teams. It is one of the rare photos which portrays multiple balls and thus allows for a direct comparison between balls sizes and not only in relation to the player. With some digital manipulation to move all the balls to the same base level, the youngsters clearly used three different sizes of balls.



Image 15 – Ball sizes at the *école de football*, Bleuets de Pau, 1980⁵⁵

⁵⁴ *Sports Illustrated*, 25 December 1978.

⁵⁵ Bleuets de Pau, 'Ecole de foot 1979/80', <http://bleuetspau64.free.fr/forum/viewforum.php?f=27> (accessed January 20, 2010).



Image 16 – Ball sizes at the *école de football*, Bleuets de Pau (with balls compared digitally), 1980⁵⁶

Beyond visual evidence for the use of smaller footballs, the most telling example of the push towards official requirements was a proposal from the same year as the above photo. Among the many points to be discussed and voted upon at the 1980 USYSA General Meeting was one short proposal from the California Youth Soccer Association-North. Almost lost among the mass of other bureaucratic proposals was a request to change the ball size for the ‘under 8’ age group from size 4 to size 3.⁵⁷ Given the reticence nationally for aspects of smaller-sided games and their relatively late adoption in comparison with France (2002), it would not appear that the Californian proposition went any further. If not adopted nationally in 1980, the presence of the proposal does suggest nonetheless that the wide use of size 3 balls had spread, at the least, through the grapevine of Californian youth football.

Indeed, by the 1980s, the size 3 ball had successfully passed into the wider footballing, but also general, sporting consciousness. The ‘pee wee’ sized ball was a familiar enough object to be cited as a reference for a 1985 issued patent to Chester Massino of Sandwich, Illinois for a softer and lighter soccer ball for younger children

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, modified by author.

⁵⁷ United States Youth Soccer Association, *Annual Report 1979-80*, p. 54.

“who are more susceptible to injury with hard balls” according to the abstract.⁵⁸ Massino submitted his invention for “a substitute soccer ball generally comparable in size and weight to a conventional number 3 soccer ball”.⁵⁹ That the patent was submitted for a ball similar to a *conventional* number 3 ball argues for a wider recognition of such a ball.

Even if the presence of a size 3 ball appears to have been custom in some clubs and on some fields of play, national regulations were slow to recognise the shift to the smaller ball for the youngest age groups. The FFF’s *Règlements Généraux* required the use of an “adapted” ball for the six and seven year-old *débutants* category as late as 2002.⁶⁰ It is unclear, however, exactly what article 9, paragraph 4 of the ‘Statut Fédéral des Jeunes’ and article 6 of the ‘Statut Fédéral Féminin’ meant by the term “adapted”. All other age groups in France were unequivocal on the issue and were required to use either “size 5” or “size 4”. That same year Rule 303 of the regulations for US Youth Soccer required size 3 balls for ‘Under 8’ and ‘Under 6’ players, according to the ‘Modified Playing Rules’ that had been in place for some time.⁶¹ When the French system moved to a numerically based age category structure for the 2009-10 season similar to that used in the USA, the vast overhaul laid aside any doubt to the interpretation for the term “adapted” ball: a revised article 4 of the ‘Statut Fédéral des Jeunes’ stipulated that U7, U8 and U9 players, both boys and girls, would use either a size 3 or size 4 depending on age.⁶² In this way the bureaucracy had finally caught up with the reality of play.

While the respective national football regulations in France and the United States did not require size 3 balls until late in the twentieth century, there is evidence

⁵⁸ United States Patent, 4,542,902, 9/1985, Massino. Another earlier patent from the late 1970s made reference to three sizes of ‘soccer balls’: adult, “pee wee” and “toy size”. See United States Patent, 4,042,241, 8/1977, Copp Collins.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4, line 30.

⁶⁰ See ‘Statut Fédéral des Jeunes’ in Fédération Française de Football, *Règlements Généraux 2002-2003*, pp. 349-50, and ‘Statut Fédéral Féminin’ in Fédération Française de Football, *Règlements Généraux 2002-2003*, p. 357.

⁶¹ United States Youth Soccer Association, *US Youth Soccer Policy on Players and Playing Rules, September 1, 2002*, p. 8.

⁶² Fédération Française de Football, Annexe 6 of the ‘Statut Fédéral des Jeunes’ in *Règlements Généraux 2009-2010*.

that the rules were only part of the story much like the IFAB's slow official recognition of the eleven-players-per-team rule more than a century before. Off the paper and on the pitch, the youngest age groups had started using these balls much earlier. Indeed, the smaller size balls that had been around since the turn of the 1900s became intimately associated with the face of youth football for its entry into the twenty-first century. The small ball may have looked toy-size at an adult's feet or in a full-grown hand, but in front of a six year-old, it was a perfect fit.



AL 5222 / Los Angeles Times
In a typical practice, these boys and girls of a Division VII soccer team are getting a few pointers on technique from their coach. They may be the future of soccer.

Image 17 – AYSO coach and Division VII players (aged five and six)⁶³

Law 7: They're not ready to play the full 90 minutes

In an exhibition preliminary, the Philadelphia Lighthouse team defeated the Long Island Juniors, 10-0. The youngsters playe[d] 30-minute halves instead of the usual 45-minute periods.

- New York Times, 25 May 1961

The seventh law of the game in its modern form stipulates that the duration of a football match in the middle of the twentieth century was “two equal periods of 45

⁶³ *Los Angeles Times*, 22 December 1984.

minutes, unless otherwise mutually agreed upon”.⁶⁴ Over the century youth football provided the exception which proved the rule. Indeed, youth matches were not always played for the full ninety minutes. In fact, the length of officially organised games decreased as younger age groups entered the competitive fray. The process through which the duration of official matches was scaled down differs from other adaptations discussed in this chapter in one significant way. While the youth game, as a whole, included a shortening of matches ranging from the oldest to youngest age categories, a counter current flowed in the opposite direction: official match duration within individual categories often increased over time.

The deviation from the “usual 45-minute periods” played by the Philadelphia and Long Island boys would certainly not have been lost on the readers of the *New York Times* nor on the crowd at the Polo Grounds in May of 1961. Yet the estimated 7,500 present paid their entry to watch an International Soccer League match between Karlsruhe and Bangu and the spectators who arrived early were treated to a goal-fest during the junior exhibition match.⁶⁵ What is unclear from the news account is whether the habitual length of 45 minutes was “usual” for both senior games *and* junior contests. Indeed, match times, when noted in the press, often varied over the twentieth century. In some cases, these examples illustrate humorous reporting errors but mostly they were simply a testament to different interpretations of Law 7 as it applied to youth.

As early as 1929, the final round of the Scholastic Cup for the south-western Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area pitted South Hills against Scott Township. The local newspaper reported that the match was played with two 30-minute halves.⁶⁶ Given the required schooling ages for that period it would not be unlikely for the players to have been anywhere from fourteen to seventeen years old.⁶⁷ The match duration there was the same as the maximum limit of two 30-minute periods provided for in the FFF’s

⁶⁴ ‘Laws of the Game’, in Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Handbook 1950*, (FIFA: Zurich, 1950), p. 13.

⁶⁵ *New York Times*, 25 May 1961.

⁶⁶ *The Pittsburgh Press*, 13 January 1929.

⁶⁷ See Chapter 1, ‘Table 2 - Some examples of key changes to legislation and age limits in education (1870-2008)’.

1930 regulations for competitive games at the same age group (*minimes*).⁶⁸ What is unknown is whether the length of the halves was standard for that age of competition in Pennsylvania at the turn of the 1930s or rather an adaptation of the normal 45-minute duration in account of the frigid mid-winter date.⁶⁹

Establishing a clear idea of match times in both France and the United States for the period prior to World War Two is difficult, even beyond the official voice of the FFF's regulations. The press provides some clues to the actual length of play which varied greatly from extremely shortened periods to the unbelievable. According to the rules, French *juniors* were to play the game with the normal length of ninety minutes.⁷⁰ Examples of friendly matches played in 1939 range from a standard ninety-minute Reading vs Lighthouse fixture in America to a match in France between Sports Athlétiques Fontenaysiens and A.S. Niortaise ended after only thirty minutes.⁷¹

Even official cup competition during this period was played with varying duration times. The 1937 US National Junior Cup Eastern Final between future winners Hatikvah Juniors and Clifton Juniors went a total of 80 minutes whereas the Eastern Pennsylvania district final match the following year between Reading and Philadelphia's Lighthouse Boys' club was played with two 35-minute halves.⁷² The most interesting example of match duration for sanctioned competition in the inter-war period however, came from the Bourgogne-Franche-Comté region in France where the *Comité de District des Jeunes*, the district committee for youth competition, officially reminded all clubs

“that matches for the *juniors* league have a length of 2 hours 30 and that they begin, unless otherwise agreed, at 13h30 between the 31st of March and the 31st of October, and at 13h from the 1st of November to the end of February.”⁷³

⁶⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 44.

⁶⁹ A match in mid-January in Pittsburgh was certainly not a warm affair and the players braved the frigid cold. Winter temperatures in the area for the month regularly hovered below freezing. The National Weather Service's historical temperature averages for the city of Pittsburgh for that month of January in 1929 list an average temperature of 28° Fahrenheit. See 'Pittsburgh Historical Temperature Averages 1871 to Current', <http://www.erh.noaa.gov/pbz/thistemp.htm> (accessed September 23, 2011).

⁷⁰ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 44.

⁷¹ *Ouest-Éclair*, 27 March 1939; *Reading Eagle*, 10 January 1939.

⁷² *New York Times*, 31 May 1937; *Reading Eagle*, 10 April 1938.

⁷³ *Le Petit Comtois*, 11 October 1929.

Such a long match may be a sign of the superior physical fitness of the *juniors* from this region, but more probably it can be ascribed to the hazards of typography and should have read 1 hour 30.

With the drop in age for organised competition in the decades after World War Two, the adaptation of shorter match times became a common occurrence on both sides of the Atlantic but also in the international footballing consciousness. The IFAB officially recognised shorter match times as a legitimate modification of the rules for schoolboy competitions in 1963.⁷⁴ Within five years the *pupilles* age group and later *poussins* were playing 20-minute and 15-minute halves respectively.⁷⁵ Two years later, in 1970, the different AYSO age groups were also playing reduced versions of the 90-minute game: boys aged seven to nine (20-minute halves), ten to twelve (25-minute halves), thirteen to fifteen (30-minute halves) and girls aged eight to twelve (20-minute halves).⁷⁶

Yet in the face of shorter games a counter current flowed in the opposite direction in the late 1970s and early 80s: a lengthening of match duration within individual age groups. While the categories dropped a full eight months in age with the 1971-72 reforms, the total match duration for the three youngest boys age groups (*minimes*, *pupilles* and *poussins*) actually rose by ten minutes in 1977.⁷⁷ A similar lengthening occurred on the girls' side two years later as the *benjamines* were allowed to play 20-minute halves instead of the old 15-minute periods while the *cadettes* were permitted to continue their passing game for an additional ten minutes overall.⁷⁸ In 1981, the FFF split both girls' categories and the 'Statut Fédéral Féminin' allowed the older *benjamines* to play games for a further ten minutes.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ International Football Association Board, 'Laws of the Game', issued July 1963, p. 67.

⁷⁵ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1968-69*, p. 106. The *pupilles* had been playing 20-minute halves since as early as 1958. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1959-60*, p. 73.

⁷⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, 18 January 1970.

⁷⁷ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1977-78*, p. 212. The match time had already been lengthened at the *cadets* age level in 1963. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1963-64*, p. 73.

⁷⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1979-80*, p. 225.

⁷⁹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1981-82*, p. 227.

The youth game in America underwent a parallel process of extending game duration. In comparison with the AYSO match times in 1970, the 1977 regulations for USSF-sanctioned play allowed for up to ten more minutes per half in all six recognised age groups.⁸⁰ The tendency to prolong match time was evident in even the youngest age group, the ‘under 8’ category: the following year, the USSF stretched the 20-minute halves by five minutes each.⁸¹

The final shift in match duration occurred between the 1980s and the early twenty-first century. In general, competition organisers extended the length of halves for the younger age categories while the older age groups maintained their match times. By the 2002 age category reforms in France, the FFF had further subdivided the older age groups and adapted the half length to suit. The big change came for the *benjamins*, *poussins* and *débutants*. All three age groups, both on the boys’ and girls’ sides, were allowed to play official matches that lasted five to ten more minutes.⁸² The one rare exception to this match lengthening tendency was for the ‘Under 10’ age group for which the USSF and USYS actually reduced playing time by prohibiting over-time play for ties.⁸³ In comparison to French kids, American youth had already been playing longer matches since the late 1970s. By the start of the twenty-first century, whether they were in France or America, similar age categories played virtually the same shortened versions of the 90-minute game. Perhaps unsurprisingly, these varied by age and length from as little as twenty-four minutes in total for the ‘Under 6’ age group in the USA (2008) to the full 90-minute duration for French ‘U19’ players.

Thus, as younger age categories arrived on the competitive scene, a first step by the organisers (FFF, AYSO, USSF and USYS) was to limit the length of the match. Indeed, the shortening of the 90-minute match time to an appropriate ‘youth-time’ was a

⁸⁰ The USSF age groups were marginally different than AYSO. In each category, match length was extended: aged under ten (25-minute halves), under twelve (30-minute halves), under fourteen (35-minute halves), under sixteen (40-minute halves). United States Soccer Federation, *Handbook for Youth Soccer*, p. 59.

⁸¹ United States Soccer Federation, *Official Administrative Rulebook*, 1978, p. 80.

⁸² Fédération Française de Football, article 8 of ‘Statut Fédéral des Jeunes’, *Règlements Généraux 2002-2003*, pp. 349-50, and article 6 of ‘Statut Fédéral Féminin’ in Fédération Française de Football, *Règlements Généraux 2002-2003*, p. 357.

⁸³ United States Youth Soccer Association, *US Youth Soccer Policy*, p. 8. Over-time had been allowed in both the ‘Under 8’ and ‘Under 10’ age groups in 1977.

process that paralleled the arrival of younger children. The competitions in which they played were managed by adults who undoubtedly saw adaptations of an adult activity as normal. In short, just as kids of a younger and younger age were unable to dribble and pass a full sized ball or to run up and down a regulation sized pitch, they were not deemed ready to “go the full ninety”. Beyond these important modifications of the game, the final aspect of the *Laws of the Game* to be altered was perhaps the most important: the number of players.

Law 3: Thou shalt not play 11-a-side

Much like the size and shape of the ball, the dimensions and marking of the pitch and the 90-minute match length, the number of players per team became one of the sacrosanct elements of association football especially in comparison with the rugby codes. All, however, have come to have different interpretations in regard to youth over time. The final pillar of the modern game’s foundations, its ten players plus a goalkeeper, eroded over the twentieth century as the accepted number of players for youth football dropped well below the initial eleven. The process occurred at different speeds in France and America but the end result was the same: the younger the age, the fewer the players.

In similar fashion to the other rule changes there appears to have been little difference between youth and adult rules for player numbers before the 1950s. For example the FFF regulations from the start of the 1930s omit any mention of a smaller number of players, a fact that argues in favour of a broad 11-a-side policy regardless of age.⁸⁴ Furthermore, some photographic evidence almost exclusively portrays team shots of eleven players, though no images are aerial photographs of match play.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1930*, p. 44. As noted above, the *minimes* played on smaller sized fields “in so far as possible”, but no mention was made to fewer than eleven players.

⁸⁵ *US Beauregard*, the forerunner of *US Laval*, featured a fifth team in the early 1930s and a team photo shows eleven boys in uniform. A later *minimes* team from the same club finished as 1945-46 champion of the Mayenne and the photo shows twelve boys, eleven of which are in uniform. A photo of *AS Brestoise’s* 1944 champion *minimes* team also portrays eleven players in uniform surrounded by two adults. See ‘De 1935 à 1950’, in *US Laval Historique*, <http://www.uslavalfoot.fr/spip.php?article2>

Eleven-a-side play also appears to have been the standard for youth competition in the USA during this period and the *Spalding Guides* printed a vast number of photographs of school teams featuring the familiar number of players. Press reports that actually describe a match and list players by position provide more concrete evidence of teams of eleven players such as a 1935 Boston area school match between Medford and Watertown.⁸⁶ Local and national competitions also went 11-a-side. The Sao MIGUELS versus Peabody match was a local Boston junior league fixture and the newspaper again listed the names of all eleven players.⁸⁷ So the small-sided revolution did not begin until after the younger age groups started widespread competitive play from the 1950s onwards.

When walking across the fields of football history, in general one finds that youth left primarily eleven sets of footprints during the late 1950s and well into the 70s. The push for smaller teams does not appear to have gathered significant national momentum until the late 60s at the earliest. The FFF regulations, for example, made no specific mention to a reduced number of players per team for any category until the turn of the 1970s but some visual evidence and match records demonstrate that both full teams and smaller-sided competitions existed before the matter was officially dealt with by the governing body. Teams of *minimes* in the 1950s such as the one from l'Intrépide Angers or l'Etoile Filante Bastiaise posed with eleven players all kitted out.⁸⁸ Yet at least one example illustrates that there may have been competitions for seven-a-side teams. The Ligue de Franche-Comté online records list a seven-a-side competition that began as early as 1958 though this would appear to be more the exception than the rule.⁸⁹ Indeed, other leagues such as the Ligue Midi-Pyrénées (1971) and the Ligue

(accessed January 19, 2010), and 'Historique: 1945', in AS Brestoise, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/45.htm> (accessed January 15, 2010).

⁸⁶ *Daily Boston Globe*, 5 October 1935. Players' last names were listed in all eleven positions.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 22 May 1939.

⁸⁸ See photo with the title *V 3* in '1950-1960', Intrépide Angers 90 ans, DVD; *E.F.B. Minimes bat O.A. 1-0 année : 1952-53*, in 'RUBRIQUE 40 - Album Vincent Ghipponi', <http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/octobre-2007.html?pn=21> (accessed March 3, 2011).

⁸⁹ 'Benjamins à 7', <http://franche-comte.fff.fr/cg/4000/www/palmares/championnats/47603.shtml> (accessed November 27, 2009).

Atlantique (1976) both started their seven-a-side competitions during the course of the 1970s.⁹⁰

In America, the tendency appears to have also favoured the full-sided game during the immediate post-World War Two era. The Farmington town ‘midget’ soccer programme based in central Connecticut played regularly in the 1950s. For a 1955 national tournament for these sixteen and under players, the Farmington club travelled east to Ludlow, Massachusetts for the Thanksgiving weekend competition with a roster of eighteen players which suggests that they played 11-a-side.⁹¹ A similar league in Newington, CT included younger players, ages thirteen to fifteen, and listed eighteen-player rosters for its four teams for the 1963 fall season.⁹² On the opposite coast in California, AYSO used the same approach in 1968 with full-sided teams for their three age groups under sixteen.⁹³ In contrast to the boys, the girls playing on newly formed AYSO teams two years later were playing seven-a-side.⁹⁴ By the turn of the 70s, youth football began to reflect the shift in fewer playing numbers.

The FFF first included provisions for fewer players per team for the 1970-71 season and the process accelerated throughout the decade. Article 6 of the 1972 ‘Statut Fédéral des Jeunes’ outlined regulations that were specific for seven-a-side competitions in the *pupilles* and *poussins* age categories.⁹⁵ This was not yet to the exclusion of eleven-a-side play for both of these age groups however. It was not until several years later that the younger of the two categories, the *poussins*, were formally restricted to seven-a-side play; the younger of the two girls’ age groups, the *benjamines*, followed

⁹⁰ See ‘Championnat Pupilles Foot à VII’, <http://ligue-midi-pyrenees-foot.fff.fr/cg/6500/www/palmares/17780.shtml> (accessed December 7, 2009); ‘Championnat Régional des Benjamins’, <http://atlantique.fff.fr/cg/0600/www/palmares/25974.shtml> (accessed November 25, 2009).

⁹¹ *The Hartford Courant*, 24 November 1955. While “national” in name, the newspaper records only point to a handful of teams from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Baltimore, Philadelphia and the New York metropolitan area.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 26 September 1963.

⁹³ *Los Angeles Times*, 24 March 1968.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 January 1970.

⁹⁵ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1971-72*, p. 126. The article was revised the prior season (1970-71).

suit in 1977.⁹⁶ By 1981 eleven-a-side teams for *pupilles* were capped at maximum two per club and all other teams in that age group were required to play with the seven-player format.⁹⁷ But seven was too much even for the youngest of players and in 1983 teams of *débutants* were shrunk to five-a-side.⁹⁸ In a twist from the AYSO trend which had girls play on small-side teams before the boys, the French went in the opposite direction and for some reason girls in the *débutantes* category were to play seven-a-side rather than the smaller five-a-side.⁹⁹

The small-sided game was important enough to the FFF that in 1983, the federation introduced a new role and required that each regional league appoint a *Délégué Régional de football à effectifs réduits*, a regional delegate who was to work solely on the scaled-down version of the game and who would meet annually with national technical representatives to develop this miniature version of football.¹⁰⁰ The adjustments continued over the following decade even if the majority of the shift was complete. For example, the *poussins* were required from 1996 on to play no more than 7-a-side while the *benjamins*, who in the 1980s were playing either 7-a-side or 11-a-side under the previously named *pupilles* category, were required by 2002 to play only 7-a-side or 9-a-side.¹⁰¹ The small-sided wave had flooded the French youth game.

In contrast, the youth game on the other side of the Atlantic was not shrinking at the same speed. With the rush of suburban children to youth football in the 1970s the game remained largely an eleven-a-side sport regardless of age. The 1977 USSF *Handbook* listed the standard number of eleven players under Law 3 with the caveat that a game was not considered valid with fewer than seven players for either of the two teams.¹⁰² However, in the section on ‘Coaching Guidelines’ the *Handbook* was more flexible. For the two youngest age ranges, six to eight, and eight to ten, the USSF

⁹⁶ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1976-77*, p. 191, and Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1977-78*, p. 216.

⁹⁷ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1981-82*, p. 227.

⁹⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1983-84*, pp. 223-4.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 227-8.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.225.

¹⁰¹ See ‘Jeunes Footballeurs – Le grand chambardement’, article from unknown newspaper in US Aiglun archive, <http://us-aiglun.footeo.com/page/histoire-palmares-2.html> (accessed January 20, 2010) and Fédération Française de Football, article 7, *Règlements Généraux 2002-2003*, pp. 348-49.

¹⁰² United States Soccer Federation, *Handbook for Youth Soccer*, pp. 56-7.

recommended seven-a-side play even for the weekly game.¹⁰³ Indeed much of the rhetoric in the *Handbook* was in favour of small-sided play, both for matches and training, yet it does not appear that this approach garnered the majority view.

For a whole generation of parents who were learning the game for the first time in no small way thanks to the widespread attention accorded to Pelé and the NASL, *unlearning* the 11-a-side game may have been rather difficult or confusing at best. Newspapers that reported on the sport probably reinforced the difficulty in altering views about the number of players even for the youth game. Many national and local articles on the ‘youth soccer’ phenomenon included the almost inevitable paragraph about the rules of the game. One local paper discussed the growing Utah Youth Soccer Association and the benefits of the sport for players aged five to nineteen: “since 11 players can be on the field at one time, soccer is considered a real participation sport”.¹⁰⁴ In the face of such fervour and the hordes of parents rushing to the new “safe and participatory” sport, modifying the game for the younger age groups may have been a real difficulty.

Similar to his comments on the size of fields, Gordon Hill of the Tampa Bay Rowdies in the NASL, was frustrated with the 11-a-side youth football scene. His wish was to downplay the competitive aspects of the youth game and focus on skills development: “In the under-10 age classifications, I would like to see them play six to a side (team) instead of 11.”¹⁰⁵ In Hill’s native England, the debate about small-sided play was all the rage in schoolboy football. Kerrigan has recounted that while this was widely promoted by many teachers and coaches at primary school level during the 1970s, those at the decision making level in both the ESFA and FA were not yet fully convinced.¹⁰⁶ Hill’s wish was granted but only much later, two decades in fact.

Despite recommendations in the mid-1980s, the USYSA did not mandate “eight-a-side games” until 1995 and only as a maximum for the under-10 age group and below

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁰⁴ *Desert News*, 24 October 1979.

¹⁰⁵ *St. Petersburg Times*, 15 May 1980.

¹⁰⁶ Colm Kerrigan, *History of the ESFA 1904-2004*, (Trowbridge: The Cromwell Press, 2004), pp. 131-3.

with the rules being effective from the 1996-97 season.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, the official published USYS ‘Modified Playing Rules’ for the youngest age groups (U10, U8 and U6) were still referred to as optional in 2001; the only mandatory element was still limiting play to a maximum of 8-a-side.¹⁰⁸

This was hotly debated philosophical ground and in some areas the topic was regularly debated at the state and regional level of youth football associations. When the question was discussed by the Washington, D.C. area youth-based National Capital Soccer League in March of 2001, the organisation formed a working group to study the issue.¹⁰⁹ In a memorandum submitted before the final decision date by Len Oliver to the NCSL Board, he noted that many of the arguments against small-sided games were “adult, structural, institutional, short-sighted, and work against fuller development of the individual youth player”.¹¹⁰ In favour of the move to small-sided games, Oliver cited “evidence that Holland, France, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Italy, and England – the soccer powers in Europe – have all moved their youth programs to smaller-sided games through the U12 levels”.¹¹¹

Notwithstanding the support from respected coaches like Oliver the battle for less ‘mob football’ or ‘beehive soccer’ was not yet won. When the NCSL Board met again several weeks later in May the members voted that “NCSL not unilaterally institute small-sided play for the U11 and U12 age groups” based on the view that “the league should not adopt small-sided play for these age groups unless and until such play is mandated, at a minimum, on a state-wide basis by VYSA [Virginia Youth Soccer Association] and MSYSA [Maryland State Youth Soccer Association]”.¹¹² Nonetheless, the general support for small-sided play was present and the NCSL Board

¹⁰⁷ *USA Today*, 9 April 1997. There were recommendations for “four-on-four games for players younger than 8 and three-on-three for those younger than 6” but these remained optional. According to Tom Fleck, member of the USYSA committee that designed the program for short-sided games, implementing the mandate was a challenge since the USYSA did not “have any eight-vs.-eight police out there” but he did believe that “we have a great compliance level”.

¹⁰⁸ USYSA, *US Youth Soccer Policy on Players and Playing Rules*, 2001, Rule 303.

¹⁰⁹ National Capital Soccer League, *Minutes of the NCSL Board of Directors Meeting*, 20 March 2001.

¹¹⁰ *Memorandum from Len Oliver Associates to NCSL via Jim Ferguson, Chair, Committee on Smaller-Sided Games*, 11 May 2001, p. 2.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹² National Capital Soccer League, *Minutes of the NCSL Board of Directors Meeting*, 14 May 2001.

recommended by a unanimous vote “that the president of NCSL introduce a motion with the VYSA Board to propose a USYSA rule change, to be considered at the next AGM [Annual General Meeting], to nationally mandate small-sided play for at least the U11 age group”.¹¹³ Indeed, the real revolution occurred with the adoption nationally in August of 2002 of the revised Rule 303. Effective September 2003, all age groups from ‘U10’ down to ‘U6’ were to play “Small-Sided Games” and this varied from 8-a-side to 3-a-side.¹¹⁴

The transition was not always easy and one state which struggled with its implementation was Virginia. The South-Eastern Virginia Youth Soccer Association (SEVYSA) often made mention of the change and the implications during its meeting minutes in 2002 and 2003. In February of 2002, it was noted that “Virginia is NOT prepared. When implemented, the mandate will present some very unique obstacles for SEVYSA clubs to collaterally resolve.”¹¹⁵ Even once the mandate was enforced for 2003, some clubs and leagues struggled as evidenced by problems with inter-league play between SEVYSA and Richmond’s Metropolitan Youth Soccer League. The minutes from SEVYSA’s October 2003 meeting stated that

“[s]everal clubs have experienced problems in Richmond with IL [inter-league] games including U12 teams being made to play 11 a side instead of 9, Richmond fields not ready for play, no officials present at the start of the match, an opposing team that didn’t want to play their second scheduled game of the day.”¹¹⁶

In order to help the move to small-sided games, the USYS undertook a massive communicational effort which included published handbooks, manuals, complete with diagrams on field layout and statistical analyses supporting the benefits in playing time per player.¹¹⁷ When USYS carried out a survey on the implementation of small-sided games in 2009, the twenty-nine state associations reported that they had all mandated

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁴ USYSA, *US Youth Soccer Policy on Players and Playing Rules*, 2003, Rule 303.

¹¹⁵ South-Eastern Virginia Youth Soccer Association, *Minutes from February 28, 2002*.

¹¹⁶ South-Eastern Virginia Youth Soccer Association, *Minutes from October 21, 2003*.

¹¹⁷ To wit, the 2005 revised *Small Sided Games Manual* was a seventy page document from the USYS coaching department outlining all aspects of this shift and listed a bibliography of several pages including articles from UEFA’s Technical Director Andy Roxburgh.

the guidelines while the remaining twenty-six associations had only partially implemented as per the original mandate.¹¹⁸ This required a philosophical shift for some coaches and parents in the game which had been recommended for many years but only finally approved and slowly implemented at the start of the twenty-first century. With the final scaling down of team sizes, the adaptation of the youth game was in many respects complete. It was no longer an exclusively 11-a-side team sport but a game officially and legitimately played by three players per team in the youngest of age groups.

Conclusion: Adapted Laws, the fruit of coaching, professionalism and commercialisation?

The steps in the scaling down of the rules and equipment for youth football were overtly visible. Younger and younger players played shorter matches on smaller and smaller fields, with shorter crossbars, narrower goals and smaller balls, and most strikingly with fewer players to a team. Yet what was it that led youth organisations in the late 1970s, such as USYSA, to stipulate that

“Except as otherwise provided herein, FIFA ‘Laws of the Game’ shall apply to any and all competition sponsored by this Association”?¹¹⁹

The underlying reasons behind this reduction were not so evident, however, and they require a more subjective interpretation of the historical timeline. This conclusion only addresses some possible avenues to consider in connection with this ‘sizing down’ process.

Three different themes within sport are explored here: education/coaching, professionalism, and commercialisation. While different in France and America, each issue intersected the youth football phenomenon at different times and in accordance

¹¹⁸ US Youth Soccer, *National Small-Sided Games Expansion*, Report updated May 12, 2009, p. 7.

¹¹⁹ The USYSA rules made reference to the FIFA “Laws of the Game” a fact that reflects the abstract nature of the IFAB to the wider public who generally attribute football’s rules to the international federation rather than the historical four-nation committee. For the USYSA rules, see rule 2105 in United States Soccer Federation, *Official Administrative Rulebook*, 1978, p. 80.

with the evolving national sporting context and thus may provide some explanation to this scaling down trend.

The first, the rise of the youth football-specific educator, is concomitant with the scaling down phenomenon and some clues hint that this teaching corps who focused on sports skills were behind the push for a kid-size version of the game. As the adult responsible for youth teams became trained for football-specific education in a club setting and not just physical education within the school curriculum, the focus of the subject (football) changed as well. Just like mathematics in which a child learns addition and subtraction before the more complicated multiplication and division, a dedicated football teaching corps sought a pedagogical approach to the sport which progressively introduced various aspects of the game in phases according to age and ability. But for this youth-specific coaching to have taken hold, the role of the coach also had to become an accepted part of the football world.

Laurent Grün has argued that the coaching profession in France underwent a process of “difficult emergence” before finally becoming recognised as a legitimate profession by the end of the 1940s in part accelerated by professionalism in the two prior decades.¹²⁰ Yet even if the *entraîneur* was officially incorporated in the FFF’s regulations, the five-page ‘Statut de l’Entraîneur’ explained the three coaching diplomas (*entraîneur*, *moniteur* or *initiateur*) but made no specific mention to coaching youth as late as the mid 1950s.¹²¹ Coaches whose focus was on youth did exist, however; though they were not immune to the same type of club politics which often cost a first team coach his head.¹²²

Obtaining an official coaching diploma was the mandatory rite of passage before a club handed a coach the reigns of their footballing youth. Such was the case of

¹²⁰ Laurent Grün, ‘La difficile émergence de la profession d’entraîneur de football en France (1890-1950)’, in *STAPS*, 63 (2003), pp. 45-62.

¹²¹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, pp. 79-83.

¹²² Philippe Prédour, longtime player and later youth coach for *AS Brestoise* in the late 1940s, was let go by the club’s board after being caught up in some political issues. *AS Brestoise* archive, *Letter from Paul Abaléa to Philippe Prédour*, 4 April 1950. See also ASB online archive, ‘Prédour Philippe’, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/jopq.htm> (accessed March 16, 2010).

Dieppe UC's Maurice Monneveu who was among the chosen twelve (out of fifty-four candidates) to successfully pass the course to become an *initiateur de football*, the necessary step to open an *école de football*.¹²³ By the 1960s, a club's first team coach was certainly expected to assume at least the supervision of youth teams (sometimes assisted by senior players). Interviewed in *Football Magazine* 1963, AS Brestoise first team coach Martial Gergotich described training at his club

“With regard to the youngsters, I am assisted by [Jean] Lars and also by [senior] players, Cerveau and Saleun both who are physical education teachers.”¹²⁴

The promotion of the FFF's coaching diplomas targeted senior players, amateur or professional, who were in the middle or towards the end of their careers and who saw a future in the field of physical education. The development of the *entraîneurs*, *moniteurs*, and *initiateurs de football* paralleled the previously described expansion of the *écoles de football* beginning in the 1950s up to the 1980s. The move away from football *at* school to the school *for* football necessitated the creation of a teaching corps capable of overseeing the “physical preparation for football, technical and tactical instruction, social and moral education of the player” as stipulated in the FFF's 1955 definition of the role of the officially trained *entraîneur* and be consistent with their role as educators in the service of the public.¹²⁵ The push for this teaching, or rather, coaching corps was such that in the 1960s the FFF regularly reported a gradually increasing number of several hundred officially licensed coaches who were educating players across the fields of France.¹²⁶ The FFF's official coaching status finally made clear mention to youth age categories as one of the major objects of football education in 1967.¹²⁷ In all, the number of officially trained corps of all ‘football educators’ (many in a volunteer capacity), had mushroomed to around 9,000 by the turn of the 1980s.¹²⁸

¹²³ UC Dieppois, *Histoire 1950-51*, <http://duc-football.ifrance.com/1950.html?5&weborama=26> (accessed January 20, 2010)

¹²⁴ *Football Magazine*, April 1963.

¹²⁵ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, p. 79.

¹²⁶ In 1965 the figure was around 500 active licensed coaches. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1965-66*, p. 6.

¹²⁷ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1967-68*, p. 108.

¹²⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel 1979-80*, p. 6.

The curtain had risen on a new footballing world where the sport was no longer at the centre of political and ideological battles between believers in the secular *République* and those faithful to the Catholic *patronages* movement as was the case at the start of the century. Football's "school of virtues", as described by Wahl, meant something altogether different by turn of the 1980s.¹²⁹ In so far as youth were concerned, they continued to flood local clubs but those adults (now licensed coaches as opposed to ordained priests) probably had a different focus than the earlier generation of clergymen who had mostly pulled out of the coaching roles and of the running of the *patronages* by the late 1960s.¹³⁰ At the hands of an FFF-trained coaching corps it is unlikely that the match preparation in 1980 would have been of the same spiritual regime as the requirement for members of Catholic *patronage* teams to attend Sunday mass as a warm-up.¹³¹ Indeed, a modern technically focused coach would have undoubtedly been behind any push for developments in adopting an age-appropriate and skills-training-targeted pedagogy including all aspects of the rules and equipment. The importance of adapted *Laws* mirrored the development of the youth coach and also had a technical orientation: skills training for a professionalised industry.

Not having the same widespread national footballing culture, the USA faced the 1970s tidal wave of youth without the natural evolution of the youth coach which had been the case in France over the prior decades. All the same, the push for a scaled down version of the game found support in coaches' motivations for skills development. The aforementioned Bruce Golden, who founded the Meriden, Connecticut youth league in the 1970s after having played high school soccer locally, explained the technical reasons for a smaller sized game:

¹²⁹ Alfred Wahl, *Les archives du football*, (Paris: Editions Gallimard/Julliard, 1989), pp. 76-9.

¹³⁰ Jean Berthou described his own experience as a local priest who was spent most of his active ministry "taking care of the youth" between 1948 and 1972. Berthou also held the role as the designated chaplain, or *aumônier*, for the national Catholic sports federation and attended the 1972 Olympic Games. Jean Berthou, 'Du vicariate de patro à l'aumônerie nationale', in Gérard Cholvy and Yvon Tranvouez, eds., *Sport, culture et religion : les patronages catholiques (1898-1998)*, (Brest: Centre de Recherche Bretonne et Celtique, 1999), pp. 323-35.

¹³¹ One such Catholic patronage was l'Intrépide Angers which published its teams in advance of matches in the newspaper. The line-ups were listed under what was called convocations, or a call-up. In advance of a match in 1936, the club published its convocations for the 9:30 am match. The players were instructed to arrive one hour and a half early for the 8am mass. See unnamed newspaper clipping, '1936 Messe', in Intrépide Angers, 90th Anniversary DVD.

“We’ve scaled it down to get more kids involved...We don’t want just kick and run. We want them to handle the ball.”¹³²

Other coaches, who were not native-born American parent volunteers, were more recent immigrants and brought a youth-specific mentality to the game. One recent immigrant, Gordon Hill described his view after several years of coaching youth in a slightly different context, for the NASL’s Tampa Bay Rowdies:

“At this age (6-12 year-olds), if we don’t develop the skills properly, we’ll fail them, just as other countries have failed their youth. You know when Pelé was at his peak, a study showed that he had the ball at his feet a maximum of one minute, 45 seconds in a 90-minute game. How often does a kid on an 11-a-side soccer team touch the ball in a youth game? There’s a story about the kid who comes home from practice and says happily to his mother, ‘Mom, I had a good day today! I kicked the ball!’ That’s why I believe we should play seven-a-side games across half the field with orange cones for goals, and maybe even no goalkeeper. It’s not unusual for a kid to play and not touch the ball. But the only way they’ll learn the basic ball skills is to have the ball at the foot. We have to give every kid a chance to play in a controlled situation, and we’re not doing that.”¹³³

For the Englishman Hill, the move to small-sided games was *intrinsically* linked with skills development. Perhaps this is unsurprising given his work for a professional NASL team: his role was to educate young players with an end view of training future players for this rising industry. The changes to the professional side of the sport while the aforementioned youth rule modifications took place are not to be overlooked. They mark the wider questions about the youth football phenomenon and what was at stake as professionalism rose to another level with the onset of television and big business beginning in the 1960s and 70s, a theme discussed in the next chapter.

The final aspect to consider when investigating the creation of a youth-sized game is the wider commercialisation of the sport as a product to be sold. As the rules changed, the equipment requirements created new markets for the leisure and sporting goods companies. But business developments are not always a consequence of external organisational changes and often accompany such shifts or even instigate them. In the case of youth football, could the adaptation of a scaled-down version have had a

¹³² *The Morning Record and Journal*, 16 June 1979.

¹³³ *Sarasota Journal*, 18 June 1980.

commercial connection in the manner of the “symbiotic affiliation” between sports governing associations and the sporting goods manufacturers described by Stephen Hardy?¹³⁴ Admittedly, children in the 1950s did not have the purchasing power to exert direct influence on this type of affiliation. Yet maybe their preference for one type or size of sporting equipment over another may have indirectly influenced the issue? One example from youth basketball illustrates this point rather well.

A plethora of local midget teams (aged twelve to fourteen) from various organisations, churches and boys’ clubs played regular games in Boston Garden during the halftime intermission of collegiate and professional games in the early 1950s. It had been suggested that the boys use a smaller size ball, a soccer ball no less, “because the regulation-size ball was too heavy” but when basketball director, Bill Mokray attempted the switch the boys refused on both occasions demanding the same regulation size ball used in collegiate play.¹³⁵ To what extent was the choice of sporting equipment a fight between adults who sought to impose modified versions of their games on kids who wanted none of it and desperately wanted to play with the *real* thing?

In contrast to the rejection of the smaller size by the youth themselves, how did the rise of sports manufacturers specialising in youth markets actually influence the development of rule changes? Was there not an inherent business interest in sponsoring a youth tournament, ideally with hopes to position its products as the ‘official’ or preferred ball or goal supplier? What else could motivate a ball manufacturer such as Voit, to sponsor youth tournaments in the late 1970s named the “Voit Soccer Cup” in the heart of where southern California ‘youth soccer’ was booming?¹³⁶ Likewise, before becoming the international corporate giant, adidas undoubtedly had some interest and influence in the youth sector once it began to sponsor skills competitions in France

¹³⁴ Stephen Hardy argues that the question of how sport governing bodies in America gained control can be explained in part by the rise of their authority as an outgrowth of their “symbiotic affiliations with sporting goods firms”. See especially pages 146-50 in Stephen Hardy, ‘Adopted by all the leading clubs: Sporting goods and the shaping of leisure’, in David K. Wiggins, ed., *Sport in America: from wicked amusement to national obsession*, (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1995).

¹³⁵ *Daily Boston Globe*, 1 January 1950.

¹³⁶ *Los Angeles Times*, 30 March 1979.

like the 'Jeu adidas' which were the precursor to an intimate long-term partnership with the FFF for youth development programmes.¹³⁷

As children's games became increasingly organised by adults – whose focus turned to teaching skills rather than using sport primarily as a means for character development – their coaching objective changed from moral imperatives to technique and tactics. This shift in vision about football was undeniably linked to the scaling-down of the youth game which was in turn also connected to other changes in professionalism or commercialisation of the sport itself. That the scaling-down of football occurred alongside these changes – educational/coaching, professional and commercial – is not altogether surprising. What may not have been foreseeable, however, was that the separating of the youth level from adult football according to age, separate competition and distinct rules, was to co-exist with a formalisation of the connections between the two different worlds. The bridging of the youth and elite sectors, while perhaps in opposition to the separation of youth and senior football described in Chapters 1, 2 and 3, actually serves to confirm that the two faces of the sport could actually be considered distinct. It is to this relationship, the linking of youth and elite football, that the final chapter will turn.

¹³⁷ *France Football*, 5 January 1971.

Chapter 4 - Bridging the gap between youth and elite: from child's play to a *métier*, c.1920-c.2000

More than 220 teams and 4,000 players have begun a national competition to decide the best youth team in the United States. The National Junior Challenge Cup, instituted in 1935, will be awarded to the winner in May. The National Junior Cup is the only national competition for youth in the country and represents the biggest soccer event for players of high school age. The annual event is sanctioned and cosponsored by the United States Soccer Federation, the governing body of soccer in this country. "The Junior Cup is our hope for international success in the years to come," said Kurt Lamm, secretary of the federation. "These will be the players we will count on for our World Cup team in five years," Lamm said.

- Kurt Lamm, General Secretary of the USSF, interviewed in the *New York Times*, February 3, 1974¹

As it was underlined above, the increased reinforcement of our policy for formation of youth is one of the essential conditions for the improvement of our elite football, and starting from the international results of our clubs and national teams. Stefan Kovacs [French national team coach at the time], among others, has remarked: "If the best French footballers are talented as well as generally courageous and clever, on the other hand they suffer, vis-à-vis their foreign rivals, from an incomplete basic formation, equivalent to students who entered university without passing the baccalauréat."

- excerpt from the opening editorial of the French Football Federation's 1974 Annual²

Intentionally, or not, human groups regenerate themselves through their youth. Professions, the bodies designed to define and regulate a specific trade or set of skills, set out means through which the next generation of lawyers or doctors will attain the knowledge and the peer recognition necessary to legitimately exercise a given practice

¹ *New York Times*, 3 February 1974.

² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1974-75*, p. 16. While the 1974 editorial in the *Annuaire* is not actually signed by the General Secretary René Fougère, this opening piece was almost always credited to the person in that position in the years prior. In 1955 the piece was authored by General Secretary, Henri Delaunay, and from 1956 until 1969 by his son Pierre Delaunay who took over the post. At the start of 1969, the FFF underwent structural change and the new General Secretary was Fernand Sastre (1969-72) followed by Fougère. The annual opening editorial systematically covered the history and ongoing development of the federation. The text itself has clearly been built on year upon year with only a few new sections for each year's updated edition. So, while it is not certain which individual actually authored the introductory piece for 1974-75, in the manner of biblical scholarship where texts were often compiled by multiple authors, it is not beyond reason to attribute this to Fougère and, moreover, to consider this as an accurate reflection of the view of the FFF's leadership.

or *métier*. Beyond the professional corps, many different forms of groups, religious, social or political for example, have established ways to ensure their future. Was sport any different? Did football's organisers in France and America explore ways to populate the fields of the future? This chapter argues that these two sporting societies were no different to other groups (like professions) and explains some of the mechanisms used by football's organisers on both sides of the Atlantic to produce future players for the adult and elite levels.

If the three prior chapters have sought to illustrate the shifts in youth football that contributed to its separation as an autonomous sector of the sport through reduced and restricted age, distinct competition, adapted rules and equipment, then this chapter contrasts this in three ways. Firstly, it presents a contemporaneous counter-current to the issues mentioned in the prior chapters: a bridge between the increasingly distinct youth and adult levels. Indeed, just as the two sectors of the sport became more and more distinct, there were simultaneous efforts to connect them. Secondly, this chapter posits that the existence of a professional elite was not a necessary and sufficient condition for the bridging of youth and elite. The power and draw of professionalism on one side was certainly an essential motor for the bridging process in France for example but it was not the only reason. In America, the push from the grassroots level in pursuit of the elusive yet coveted college scholarship was equally responsible for this bridging. Lastly, it is argued here that the decade of the 1970s saw fundamental shifts that solidified the foundations of the connections between youth and elite.

Consequently, the chapter is divided in three sections. The first addresses the bridging process between the 1920s and the early 1970s with a focus on the theme of identification while the second section examines the developments from the decade of the 1970s to the present, a period in which the accent moved to *formation* or development. Finally, the conclusion of this chapter explores some of the issues at stake behind these shifts in the different bridging mechanisms as well as the relevance or not of professionalism as a catalyst in both countries.

In parallel, this chapter explores whether there were similarities as well as disparities between the efforts to link the youth with the elite in America and those in France. From the 1920s up to the turn of the millennium, there were two constants in the bridging of youth and elite: talent identification and talent development. Essential to the bridging process between youth and elite football was the identification of youthful talent. This *détection*, as it was often called in France, was carried out at younger and younger age levels as the twentieth century advanced. Perhaps of greater importance by the end of the century was the systematized development, or *formation*, of youth through training. The deliberate identification of American youth as the “hope for international success” and the development in France of an essential policy for the “formation of youth” cited in the opening quotations reflect both themes, although the focus and level of importance in both countries have probably moved over time from an exclusive focus on the former, identification, to a dual model with more and more focus on the latter, development.

Bridges there were then between youth and elite, but were the passages across the youth-adult divide different in France and America? Despite some general similarities, the underlying aims for and the manner in which the two increasingly autonomous sectors of the sport (youth and adult) were connected were not necessarily identical in France and the United States. Given that the sport’s status was vastly different in the two countries, what were some of the factors that conditioned the conscious connecting of the youth game to the senior level? From 1932 onwards French football was openly professional and the youth game developed in connection with a clearly defined elite level that, despite significant transformation, never disappeared since that date.³ In contrast, the game in America, notwithstanding intense eclipses of professionalism, witnessed mostly long periods of marginalization in ethnic

³ Various scholars such as Lanfranchi & Wahl and Faure & Suaud have noted that professionalism, albeit allowed in 1932, did not achieve full recognition as a profession until decades later (indeed many players remained ‘amateur’ even into the 1960s). Thus the notion here of “clearly defined elite” is to be read with restraint and, moreover, the focus of the phrase should be on the comparison with America where similar widespread and continual professionalism was not as present.

communities and attained a semi-professional status at best.⁴ Was the link between youth and elite possible despite such disparate sporting realities?

For both USSF Secretary Kurt Lamm and FFF Secretary René Fougère, to whom the second opening quotation is probably credited, the answer in 1974 was categorically affirmative. They clearly foresaw the future of their national elite reflected in the eyes of their youth. Fougère's French football world had just undergone reform after a major crisis with the professional side of the sport while Lamm's USSF had just been Americanized by dropping the word 'football' at the same time that the NASL was languoring in its pre-Pelé era. Despite evident disparities between the national elite games of France and America, youth were viewed in both countries as the future of the top level of the sport, at least by the national federations in the 1970s.

This would suggest that the presence and reach, or not, of nationally recognized professionalism may not have drastically affected the bridging of youth and elite. It undoubtedly did have an effect on the development of the youth sector with regard to both of these two important elements of identification and development in France. But the absence of longstanding, nationally recognised professionalism in America did not impede the building of bridges between youth and senior levels as they were seen in 1974. Quite to the contrary, as will be discussed below.

What is most important here is the recognition that the tectonic shifts, which defined youth as separate from adult through age, distinct competition, different rules and equipment, opened a chasm between the young and old. As a result, the existence of a breach between youth and adult football justified and necessitated the forging of a connection hitherto unnecessary. In short, building a bridge became ineludible since without two opposing banks, there was no river to cross.

⁴ Authors such as Allaway, Jose, and Wangerin have presented in detail these eclipses including the American Soccer League of the 1920s that was certainly professional but disappeared with the onset of the Great Depression, and the brief burst of the NASL during the mid to late 1970s. Aside from these two examples and the birth of Major League Soccer in 1996, nationally recognised professionalism has not continually existed over the twentieth century in the way it did in France.

This chapter argues that the 1970s were an important transitional period in regards to the themes of talent identification and development. While the year 1974 was not in itself the tipping point, it was a landmark year in many respects. It was the year in which the US Youth Soccer Association was founded, the first year that the youth portion of the FFF's membership significantly surpassed the number of senior players, the last year before Pelé signed with the New York Cosmos and the end of the first season (1973-74) of French football's new *Charte du Football Professionnel* that essentially formalised the creation of training academies known as *centres de formation*.⁵ That year was part of a decade of change in which the youth game was recognised and internationalised to a degree not seen before, paradigms to which the two opening quotes allude.

Talent Identification c.1920-c.1974: Looking for little Kopas and little Fontaines

Robert Chapatte: "Do you have the impression that you are working for something, labouring for football?"

Léon Glovacki: "Of course. We are always trying to find little Kopa's, little Fontaine's."

- From a 1961 television news report on the Stade de Reims *école de football* for boys aged ten to fourteen.⁶

The fabled Stade de Reims club is known primarily for its success and velours style of play over the 1950s, yet the club was also actively engaged in the organisation of youth football activities during their heyday. Léon Glovacki, a professional player for Reims who was also involved in the club's youth programme, was interviewed by journalist Robert Chapatte in a special piece dedicated to the club for a television news report. The segment on the *école de football* portrayed images of boys performing technical exercises under the supervision of professionals including Raymond Kopa, Just Fontaine, Leon Glovacki and others. The focus throughout the interviews was on

⁵ At the end of the 1973-74 season, the FFF reported 480,921 registered youth players between the ages of nine and eighteen. The total number of *séniors* and *vétérans* for that season was 436,484 players. The prior season both amounts were very close despite the youth just outnumbering the adults: 421,898 for the *séniors* and *vétérans* and 423,205 for all youth players. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1974-75*, p. 6.

⁶ Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, 'Place aux Jeunes', video archive, (November 4, 1961; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel). From 6 minutes 52 seconds to 7 minutes 2 seconds.

the process of identifying talented youngsters. Aside from the weekly sessions at the *école de football*, how did clubs like Reims uncover their next generation of players? How did the sport's leadership ensure that they would find the little Kopas and little Fontaines who would pull on the club and national team shirts of tomorrow?

From the interwar years to the decades that followed World War Two a variety of talent identification mechanisms were utilised by football's organisers in order to pick out the up-and-coming talent. The efforts in France rested on the well-connected national structure of the sport (from local club to national team) and the game's administrators deliberately sought to put talented youth in contact with established professionals. Before there were widespread academies, or *centres de formation*, youth participated in skills contests, played curtain raisers, and were mentored by elite players. This section, which relies more heavily on French sources, illustrates some of the talent identification mechanisms.

The 'Concours du Jeune Footballeur', 1930 to 1979

"Throughout this month the various events of the Concours du Footballeur shall be contested."⁷

A 'concours' in French can be translated as a 'contest' in English, in the sense of 'to run together' or 'test together'. In practice, the term has become a means of competitive measurement and even used as an 'entrance exam'. While little is known about the event referred to in the above quote from 1922 and whether it was the first of its kind, another contest sharing a strikingly similar name, the *Concours du Jeune Footballeur*, was organised annually from 1930 and served as one of the earliest mechanisms for talent identification. While a number of authors, Lanfranchi and Wahl, Slimani, Vassort and Faure and Suaud have referred to this event, its examination has been incomplete thus far.⁸ This section does not purport to be fully exhaustive but it

⁷ *Ballon Rond*, 22 July 1922. As part of the article about the upcoming season for the large club, V.G.A.M. (Vie au Grand Air du Médoc), this note is the only mention of such an event in the weekly between 1920-1925. Whether this was a one off or a regularly organised contest which later served to inspire the organisers in 1930 is unknown.

⁸ Most scholars have referred to the creation of the event or simply listed one or more of its winners. See Pierre Lanfranchi and Alfred Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, (Paris : Hachette, 1995), pp. 119-

endeavours to provide a more complete picture and a basis for a more complete and nuanced appreciation of its impact on youth and senior football. It explores, over the competition's fifty year life span, the organisation of the event, its link with the elite level, the role of the media, the structure and format of the contest, and finally the *Concours'* place as a recruitment tool.

If all authors and various additional sources concur on the date for the inaugural edition held toward the end of the 1929-30 season, little effort has been made at putting together a coherent picture about the general organisation of the event. The Parisian weekly, *Match*, reported that Aimé Nuic won the inaugural *Concours du Jeune Footballeur* at the Stade de Paris on June 1st 1930 beating at least eighteen other participants all hailing from essentially only Paris and the north-east.⁹ No mention was made of a 'finals' or any regional qualifying. Indeed, the scope of the participants was geographically restricted with only two, the winner Nuic and Travers both from Lorraine, hailing from outside the two above-mentioned regions.¹⁰ Two years later the final fielded a wider participant range including representatives from the north, Normandy, the Lorraine, Paris, the north-west, and the Rhone-Alps region.¹¹ The event appears to have moved to the autumn for just the following year. In one of the brief mentions to the contest in Favero and Wahl's work, the regional paper, *l'Est Républicain*, announced on October 28 that Capelli, the regional winner from the *Lorraine* region, would head to Paris for the 1933 finals.¹² In the early years then, the national finals were not necessarily fixed to late spring or early summer.

How was the *Concours* organised? As a stand-alone event or integrated into the footballing calendar? Scholars have commented that it was generally held in connection with a big match. Though this was not always the case, it did, however, become the

20; Jean-Michel Faure and Charles Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel à la Française*, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1999), p. 59; Hassen Slimani, 'La professionnalisation du football français : un modèle de dénégarion', (PhD thesis, Université de Nantes, 2000), pp. 257-8 ; Patrick Vassort, *Football et Politique*, (Paris : Les Éditions de la Passion, 2002), pp. 135-7.

⁹ *Match*, 3 June 1930.

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Of the eighteen participants listed, ten came from the *Nord* (north), seven from Paris and one from *Lorraine* (in the east).

¹¹ *Match*, 10 May 1932.

¹² Jean-Pierre Favero and Alfred Wahl, *Immigration et intégration par le sport: Le cas des immigrés italiens du bassin de Briey*, (Paris: l'Harmattan, 2008), p. 87.

tendency over time with a France international match or the French cup final being favourites. The inaugural final in 1930 was held on June 1st and no mention was made to another major football event on the same day.¹³ That year the French cup final was held on the 27th of April and three France internationals were held in May but no matches took place on June 1. Announcing the first regional competition in Brittany in 1932, the first prize granted the winner an all expenses paid trip to Paris for the France-Scotland international in May and presumably the opportunity to compete in the national finals.¹⁴ Given the report on the finals however, it is not certain that the western league provided a representative that year, though there is a mention in the AS Brestoise archive of two news articles covering Martial Gergotich who would apparently have participated in the 1932 *Concours*.¹⁵ *Match* provided one full page of coverage on the 10th of May 1932 of the France-Scotland international and included, towards the end of the report, a description of the skills competition which was held that same morning at the *Stade de Colombes*.¹⁶ A big stage was not always the backdrop for the event however. For example, the 1937 final was held on Sunday, May 30th and appears to have been organised independent of a major match.¹⁷

In this initial period was the event publicly supported? The presence of an actual paying public at the national event and even at the district and regional events can be traced back to the earliest years of the competition. For example, the 1937 *Haute-Bretagne* district qualifier held on the 26th of April in Rennes had a general admission fee of one franc and the newspaper report went on to state that “there will be no free entry as this concours is organised by the L.O.F.A. [regional league of Bretagne].”¹⁸ The existence of an admission fee does not presume, however, that the event regularly attracted large paying crowds. A reporter covering the other half of the district qualifier on the same day in Lannion noted that:

¹³ *Match*, 3 June 1930.

¹⁴ AS Brestoise archive, 1932, entry from February 2, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/32.htm> (accessed February 2, 2010).

¹⁵ *Ibid*. It is unclear whether the reference is indeed for 1932 and rather unlikely as Gergotich would have been only twelve years of age. The western league apparently sent their first representatives to the finals in Paris in 1935. See *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 18 May 1935.

¹⁶ *Match*, 10 May 1932.

¹⁷ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 31 May 1937. The French Cup final that year was held on the 9th of May and the only French international during the spring was on the 23rd.

¹⁸ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 26 April 1937.

“This event, organised by Stade Lannionais, if it did not attract the favour of the public, it was nevertheless a lovely success from a sporting point of view.”¹⁹

When considering that the price for the match organised several weeks earlier by the FFF for the selection of the national amateur team ranged from four francs to twelve, the one franc required for admittance to the *concours* appears to have been more of a supportive gesture by spectators who would thus contribute to cover its costs or help fund the winners travel to the regional and national finals.²⁰ The higher the level of competition, the more expensive the ticket. One level up from the prior district examples, the 1939 regional final in Rennes set admission at two francs.²¹

Spectatorship was not the only source of support as the media played a key role in the early organisation of the event. The first edition was ‘sponsored’ by *Football*, a weekly that served as the communication bulletin for the FFF at the time.²² The full organisation of the 1937 finals in Paris was still attributed to the weekly.²³ The cross-over between the media and the sport’s leadership in the federation was evident although the line between the two was more difficult to draw during this period of significant growth of the sporting press.²⁴ Individuals such as Gabriel Hanot and Achille Duchenne wrote regularly in various periodicals including the FFF’s own *Football* and were also deeply involved in the running of the sport.²⁵ Even at the regional level, the event was often co-sponsored by the press. The 1937 district finals in Nantes and Angers were supported by *L’Ouest-Éclair* which provided wide coverage of the rules and registration information beforehand as well as the results after the event. Covering that year’s Angers qualifier, the headline read: “Combot, from SCO Angers,

¹⁹ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 27 April 1937.

²⁰ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 18 March 1937.

²¹ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 16 April 1939.

²² *Match*, 3 June 1930.

²³ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 31 May 1937.

²⁴ Slimani notes how many of the leading writers and editors of the football press were in fact former players and still involved in the sport. Slimani, ‘La professionnalisation du football français’, pp. 101-4.

²⁵ Hanot, probably the most well known of the two thanks to his career as a journalist for sporting papers, *Le Miroir des Sports*, *L’Auto*, later, *L’Equipe*, was instrumental in the planning of the European Cup. He also published a guidebook on how to become a good footballer, *Pour devenir un bon joueur de football association: Règles officielles fixées par l’International Board* in 1921 as well as another text on the game *Le Football-Association*. Duchenne, also a journalist, served during the 1950s on the FFF’s committee for the organisation of the *Coupe de France* and that for statute for coaches. See *Football*, 22 May 1941; Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1959-60*, pp. 16-20.

wins the qualifier for Anjou-Basse-Loire organised with the patronage of *Ouest-Éclair*”.²⁶

There is further evidence that illustrates the link between individual members of the different regional league committees for *juniors* and *minimes* and journalists or editors working in the media. The registrations for the 1939 Nantes elimination round were to be sent to Mr. Donnart who happened to work in the editor’s office of *L’Ouest-Éclair*.²⁷ It is unclear if the role of the media was also one of directly financially sponsoring the organisation of the *Concours*, or the participants and league representatives’ travel to the regional event and to the finals in Paris. What is clear is that the media were key promoters in the early years of the event.

If the initial years saw the *Concours* closely linked to and supported by the media, the next step in growing the event was providing a bigger stage for attendance in the post-war years. Wahl has noted that the trend shifted to occur alongside the French cup final at which the winners were publicly presented to the crowd.²⁸ But was the event itself widely attended by spectators? Were only the winners invited to watch the cup final? When asked if the 1959 finals were open to the public and whether all the participants were invited to the final of the French cup, Jean-Paul Lacasa, one of that year’s competitors, responded:

“I know that it was held at Colombes at the time. As far as I can say it was open to spectators, and there were surely spectators...Oh yes, yes, yes, we attended the final of the French Cup. That year it was Le Havre against Sochaux if I recall correctly.”²⁹

Lacasa was a native of Sidi-Bel-Abbès in French Algeria and, interestingly, the traditions of linking the *Concours* to a major match continued in independent post-colonial Algeria. Newspaper reports recounted how Anwar Bachta finished first in the *Ligue d’Alger* event and would compete in the national final the day before the 1965

²⁶ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 3 April 1937.

²⁷ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 19 March 1939.

²⁸ Alfred Wahl, ‘Raymond Kopa: Une vedette du football, un mythe’, in Alfred Wahl, *Football et histoire: Recueil d’articles*, (Centre de recherche Histoire et civilisation de l’Université de Metz, 2004), p. 164.

²⁹ Interview with Jean-Paul Lacasa, April 23, 2010.

Algerian Cup Final.³⁰ This trend also continued on the mainland into the 1960s and 70s and Maxime Bossis recalled his experience in 1970:

“I also remember that before signing my first contract, I had participated in the finals of the concours des jeunes footballeurs, in Paris. And that evening we were invited to the final of the French cup... It was in 1970, the finals were still held at Colombes...”³¹

In a telling photo from the 1973 final, the first to be held in the new Parc des Princes, Nanou Battesti, the winner, is seen waving to the packed house of spectators. Indeed, by the 1970s this had become a big moment for the young boys who reached the finals in Paris and more than a subconscious link had been established between the participants and the professionals they were invited to watch.

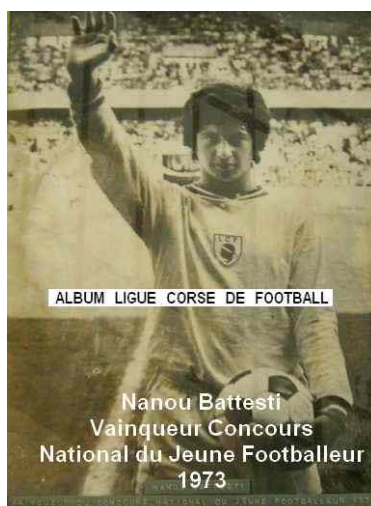


Image 18 - Nanou Battesti, 1973 winner of the Concours du Jeune Footballeur³²

But what was the format of the competition that had forged a connection between youth and elite? What were the skills tested and how was it organised? As an individual skills contest, participants were scored and timed in various exercises

³⁰ ‘Anwar Bachtta (O.M.R.) Meilleur Jeune Footballeur de la Ligue d’Alger’, clipping from unnamed newspaper, Mouloudia Club Algérois archive, <http://sebbar.kazeo.com/Ancienne-gloire/BACHTA-ANWAR> (accessed May 2, 2010).

³¹ Maxime Cogny, ‘La rivalité FC Nantes / ASSE entre 1970 à 1984’, interview with Maxime Bossis, http://footnostalgie.free.fr/version2/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=264&Itemid=32 (accessed September 1, 2009).

³² Album Ligue de Corse de Football, ‘Nanou Battesti Vainqueur Concours National du Jeune Footballeur’, <http://retrofoot.blog.club-corsica.com/rub-00247-album-ligue-corse-de-football-n-2-6249.html> (accessed May 5, 2010).

beginning with the earliest editions, though the scoring system seems to have evolved. Unfortunately, *Match* did not describe the different events or disciplines of the first edition.³³ Several years later, the 1937 district final in Nantes received wide ranging coverage before and after, and the regional press explained it this way:

“These juniors will demonstrate their science, already accomplished, in an interesting curtain-raiser for the long awaited match Stade Quimpérois vs. Saint-Pierre de Nantes, which will serve as the close of the season in Nantes. **WHAT THE CONCOURS WILL BE**: We recall that the numerous tests on the programme will allow the young players to show their science, power, skill, speed, all the qualities that will make the excellent footballers of tomorrow.”³⁴

Even in the early years the media had to explain the event to the public which suggests that its format was perhaps not as widely known as the organisers would have wished.

The actual skills exercises were either timed, including a sort of obstacle course called a *parcours*, or scored in their ability to shoot, cross and take corners. Describing the 1937 Lannion qualifying event for the district Bretagne-Nord, the newspaper reported:

“It was really a pleasure to see the young footballers of 15, 16, and 17 years of age complete the difficult course in very good time, execute shots, crosses, and corners with the right foot and the left foot.”³⁵

But evaluating the candidates’ skills went beyond just the quality of their feet and the same year’s regional final included heading, from the right, left and front.³⁶ Lacasa himself recalled the different elements as well as some unforeseen difficulties while at the national finals in Paris in 1959:

“In the elimination round, that is in the ‘parcours’, there are a lot of poles...and I fell twice since I did not have any cleats. We had bars on our soles back there [in Algeria], the fields were dry...”

³³ *Match*, 3 June 1930.

³⁴ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 25 April 1937. Capital letters in original.

³⁵ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 27 April 1937.

³⁶ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 10 May 1937.

“So, there were shots on goal on the run taking off from midfield. We had to shoot, left foot, right foot, then we had to do long diagonal balls, changing the play... Then there was everything having to do with ball control, heading...”³⁷

In addition to the technical events, there even appears to have been a theoretical part of the competition though the press made little of this element. The 1939 event included references on several occasions to an ‘exam’ and at least the Rennes district and regional events included a theory section which was described by *L’Ouest-Éclair* in this way:

“the paternal and devoted administrative secretary of the L.O.F.A. [the regional league], the competent Mr. Adolphe Marchand, asked ‘sticky’ questions to the participants”.³⁸

The inclusion of a theory section did not drive youth away, rather to the contrary as the press flaunted the growing success of the regional event. Due to increasing participation some subtle changes were made to lengthen the *parcours* just two years later though the major elements of the contest, shooting, crossing, corners, and the *parcours*, remained.³⁹ After seventy-four participants registered for the 1937 Nantes district competition alone, it is understandable that the organisers sought to extend the event.⁴⁰ It is unclear whether the theoretical element of the contest continued after World War Two.

What did these contests actually resemble? Uncovering visual evidence is more difficult for the first two decades, but a photo from what is probably 1952 or 1953 depicts Mahomet Maouche, a young player who qualified from the *Ligue d’Alger* for the national finals. He is seen dribbling over an obstacle.⁴¹ Two photos from the 1950s or as late as the early 1960s clearly depict the *parcours* sequence with its various hurdles or tasks to be completed while dribbling the ball. But the images also portray some of the differences between the elaborate obstacle course at the national finals and

³⁷ Interview with Jean-Paul Lacasa, April 23, 2010.

³⁸ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 3 April 1939.

³⁹ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 19 March 1939.

⁴⁰ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 27 April 1937.

⁴¹ ASSE - Association Sportive de Saint Eugène – Alger, ‘Passage d’un obstacle placé sur le parcours (Concours du Jeune Footballeur): l’Algérois Maouche le saute sans quitter des yeux le ballon’, http://www.mitidjweb.com/asse_alger.htm (accessed May 2, 2010).

how the same concept was implemented at the local level with much simpler means. The district qualifying event in the Loiret did incorporate a *parcours* but here the boys dribbled between large oil cans and poles stuck in the ground. This may well have reflected the budget constraints at the regional or district level and difficulties in supplying the same technical training equipment available for the national finals to all the local districts in the days before multi-million franc corporate sponsorship.



Image 19 - National finals, c. 1960⁴²

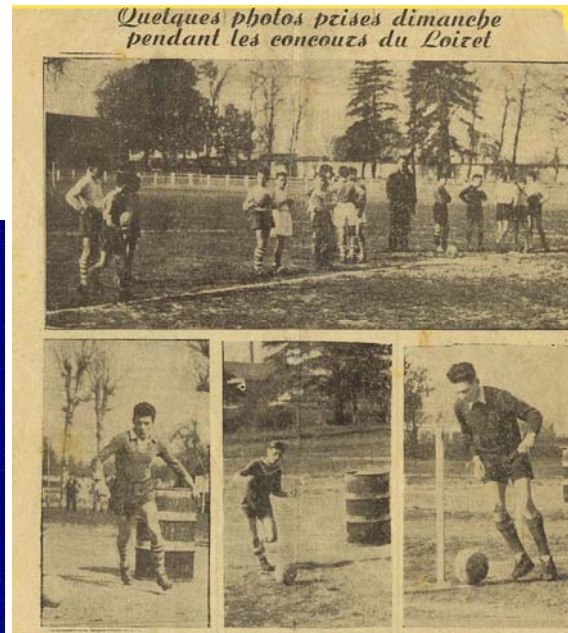


Image 20 - District qualifying event, c. 1955⁴³

It is difficult to decipher how the scoring system changed over the years. Taking some of the event's winners as a baseline for comparison, it is unclear how the scoring evolved from the system in the post-war era, but it did appear to have changed over time. *Match* reported that the young Nuic scored "77 points 25" out of a possible 85 in 1930.⁴⁴ Nuic's score appears significantly higher than Vandevælde's winning "59.2" in the 1937 final in Paris.⁴⁵ Different from Nuic's and Vandevælde's scores from the 1930s, Le Houréou won the Lannion qualifying event in 1937 with a score of "40 points

⁴² Louis Bédarieux, *Le Foot de Papa*, (Paris: Terres Editions, 2008), p.87.

⁴³ 'Quelques photos prises dimanche pendant les concours du Loiret', unnamed newspaper, USO Arago archive, <http://usoarago.canalblog.com/archives/documents/index.html> (accessed April 30, 2010).

⁴⁴ *Match*, 3 June 1930.

⁴⁵ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 31 May 1937.

25”.⁴⁶ Jean-Paul Lacasa sped through the 1958 *Ligue d’Oranie* regional qualifying event in an almost record time 48.1 seconds and scored “11 points 40” out of a possible 12 for the shooting test.⁴⁷ His overall “23 points 10” in the 1958 regional event in Oranie made no mention to the crosses or corners which were staple parts of the early competition. This was less than Alain Fescourt’s winning score of “35 pts 97” in the 1975 district competition qualifying phase for the *Ligue de Picardie*.⁴⁸ Beyond the superficial changes over the years, what is clear is that there was an attentive scoring system designed to quantify sporting performance from the earliest *Concours* – a fact that without a doubt facilitated the identification of talent with the same criteria applied across the entire country’s junior players.

As regards the structure of the event, the early years of the competition appear to have followed a local, regional and national hierarchy including an established process of qualifying through each level. While there is no mention of qualifying in the *Match* article reporting on the Parisian event in 1930, it is possible that the Lorraine, Parisian and north-eastern regional press would reveal such evidence as the competitors hailed from those two areas. In the following years however, it is clear that the finalists had already won their regional, district competitions and even qualifying events at the city or club level. One example illustrates rather well the trajectory which a given youth would have followed to reach the finals in Paris.

In 1937 two *juniors*, Yves Lavanant and Pierre Combot, from the same club, *Gâs de Morlaix*, went all the way to the national final.⁴⁹ In order to reach Paris, both completed the extensive qualifying process. After a local elimination round held separately in Brest and Lannion, the scoring was consolidated into a final district table

⁴⁶ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 27 April 1937.

⁴⁷ See Amicale des anciennes et des anciens du lycée Leclerc de Sidi-Bel-Abbès et de la plaine de Mekerra, online archive, ‘Concours du jeune footballeur – Le Bel-Abbésien LACAZA prend une large option sur la victoire’, unnamed newspaper, 1958, <http://www.mekerra.fr> (accessed March 30, 2010) and ‘Le « métronome » LACAZA (SCBA) a déjà gagné son billet pour Paris’, unnamed newspaper, 1958, in Amicale des anciennes et des anciens du lycée Leclerc de Sidi-Bel-Abbès et de la plaine de Mekerra, online archive, <http://www.mekerra.fr> (accessed March 30, 2010).

⁴⁸ See US Ribécourt archive, ‘unnamed article ‘Les concours des jeunes footballeurs’, <http://usribecourt.centerblog.net/rub-Saison-1974-1975.html> (accessed April 20, 2010), ‘Le « métronome » LACAZA (SCBA) a déjà gagné’, unnamed newspaper, 1958.

⁴⁹ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 31 May 1937.

published in the regional newspaper. Finishing second, third or fourth was not enough at the Lannion event as the scores were combined for both cities and only Le Houérou, who finished first in Lannion, broke into the top six overall which saw Lavanant and Combot take first and fourth place respectively.⁵⁰ Those top six went onto Rennes for the regional final representing the district *Bretagne-Nord*. On the ninth of May, Lavanant and Combot outscored all other district representatives at the regional final except Jean Prouff of the Nantes based Saint-Pierre club who squeezed in between the two representatives of *Gâs de Morlaix* for second place.⁵¹ The top four in Rennes proceeded on to Paris for the national final at the end of May and finished well. Out of a total of ninety-six entrants hailing from ten regional leagues and after a final elimination round which limited the field to twenty-one competitors, Lavanant took second and Combot eighteenth.⁵² Indeed, such a clearly defined hierarchy of competition and qualifying made identifying up-and-coming *juniors* relatively easy as they climbed each step of the *Concours*.

If selected for the national finals, the regional winners (and anywhere from the second place to all top six finishers) were invited for a stay in Paris to compete. This was surely unique and not something every youth was able to experience in the days before the TGV. Recalling his experiences from the late 1950s occurring in the midst of the rising tensions of colonial Algeria, Jean-Paul Lacasa said,

“The concours du jeune footballeur took place in Oran. I won it in 1958 beating Rivera. We were unable to go to Paris because of the events of the 13th of May. Everything was blocked and an airplane route did not exist. In 1959 I finished first and qualified as a standout. Normally, the top two went to Paris, but the FFF called up four competitors [presumably since he had not been able to compete the prior year]: Rivera, Lacasa, Ruiz and ? I don’t remember his name, maybe it was Del Soccoro?. We travelled on a Bréguet Deux Ponts [double-decker plane 763] and stayed one week in the capital. At sixteen years of age, we were out to discover Paris.”⁵³

⁵⁰ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 27 April 1937.

⁵¹ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 10 May 1937.

⁵² *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 31 May 1937.

⁵³ Jean-Paul Lacasa, ‘Le concours du jeune footballeur’, in *Amicale des anciennes et des anciens du lycée Leclerc de Sidi-Bel-Abbès et de la plaine de Mekerra*, online archive, <http://www.mekerra.fr> (accessed March 30, 2010). NB: Lacasa was actually seventeen when he went to Paris in 1959.

It is unclear exactly who covered the cost of this travel, whether the FFF or the regional league sending the youth, but they were generally accompanied to Paris by a regional official or coach. In the earliest editions of the competition during the 1930s, the funding for travel to the regional finals appears to have been the responsibility of the league:

“The top three [district] finalists will go to Rennes expenses paid by the League to compete in the finale de l’Ouest, and the six best in Rennes to the Federation’s [FFF] final in Paris.”⁵⁴

For those qualified for the 1939 district and regional events in Bretagne, *L’Ouest-Éclair* stated that all travel would be covered though without mentioning if it was the league or the newspaper which would be the sponsor.⁵⁵ However, on the day of the regional final in Rennes the newspaper reported that:

“At the request of the Regional Committee for Juniors and Minimes the council of the L.O.F.A. is pleased to subsidize this interesting competition, the qualified competitors will go to Paris expenses paid by the Ligue de l’Ouest.”⁵⁶

The boys did not travel alone and were generally chaperoned by a league official. For his trip in 1959, Lacasa recalled that a member of the *Ligue d’Oranie* travelled with them to Paris.⁵⁷ According to the website that commemorates the ‘Gambetta’ neighbourhood of the city of Oran in colonial French Algeria, the following year, Gabarro and Sanchez, who finished 1st and 2nd respectively at the 1960 *Ligue d’Oranie* regional level, departed for Paris on the 12th of May (just three days before that year’s French Cup Final) accompanied by a Mr. Ségara, official representative of the league.⁵⁸ It is not beyond reason to think that this was actually François Segarra (with two r’s) who served throughout the 1950s as a vice-president of the *Ligue d’Oranie*.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 25 April 1937.

⁵⁵ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 19 March 1939.

⁵⁶ *L’Ouest-Éclair*, 16 April 1939.

⁵⁷ Interview with Jean-Paul Lacasa, April 23, 2010.

⁵⁸ Gambetta Oran, ‘Nos Sportifs - Concours du plus jeune footballeur d’Oran (1960)’, <http://site.voila.fr/place.fontanel> (accessed April 19, 2010). The French cup final that year between AS Monaco and AS Saint-Étienne was held on the 15th of May.

⁵⁹ See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, p. 206 and Fédération Française de Football, *1959-60*, p. 206.

Alongside the opportunity to travel to Paris for those qualified for the national final, the winners and top finishers from the district and regional level received recognition in the form of a trophy and certificate. The newspaper proudly proclaimed its support of the Nantes leg: "...the Concours du Jeune Footballeur, with numerous prizes provided by Ouest-Éclair."⁶⁰ Two years later, apparently all the participants at the elimination round in Angers went home with something, qualified for the district final or not, with the top two finishers taking home a liquor glass set, others receiving vases, Swiss army knives and pocket screwdrivers.⁶¹ The same occurred at the district competition several weeks later:

"And what is more, Ouest-Éclair will offer a souvenir-gift to all the participants who will be present, on the 2nd of April, in Nantes, for the real district final."⁶²

After the event the newspaper expressed the "joy of all the competitors who took home souvenir-gifts" and noted how those awarded to the top four finishers were especially appreciated since those prizes were recorded to be worth one-hundred francs each.⁶³

Recognition continued in the post-war period and mirrored in some ways similar forms of recognition in other areas of society. Upon finishing third in the 1960 regional *Ligue d'Alger* event, Georges Vichot of *FC Blida* received an intricate diploma from the FFF. The striking similarity in style (ornate paper, fancy writing, official stamps and signatures) with a school diploma from the same region one year later, the *Certificat d'Études Primaires Élémentaires*, suggests that football was not all that different from the way in which other important areas of youth society, notably the school environment, recognized achievement at that time.

⁶⁰ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 25 April 1937.

⁶¹ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 30 March 1939.

⁶² *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 19 March 1939.

⁶³ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 3 April 1939.

Image 21 - Diplôme de Médaille, 1960⁶⁴Image 22 - Certificat d'Études Primaires Élémentaires, 1961⁶⁵

A collection of photos from the following year's event at the neighbouring *Ligue d'Oranie* depict two youth by the names of Grattion and Garcia, respectively 1st and 2nd of the regional final, posing with the imposing trophy.⁶⁶ Two photos from 1967 of what is almost certainly the *District de l'Oise*'s district finals portray the winner's table adorned with cups and trophies as well as showing Jacques Besson, who represented the district at that same year's *Ligue de Picardie* regional finals, as he awaited the awards ceremony with several other youth.⁶⁷ Almost a decade later, the awards still appeared to be present even at the district level as Alain Fescourt is seen holding his cup and certificate in a photo of him from the 1975 US Ribécourt club guide.⁶⁸ From the outset, the recognition of achievement and participation appears to have been present at all levels of the competition, district, regional and national and mirrored recognition in other areas of society.

There were administrative processes for the organisation of the competition in order to keep a register of all participants beyond just the winners who were of course easily identified by their top scores. The newspaper reminded potentially interested participants that the regulations for the event were published by the regional league in

⁶⁴ *Diplôme de Médaille – Concours du Jeune Footballeur*, 1960, from 'Blida et le ballon rond' in http://michelgast.mathieu.free.fr/algerie/laba_200/wxcvbn200.html (accessed March 29, 2010).

⁶⁵ *Certificat d'Études Primaires Élémentaires*, Académie d'Alger, Département de Constantine, 1961, from 'Ecole Voltaire' in <http://www.constantine-hier-aujourd'hui.fr/LesConstantinois/ecoles/voltaire.htm> (accessed June 25, 2010).

⁶⁶ Photo collection from Les Anciens du CALO, <http://anciensducalo.free.fr> (accessed January 19, 2010).

⁶⁷ US Ribécourt archive, 'Fête des jeunes à Chantilly', 1967.

⁶⁸ US Ribécourt archive, 'Alain Fescourt, un jeune plein d'avenir', in *Allez Ribécourt - Saison 1974-1975*.

their monthly *Ouest-Football*.⁶⁹ One key element of the regulations was participation limitation based on age. It would appear that most, if not all editions of the event, were limited to youth under eighteen years of age (as of January 1 of the year of the event) and clubs were expected to provide the list of participants with their date of birth and their registration number from a currently valid FFF issued playing *licence*. Indeed, when surveying the five-hundred and seventy plus participants recorded over the course of this research, all were under the age of eighteen on January 1st of the year of their participation in the *concours*.⁷⁰ Several mentions of the event in the regional Breton press through the late 1930s repeatedly mentioned that the individual *licence* would have to be presented on the day of the competition, most likely to prove the youth's identity and age.

What was the reason for this extensive bureaucratic apparatus around what was a skills contest for youth? The benefit to regional winners was more than just a trip to the 'City of Light' or a trophy offered by the local paper. Indeed, beyond a simple, and presumably fun, test of footballing skills, the authorities appear to have taken this quite seriously all the way down to the local level. *L'Ouest-Éclair* offered this commentary on the nature of the event in as early as 1939 demonstrating that at the start of the *Concours* the organisers hoped to identify talented youth:

“The concours du jeune foot-baller that the Anjou-Basse-Loire officials take such care of with all their competence and devotion is one of those occasions which allow youth to break through, to earn their stripes of a first team player as soon as they are robust enough to withstand tough matches.”⁷¹

Who were those individuals who decided whether these talented young youth had earned their stripes? Who evaluated the *Concours*? While the full biographies of all individual jury members who oversaw the district and regional events are not known, in the early years the press mentions do highlight that league and district officials were the principal evaluators. Among them were presidents of league or district youth committees and league secretaries. For example, listed among the nine members of the

⁶⁹ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 19 March 1939.

⁷⁰ See Appendix 1 – ‘Consolidated non-exhaustive results for the Concours du Jeune Footballeur (1930-1976)’ and Appendix 2 – ‘Consolidated non-exhaustive results for the Concours du Plus Jeune Footballeur (1949-1979) and some results for the jeu adidas (1968-c.1993)’.

⁷¹ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 19 March 1939.

1937 regional jury, Mr. Adolphe Marchand served as administrative secretary for the L.O.F.A. in the late 1930s and was responsible for the “theory questions” alongside Messrs. Bécel and Simon.⁷² *L'Ouest-Éclair* also hailed the devoted work of a Mr. Capitaine, the president of the district committee for *juniors*, for his supervision of the Lannion qualifying event of 1937.⁷³

In the post-war years, those evaluating the youth at the national finals were not just the volunteer committee members of district and regional leagues but appear to have been more closely linked with the professional or at least elite game. A photo which is almost certainly of the national finals from the early 1950s, possibly 1952 or '53, shows a group of participants receiving directions from Gabriel Hanot while three instructors, including Pierre Bini, a professional at Saint-Etienne, watch from the side.⁷⁴ Bini was an accomplished professional who had scored over forty goals for Stade de Reims in the late 1940s. The well-known journalist, early French international and tireless promoter of the game, Hanot, was also an FFF-paid technician.⁷⁵

At the regional level, there was a mix of committee members, amateur club coaches and professional ones. For the 1958 regional qualifying round, news reports stated that three members of the youth committee of the *Ligue d'Oranie* oversaw the competition aided by four additional club coaches.⁷⁶ A series of photographs from US Ribécourt portray the 1967 *Ligue de Picardie* regional event in which Jacques Besson, a young competitor, was in conversation with Robert Jonquet, former French international and coach of Stade de Reims at the time.⁷⁷ Jonquet's presence at the regional qualifying round was hardly a coincidence and represented the rising importance of the professional coach who was interested in scouting up-and-coming

⁷² *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 10 May 1937.

⁷³ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 27 April 1937.

⁷⁴ ASSE - Association Sportive de Saint Eugène – Alger, unnamed photo of Mohamet Maouche at the Concours du Jeune Footballeur, http://www.mitidjaweb.com/asse_alger.htm (accessed May 1, 2010).

⁷⁵ Alfred Wahl, ‘Les dirigeants du monde sportif français et allemande au XXe siècle. Un aperçu’, in Alfred Wahl, *Football et Histoire*, (Metz: Centre de Recherche Histoire et Civilisation de l'Université de Metz, 2004), p. 201.

⁷⁶ ‘Concours du jeune footballeur – Le métronome LACAZA (SCBA) a déjà gagné son billet pour Paris’, in unnamed newspaper from the Amicale des anciennes et des anciens du lycée Leclerc de Sidi-Bel-Abbès et de la plaine de Mekerra online archive.

⁷⁷ US Ribécourt archive, ‘Jacques Besson au stade de Reims avec les couleurs de l'Oise’, photo, 1967.

talent. Jean-Paul Lacasa recalled that the event was generally an excellent opportunity to be seen by recruiters. He spoke of the finals in Paris and how the participants were supervised by national coaches:

“It was national coaches. Educators and coaches. At the time it was Louis Jaffro, [Pierre] Pibarot, there was the cream of the cream.”⁷⁸

Despite the success of some, the winners did not always go on to glory. Indeed, some scholars have noted that the event was unsuccessful at unearthing more than a handful of international players for France. Slimani, for example, has argued that the *Concours* was only marginally successful at identifying future international players with only seven national winners achieving a total of 16 international caps for France between 1930 and 1976.⁷⁹ While this is certainly true, the winners of the national *Concours* are but the tip of the iceberg of an extensive network of talent identification. The principal outcome of this skills contest appears to have been its role as one of the key mechanisms for the identification of young talent which could lead to the signing of professional contracts for the most promising youth, not just national team selections.

Thanks to the presence of elite coaches the *Concours* became synonymous with recruiting opportunities though the actual recruiting results varied significantly. When considering the vast number of young participants and their career trajectories after the *Concours*, they could be grouped in three types: international, professional and semi-pro/amateur. There are examples of those who won the competition and went on to lengthy international and professional careers, those who made a career out of playing first and second division professionally and finally, the majority of this pyramid who played in the lower levels of the game.

One national winner who later represented France was Yves Herbet, who won the event in 1962. He started professionally at Sedan in Division 1 the following year, reaching the final of the French Cup in 1965, then moved briefly to Anderlecht before heading to Stade de Reims in 1970 and played successively at Nancy, Avignon and Martigues before finishing his career in 1980 having appeared sixteen times for

⁷⁸ Interview with Jean-Paul Lacasa, April 23, 2010.

⁷⁹ Slimani, ‘La professionnalisation du football français’, pp. 257-8.

France.⁸⁰ In the second group of solid professionals without international recognition were players like Jean-Pierre Guinot who won the *Concours* in 1960 and then debuted at Besançon before moving to Valenciennes, Sochaux and Toulouse.⁸¹ The abovementioned Jacques Besson exemplifies the last group of semi-pro and amateur players who competed in the *Concours*. Accompanying the photo of Besson and Reims coach Jonquet is a written comment by R. Martin who described how close some youth came to a career in the game:

“This is where at the [1967] regional finals of the *Concours du Jeune Footballeur* that Jacky almost matched the record in the timed dribbling sequence held by a certain Serge Chiesa who later became pro. It was a tenth of a second that almost changed Jacky’s life, but Robert Jonquet had taken note of him in his notebook as [he was] the coach of Reims.”⁸²

Notwithstanding some potential hyperbole, Besson was a case of so close and yet so far away. Laurent Lagathu, who maintains the online archive of US Ribécourt, recounted how Besson continued playing at a regional and amateur level with FC Rouen and later Oissel.⁸³ Indeed, for every Serge Chiesa, there were many more Jacques Bessons.

Two things are relevant when considering a successful future career. Firstly, the essence of the event was not necessarily winning the national finals. Indeed, Lacasa, himself a professional for a number of years, stressed that winning the event was not necessarily that important and that it was more the opportunity to be spotted by interested coaches from bigger clubs:

⁸⁰ See Ligue de Champagne-Ardenne, ‘Tableau récapitulatif des matches officiels internationaux et interligues’, p. 10. The comprehensive www.playerhistory.com database lists Herbet as playing at Sedan (Division 1 from 1963-68), Anderlecht (D1 from 1968-70), Stade de Reims (Div 1 from 1970-72), Nancy (D1 from 1972-74), Avignon (Div 1 and 2 from 1974-78), Martigues (Div 2 from 1978-80). He represented France on sixteen occasions including the three matches of the 1966 World Cup, played well over 500 matches professionally and scored more than 170 goals.

⁸¹ Guinot, who played over four-hundred professional matches and scored seventy-four goals is listed in the www.playerhistory.com database as having begun his career at Besançon in Division 2 during 1960-61, then Valenciennes (nine seasons in Div 1 from 1961-71), Sochaux (Div 1 from 1972-74) and Toulouse (Div 2 for 1974-75).

⁸² US Ribécourt archive, ‘Jacques Besson au stade de Reims avec les couleurs de l’Oise’, photo, 1967.

⁸³ Chiesa won the 1967 national *Concours* and subsequently continued a long professional career, principally at Olympique Lyonnais, playing over six hundred times and scoring over one-hundred and forty goals. Besson on the other hand remained at Ribécourt until 1969 when he moved to FC Rouen who played in the top regional division in Normandy for a season before being promoted to the third division at the time in 1970-71. From 1973 onwards, Besson was back at the purely amateur regional level with Oissel until 1980. Email from Laurent Lagathu on April 20, 2010.

“It is not a criterion for success, winning the concours du jeune footballeur in Paris...[the fact of having been eliminated from the final round] it did not impede me from obtaining other contacts...since the eliminated players competed in matches on the annex fields of Colombes. There we had fun, we played in small matches where there were quite a few recruiters, including Pierre Pibarot at the time, and without that I would have stayed back there [in Algeria]...So, later on, it was Garonnaire who was a recruiter for St. Etienne, and he came to get me at Sidi-Bel-Abbès in Algeria.”⁸⁴

The second aspect serves as a reminder that even doing well in the *Concours* did not forecast future success. The top two finishers from the 1978 *Concours*, Serge Torreilles and Stéphane Gravini, are a poignant example as their paths crossed on multiple occasions but neither led to an established professional career. The two stood side by side for the presentation of the winners to the crowd of the 1978 French Cup Final with Torreilles finishing top and Gravini just behind. Torreilles, often recorded as ‘Toreilles’, appeared to follow in the footsteps of a fellow former player from the Jeanne d’Arc le Béarn club in Pau, Jean-Michel Larqué, who won the national event fifteen years earlier before going on to a lengthy professional and international career. Despite joining the *centre de formation* as a youth player at AS Monaco and being selected for the *cadet* and *junior* national youth team training camps where he played again alongside Gravini, Torreilles disappeared off the French professional football map.⁸⁵ Runner-up, the Corsican Gravini continued his promising career after the *Concours* and entered the *centre de formation* at SEC Bastia all while appearing for France at youth levels before finally retiring at twenty-one years of age.⁸⁶

⁸⁴ Interview with Jean-Paul Lacasa, April 23, 2010. Lacasa was indeed recruited by Saint-Etienne but subsequently returned home after six months admitting that living so far away from family and friends was too difficult a transition.

⁸⁵ Both Torreilles and Gravini were among those selected for the training camps held at the C.R.E.P.S. facility for the *cadets* team in 1979 and for the national *juniors* reserve team in 1981. Gravini’s album provides scans of the programme and informational package for both events. See Fédération Française de Football, *XVIème Tournoi International de Football Juniors du 18 au 20 avril 1981, à Saint-Malo*, and Fédération Française de Football, *Stage de préparation de l’Équipe de France « Cadets », du mercredi 31 octobre au samedi 03 novembre 1979, C.R.E.P.S. d’Aix en Provence*; in Album Stéphane Gravini, http://corsicafoot.canalblog.com/archives/gravini_stephane_album_n_195/index.html (accessed November 12, 2010).

⁸⁶ ‘Retraite précoce’, in unnamed newspaper, from Album Stéphane Gravini, http://corsicafoot.canalblog.com/archives/gravini_stephane_album_n_195/index.html (accessed November 12, 2010).

Just as Gravini was hanging up his boots for good in Bastia, Torreilles was heading into a magical season as a first-year player at American University in amateur US college soccer where he reached the national final though not without a bittersweet end. American University men's soccer team won nineteen, tied two and lost three matches during their incredible 1985 season which saw them lose to UCLA in the NCAA final played in the Seattle Kingdome. The final went through four full over-time periods and finished only after a record of 166 minutes of play. The college's newspaper, *The Eagle*, reported on the incredible match in which Torreilles, "the freshman from Monaco", retaliated after having been kicked and was promptly sent off in the second over-time period.⁸⁷ Responding to the announced attendance of 5,986 in the cavernous 65,000 seat Kingdome the newspaper quoted Torreilles as simply saying "ridiculous" – surely a reflection of the contrast between his experiences of the sport in France and the state of the game in the American collegiate environment. While Torreilles was featured in the extensive coverage of the team in a dedicated section of the 1986 American University yearbook, *Talon*, it does not appear that Torreilles continued at the university as he does not reappear on the soccer team pages nor in the lists of graduates of the university yearbook for the four subsequent years.⁸⁸

While the number one and number two young players, as identified in the 1978 *Concours*, certainly held promise, their futures lay largely outside the French professional elite game. If the vast majority of participants in the *Concours* never reached the finals in Paris, even reaching the national event and finishing at the top was no guarantee of crossing the bridge between talented youth and future professional especially in the final years of the skills competition's existence.

So the *Concours* was a national skills competition for youth supported by the federal football structure and promoted by the media. Recognition came in many forms though winning or reaching the national finals was no guarantee for success. Probably the most significant aspect of the contest was the extensive national network that gradually built up year upon year solidifying recruitment pathways from the local club

⁸⁷ *The Eagle*, 16 December 1985.

⁸⁸ The American University, *Talon*, (Washington D.C.: The American University, 1986), vol. 60, pp. 102-21.

to exposure to professional and elite coaches. In short, the contest established concrete means for the organisers to evaluate individual talent on a local, regional and national level.

The final area of questioning for the *Concours* deals with the themes discussed earlier in the thesis. As the sport's organisers developed the event over the years, was there a similar evolution as described in the first few chapters, that is to say separation by age, distinct competition? Did the participant's age drop over time with younger entrants? Were there separate events for younger competitors? Or did such developments only come with the extension of organised competition at the youngest age groups, a phenomenon that accelerated with the turn of the 1970s?

From the contest's early years to the late 1970s the general participant profile appears to have dropped several age categories from the older *juniors* in the interwar era to second-year *cadets*, and then first-year *cadets* and finally second-year *minimes*. For the initial decade of the event the age of the competitors appears to be seventeen with a number of youth aged eighteen at the time of the competition.⁸⁹ In the post war years however, especially into the 1950s, the age seems to hover between fifteen and seventeen for the oldest of the participants. The following decade the majority of youth were fifteen or sixteen and there were practically no seventeen year-olds at all among those participants surveyed here. Of course, success in the competition incited reporting on the best performers meaning that those who finished last, possibly younger and not yet as skilled, may simply have disappeared from the written record in the press. Nonetheless, for the written record between the 1930s and the 1970s, the participants' age does appear to have dropped rather significantly by two years.

Did the organisers group all youth together so long as they were under eighteen years old? A definitive answer is difficult. The regional committee for *juniors* and *minimes* reported through the press that participants for 1937 had to be under eighteen as of the first of January 1937 and were required to present their federation-issued

⁸⁹ See Appendix 1 – 'Consolidated non-exhaustive results for the Concours du Jeune Footballeur (1930-1976)'.

licences but made no mention of separate contests for each age group.⁹⁰ In contrast, at one qualifying event organised by the *US Villaines-La-Juhel* club for that same year's *Concours* the contests were clearly separated with the *minimes* and the *juniors* listed in two different final rankings, one according to each category.⁹¹ Other evidence from the press in the interwar period indicates that *juniors* and *minimes*, covering ages fourteen up to eighteen, were all eligible for the early editions. The Sporting Club de l'Ouest published a call to the club's "juniors or minimes in Nantes" to compete in the April qualifying event.⁹² While it is not clear if the youth actually competed in mixed ages in this case, there is, however, some specific evidence that suggests that talented youngsters may have competed alongside boys far older. That same year in the regional qualifying event held in Angers, a youngster by the name of Samzun from SCO Angers finished eleventh.⁹³ If this is the same René Samzun, who would later play six seasons for the same SCO Angers into the 1950s, then the young boy was fourteen at the time of the 1939 qualifying event.⁹⁴

In the years after the war, the participation of younger boys is more difficult to discern. Jean-Paul Lacasa recalled in detail his participation in the *Concours* in the late 1950s and had no memory of younger boys competing alongside the older ones:

“The *Concours du jeune footballeur* was open only to cadets. For the *pupilles* and *minimes*, there never was a *concours*, our coaches would have prepared us and signed us up for it.”⁹⁵

At that time the *cadets* category covered those youth from age fourteen and seven months up to sixteen and seven months at the start of the season. If the event may have included mixed age competition prior to World War Two but was restricted to one age group after the war, why were the younger boys no longer welcome at the *Concours* in the post-war period? With the changes to age categories beginning in the early 1940s and the push for separate competitions for younger ages, the approach to youth in the

⁹⁰ *Ouest-Éclair*, 9 April 1937.

⁹¹ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 16 April 1937.

⁹² *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 2 April 1939.

⁹³ *L'Ouest-Éclair*, 27 March 1939.

⁹⁴ The www.playerhistory.com database lists Samzun's birthday on the 5th of September 1924 which would have made him fourteen and six months in the spring of 1939.

⁹⁵ Email from Jean-Paul Lacasa, April 27, 2010.

post-war years may have been different and the youngest talents may no longer have been allowed to compete with boys their senior. For the *Concours*, did the younger boys simply not compete at all until the *Concours du Plus Jeune Footballeur*, the younger version of the event that only began in 1967-68 if one believes only the FFF annual?⁹⁶

The apparent answer is that the younger age group indeed had their own competition actually much earlier than the FFF's 1968 records suggest. In parallel to the trend of development of age categories and separate competitions for younger and younger players, the *Concours* was no exception. With a *Concours* for the best young player already in place, the next logical step for the organisers in the post-war years was to replicate the competition for the best *youngest* player. But when did the organisers actually begin to take interest in evaluating boys even younger against their own age group? The 1969-70 FFF annual made passing mention to the creation of a *Concours du Plus Jeune Footballeur* in 1948, one of the rare mentions to this event in the federation's annual prior to the late 1960s.⁹⁷ A number of other sources attest to the creation in 1948 of a second scaled down version of the contest for the younger boys. The website for *Stade Lunaret*, a small club based in Montpellier, lists a boy by the last name of Marie who finished first in the 1949 regional segment of this younger *Concours* competition.⁹⁸ In Brittany, the *AS Brestoise* online archive also contains a mention to the Louis 'Loul' Craveur who finished 6th for the regional qualifying in the 1954 season entry.⁹⁹ Both clubs list winners in both competitions a fact which attests to the existence of two distinct but parallel *concours* rather than recording errors that would suggest the existence of only one competition.

It would even appear that the younger boys were treated to the same kind of exposure. The first edition of the revised municipal bulletin for Mondeville, a small town just on the city limits of Caen, featured the area's sporting associations and

⁹⁶ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1968-69*, p. 200.

⁹⁷ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1969-70*, p. 14.

⁹⁸ Stade Lunaret, 'Histoire & Palmarès', <http://stlunaretnord.footeo.com/page/histoire-palmares.html> (accessed October 6, 2009). Several other winners are listed from this club including Berthézene and Mirouze (both 1st in the South-west regional in 1954 and 1955 respectively).

⁹⁹ AS Brestoise, 1954, <http://pagesperso-orange.fr/jean-guy.moreau/54.htm> (accessed January 18, 2010).

celebrated back-to-back qualification of one of their own for the national finals of the *Concours du plus jeune footballeur* in 1961 and '62. A. Béatrix, a youth playing with the town's *Union Sportive Ouvrière de Mondeville* was said to have:

“...scored very well in the ranking in '62, which allowed him to be presented to the crowd in Colombes, during the final of the French Cup.”¹⁰⁰

So even the younger event's top scorers may have been presented at the French Cup final, an honour not only reserved for the older age group.

The decade of the 1970s was one of two major changes for both *Concours*: firstly in regard to the age profile of its participants and secondly to its prescribed role to identify talent. It is not without some irony perhaps that just as the younger edition of the skills contest was finally deemed important enough to be granted space in the records section of the FFF's *Annuaire*, its importance, coupled with the older *Concours*, was coming to an end. As noted by the writer Neil Postman, “historians usually come not to praise but to bury”.¹⁰¹ The *Concours du plus jeune footballeur* was last held in 1974-75 while the older *Concours du jeune footballeur* was listed for the final time in 1978-79.¹⁰² This was misleading in one sense however since the last winner in 1979, Joël Cloarec, was in fact younger than the contestants in the supposedly younger competition before it ceased to exist.¹⁰³ The competition's older age category simply took over and became the *de facto* younger *concours* after 1975-76.¹⁰⁴ After having started with eighteen-year-old *juniors* in the 1930s and dropping to fifteen and sixteen-year-old *cadets* throughout the 1950's and 60s, by the 1970s the “jeune”, or young, in the *Concours du jeune footballeur* meant even “jeune'ger” with first year *minimes* who competed and won during their first year as a teenager.

¹⁰⁰ *Bulletin Municipal de Mondeville*, June 1974, n°1, p. 24.

¹⁰¹ Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 5.

¹⁰² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel, 1979-80*, pp. 686-7.

¹⁰³ Born on February 5, 1966, Cloarec was thirteen years and four months old in the spring of 1979. For example, Laurent Roussey, the last winner listed in the FFF's records for the *Concours du Plus Jeune Footballeur*, was thirteen and six months old when he won the 1974-75 edition.

¹⁰⁴ Each of the winners from 1976 to 1979 were in the age category served by the defunct *Concours du Plus Jeune Footballeur*. Roussey (1976), Fabrice Poullain (1977) and Serge Torreilles (1978) were all *minimes* when they won the contest.

The second change for the skills competition was its disappearance as a mechanism for spotting up-and-coming youth, a shift symbolic of the move away from a focus on talent identification and towards talent development or formation. In the 1960s and 70s the trend was to move to what sociologist, Sébastien Fleuriet, has called the “rationalised production of performance”.¹⁰⁵ As the various *Concours* were not a means to produce talent but rather to identify it, by the 1970s, the role of the skills contests was, as one newspaper described, “to support the other detection tests like the Coupe Nationale des Minimes”.¹⁰⁶ The two *Concours* were still certainly relevant tools for football’s organisers but they were giving way to a movement of fundamental importance for the elite game: training and preparation at the newly founded *centres de formation*. Indeed, identifying talented youth at a younger and younger age was only one piece of the puzzle to produce the elite players of the future. One particular example illustrates this rather well.

In the mid 1970s young players performed well in the national skills contest and subsequently had similar opportunities although with differing career outcomes. Alain Fescourt was among those youth who did well in the *Concours* but never went on to the professional game and this despite having similar opportunities to another talented youngster Jean-Marc Ferratge. The US Ribécourt club annual for 1974-75 highlighted Fescourt’s success in winning the Oise district event and he eventually finished one or two places behind 5th placed Jean-Marc Ferratge at the finals in Paris, but the two subsequent trajectories could not have been more different.¹⁰⁷ Both Fescourt and Ferratge were recruited to Bordeaux’s *centre de formation* following the *Concours* but Fescourt never signed a professional contract and subsequently disappeared off the radar.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the *Concours* may have helped scouting networks and signing young players up with professional clubs as trainees, but the real elite development had yet to

¹⁰⁵ Sébastien Fleuriet, *Le Sport de Haut Niveau en France*, (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 1994), p. 37.

¹⁰⁶ The article referred to Torreilles and Gravini’s top finishes in the 1978 finals in Paris. See ‘Toreilles et le Sud-Ouest larges vainqueurs’, in unnamed newspaper, from Album Stéphane Gravini, http://corsicafoot.canalblog.com/archives/gravini_stephane_album_n_195/index.html (accessed November 12, 2010).

¹⁰⁷ US Ribecourt, *1974-75 Allez Ribécourt*.

¹⁰⁸ Email from Laurent Lagathu on April 20, 2010. Ferratge’s career at the top level was lengthy however, and www.playerhistory.com traces his time through Bordeaux, Nîmes, Toulouse, and Monaco playing almost exclusively in the first division between 1977 and 1992.

begin. Identification of talent was only the first step and its systematic development through training, a growing phenomenon in the 1970s, was overtaking the former in importance.

As the *Concours* were coming to an end, the ascending focus on development, or *formation*, was resting on solid foundations of decades of talent identification mechanisms, to which the two skills contests were important contributors. To suggest that the *Concours* initiative was the only factor in orienting career opportunities for young players would be overly simplistic and ignore the importance of other activities such as district, regional and national representative teams in various youth categories. The *Concours* should not then be seen in isolation. Rather, this was part of a larger picture, each tool having its own role, some for team development, other mechanisms for individual talent identification, but all utilised in parallel with the most promising youth destined for upper level amateur teams and professional clubs. The remainder of this section focuses on some of these other forms of talent identification and their existence on both sides of the Atlantic.

Curtain raisers on the American football stage, 'levers de rideau' and French 'parrainage', c.1920-c.1974

“Heralded as the wonder team of the English Soccer League, the Charlton Athletic F.C. of London launched its American tour before 20,000 persons at the Polo Grounds [in New York City] yesterday, and, though the invaders impressed the onlookers considerably, they had to be content with a 1-1 tie with an all-star aggregation composed of American Soccer League players...In a preliminary game the Hatikvah eleven of Brooklyn downed the Cliftons of Baltimore, 2 to 0, in the Eastern junior cup final, as Sol Albert tallied both goals.”¹⁰⁹

Beyond the *Concours*, which serves as one example of how talent identification was actually organised over time, there existed other mechanisms that served to detect playing potential in youth. The *Concours* is interesting because it existed alongside a nationalised professional game and played a role in identifying youth as the potential future for the elite of football in France. The elite level of the sport in America did not have the same continuity over this period. Nonetheless, football in the United States

¹⁰⁹ *New York Times*, 31 May 1937. Charlton had just finished runners-up to Manchester City in the Football League 1936-37 season.

was not devoid of similar measures for the bridging of the youth-adult divide. By demonstrating that mechanisms for talent identification existed not only where and when the game was fully professional, this section will argue that identification was just as relevant for the amateur and semi-professional world as it was for the elite professional one. In short, tools for identifying talent existed *because* there was an adult level whether it was elite, professional, semi-pro or amateur.

This section addresses two additional mechanisms that served as means for identification of young talent with a view to link youth with the senior level during the decades leading up to the 1970s. The first mechanism, the ‘curtain raiser’, or *lever de rideau*, was the playing of a youth match immediately before an elite or pro game. The juxtaposition of these fixtures placed the young player in the environment of the senior game – whatever the level – by playing on the same pitch, in the same stadium, in front of similar crowds. The second means was a more direct connection: ‘mentorship’, or *parrainage*, often through coaching. While the ‘curtain raiser’ placed the youth in the elite environment, *parrainage* established a direct connection between the youth and the senior player and as a means for current pros to identify their successors.

The opening quote recounts one curtain raiser prior to an ASL all-star versus Charlton exhibition match in 1937. Opening the show were the Hatikvah juniors from Brooklyn who were one match away from the national junior cup final.¹¹⁰ By the end of the match, it is not unlikely that a significant part of the announced crowd of 20,000 was already in attendance and that the ASL and Charlton players were readying to take the pitch. For centre forward Sol Albert, who scored both Hatikvah goals, this could not have been a better stage on which to perform as a young talented player despite the fact that the ASL no longer resembled its glorious past of the prior decade.

Most examples of curtain raisers, or *lever de rideau* in French, come from the press and are often linked with elite or professional matches. In terms of media importance, lower level amateur games rarely benefitted from the same level of

¹¹⁰ Hatikvah’s 1937 victory was their second title in two years and came at the expense of Beadling, a club from western Pennsylvania which went on to lose the final again the following year to the Lighthouse Juniors from Philadelphia.

extensive coverage and a youth fixture as the opening act would have ranked even lower on the sports editors' priority list. Hence, the written record is biased towards accounts of the use of these preliminary matches in conjunction with the highest levels of the game. Nonetheless, the phenomenon was present at local amateur as well as international matches, friendly exhibitions as well as professional league fixtures. In both countries the youthful beneficiaries of these games ranged from local amateur junior teams to representative all-star select sides and included teams of schoolboys and youth from ethnic clubs.

The soccer scene in Chicago after the various tours of English teams was thriving in the first decade of the twentieth century.¹¹¹ Subsequent to this boost to the game, the *Spalding Guide* recounted how schools were engaged in a league competition and the first championship was decided by a play-off match held "on the Hyde Park Blues' grounds, just preceding the Peel Challenge Cup final played between Pullman and Hyde Park Blues".¹¹² Logan has estimated the crowds for the Peel cup finals between two and four thousand at that time.¹¹³ By the following decade on the west coast in Seattle, it was junior teams, some sponsored by local business or possibly works teams themselves, that supplied two select sides for an all-star double-header with a reported 6,000 in attendance at Woodland Park.¹¹⁴ Around the same time in France, Roger Dargein described in *Ballon Rond* how the young *scolaires* who played in the *lever de rideau* prior to the final of the regional cup held in the town of Cette

"largely proved to the thousands in attendance not only that it was useful and essential for the future to take care of them, but more so that they were capable of playing a foot-ball that many a renowned club could envy for its first team".¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ See Gabe Logan, 'Pilgrims' progress in Chicago: three English soccer tours to the Second City, 1905-09', in *Soccer & Society*, 11 (3) (2010), pp. 198-212.

¹¹² *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1915-16*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, 1915), p. 79.

¹¹³ Gabe Logan, 'Lace Up the Boots, Full Tilt Ahead: Recreation, Immigration, and Labor on Chicago's Soccer Fields, 1890-1950' (Northern Illinois University: unpublished PhD dissertation, 2005), p. 156.

¹¹⁴ *Spalding's Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1922-23*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, 1922), p. 152. The teams included names like Ben Paris Billiards, Louie's Dry Cleaners and pennant-winners Cowan Cigar Company.

¹¹⁵ *Ballon Rond*, 12 November 1921.

But French young players were not just playing in front of crowds at the regional level. For the 35,000 who came to see the English defeat the French at Colombes in 1930, a large part of the crowd witnessed the *scolaires* from Montpellier and Le Havre play the national scholastic cup final.¹¹⁶

Headline matches such as a national *scolaires* final were probably more the exception than the rule. The trend to pair youth ties with adult matches continued in the post-World War Two era coupling them with lower-level regional amateur games. For example, the club from the mining area of La Combelle regularly played their junior and reserve matches before senior games.¹¹⁷ Similar to these smaller scale double-headers in France, the US National Junior Cup was often the direct beneficiary of these curtain raisers. The competition was often paired with senior matches, similar to the aforementioned example of the French *scolaires* competitions, though by no means with the same crowds as those for the finals in Paris. One local newspaper reported on the 1951 double-bill in western Pennsylvania in which “a smart and well-drilled St. Louis Seco club captivated the small crowd attending the preliminary” prior to the local amateur league final play-off.¹¹⁸ Double-headers also allowed ethnic clubs the opportunity to feature their local young all-stars during the international friendlies organised before later promoter William Cox’s ‘International Soccer League’.

¹¹⁶ *L'Écho sportif de l'Afrique du Nord*, 21 November 1930.

¹¹⁷ ‘La Combelle méritait de remporter la décision’, in unnamed newspaper, 5 December 1949.

¹¹⁸ *The Pittsburgh Press*, 14 May 1951.



Image 23 - Curtain raiser for an international exhibition in Chicago¹¹⁹

The 1960s saw curtain raisers also utilised by the semi-professional outfits of the second ASL loop such as Hartford SC which invited two local midget teams as the preliminary entertainment for the 1,000 in attendance for one autumn match leaving most of the 10,000 capacity Dillion stadium unfilled.¹²⁰

Cox's summer ISL went one step further than the one-off international double-header planned by ethnic clubs and the local second tier semi-pro match, however. The sports promoter formalised a full programme of junior competition which provided the opening act before one-half of the twenty match dates of the 1965 season. The final curtain raiser was to be against the prior year's winners, the Lighthouse Boys, immediately prior to the ISL season finale.¹²¹ In a significant change from many prior curtain raisers, these fixtures were played at Downing Stadium on Randall's Island, with its approximately 20,000 capacity, as well as in the brand new fifty-thousand-seat Shea Stadium.

Unlike the game in France where young players taking the field in front of large crowds was *de rigueur* at least for major events like scholastic finals or the *Concours du Jeune Footballeur*, until the 1960s youth footballers in America had rarely played in

¹¹⁹ *Ukrainian Weekly*, 4 May 1957.

¹²⁰ *The Hartford Courant*, 19 October 1964.

¹²¹ *New York Times*, 30 May 1965.

front of large crowds or in big stadia. But this began to change with the arrival of big-time investment in football and the launching of the two professional leagues in 1967. When two local high schools were invited to play prior to a Los Angeles Toros and St. Louis Stars NPSL match, the *Los Angeles Times* reported that the game would “make history Wednesday May 31...[and] mark the first appearance of a South Torrance team in the Coliseum”.¹²² Not bad for two schools in their first season of the sport, even if the cavernous LA Coliseum was probably more intimidating than the sparse crowd.¹²³

With one foot in the big arenas, things were beginning to change for curtain raisers in America. The arrival of the NASL brought significant crowds to certain cities during the 1970s. For example, when Rockville Centre and Glen Rock, two boys’ teams from the greater New York metropolitan area, ran across the Astroturf of the spacious Meadowlands stadium, they played in front of a crowd, at least by the very end of their match, close to 62,000.¹²⁴ Crowds that large were unheard of in France at the time but the trend of playing before professional matches continued on a smaller scale nonetheless. Before turning professional, youngsters like the abovementioned Stéphane Gravini were used to having played before important elite fixtures such as Bastia versus AS Saint-Etienne when they were as young as age ten and eleven.¹²⁵ The shift to include even younger players for curtain raisers was also evident in America and an entire generation of young Americans were no longer playing just before a local amateur match, an ethnic club tie or in front of an almost empty high school grandstand. When the Kittitas Valley Junior Soccer Association organised a select team of eleven-year-olds to play in a curtain raiser during the Seattle Sounders’ 1979 NASL season, the massive Kingdome and the near 19,000 average crowds were a far cry from the older

¹²² *Los Angeles Times*, 28 May 1967.

¹²³ The Los Angeles Coliseum’s capacity hovered around 90,000 while the Toros average 1967 season attendance was just under 3,600. See ‘Big League Soccer Returns to the United States’, in *The Year in American Soccer – 1967*, <http://homepages.sover.net/~spectrum/year/1967.html> (accessed January 12, 2012).

¹²⁴ *New York Times*, 20 June 1977.

¹²⁵ The photos depicted Gravini’s youth team in front of a considerable crowd. ‘Une belle finale entre les pupilles du S.E.C.B. et de Biguglia’, in unnamed newspaper, 4 June 1976, in Album Stéphane Gravini, http://corsicafoot.canalblog.com/archives/gravini_stephane_album_n_195/index.html (accessed November 12, 2010).

junior all-stars in the zoo-adjacent area of Woodland Park in 1922.¹²⁶ By the end of the 1970s, American youth were finally getting the opportunity to play in big stadia in front of real crowds like their French counterparts while the curtain raiser and the *lever de rideau* both featured younger and younger players.

Curtain raisers were a common feature in both countries yet on different scales and at different times. They did provide youth with an opportunity to experience the atmosphere of the adult, professional and even international level though in a somewhat indirect manner since they were not actually in contact with the elite. As a window for visibility, this mechanism did not provide the same kind of direct contact between the elite world and the youth game as offered by the second tool, mentorship or *parrainage*. Indeed, this second mechanism for identifying talented youth was far more overt in directly connecting youth and elite.

Establishing direct contact between youth and adult elite or professional players was another mechanism to identify promising up-and-coming talent. Before thousands of trained and certified coaches oversaw the game, senior players, both amateur and professional were involved in supervising the youth game.¹²⁷ Until the 1950s the role of the coach was of lesser importance in French clubs.¹²⁸ For local youth, *parrainage* was a unique opportunity to get close to the senior players they admired and learn directly from them. Clubs, on their side, also benefitted from the relationship in various ways: in maintaining positive press and also developing an initial means for scouting. This arrangement took various forms including the one-off association linked to a youth

¹²⁶ *Ellensburg Daily Record*, 2 May 1979. The Sounders averaged 18,997 for the 1979 season. See 'North American Soccer League (Div. 1)', in *The Year in American Soccer – 1979*, <http://homepages.sover.net/~spectrum/year/1979.html> (accessed January 12, 2012).

¹²⁷ In comparison with the 1970s when the number of coaches mushroomed, the FFF listed around five-hundred licensed coaches in 1963. Within one decade the federation boasted some four-thousand *dirigeants* (volunteer coaches and club officials) and by 1979, approximately nine-thousand. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire, 1963-64*, pp. 6-7, Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire, 1973-74*, p. 7, and Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel, 1979-80*, p. 16.

¹²⁸ Beginning in 1929 the FFF organised coaching courses but with limited numbers of participants. From 1942 the FFF adopted a special statute for player-coaches and after the Second World War the coaching courses returned. The national coaches' association was set up in 1947 with an initial membership of two-hundred. See Laurent Grün, 'La difficile émergence de la profession d'entraîneur de football en France (1890-1950)', in *STAPS*, 63 (2003), pp. 55-6.

event or competition as well as more intricately organised activities which regularly brought youth to the club.

One example of the former were the different *scolaires* competitions for which OGC Nice senior players served as coaches and referees. Organised by the scholastic sports union of the city, the club sponsored the tourney for local schools by providing a cup, called the ‘Coupe des Aiglons’ in the press after the club’s nickname, ‘les Aiglons’ or ‘the Eagles’. The final of the 1930 edition of the tournament – which was played in the same stadium where OGC Nice played, the ‘Stade Saint Maurice’ – featured as its referee, Vitalis described as “the sympathetic player from O.G.C.N.”¹²⁹ The club president, Mister Provenzale, presented the cup to the captain of the winning team. Later that decade the club was again involved in a scholastic tournament, but this time with a more prominent role for its players. The competition in 1936, sponsored by the weekly *Match*, brought the senior players in direct contact with the schoolboys:

“let us highlight the gesture by the professionals from O.G.C.N. who adopted the Nice schoolboys for the Challenge Match [the name of the tournament]. Chaisaz transformed himself into a professor of tactics. Audibert provided the half-time refreshments. Galland galloped along the touchline while ‘his boys’ played, and Dubois; Boudjemaa, Marino did not hide their joy when their protégés scored a goal!”¹³⁰

There was no explicit evidence that the club utilised this as a scouting mechanism during this period of early professionalism. However, as the professional nature of the sport expanded over the subsequent decades, some clubs’ motivations appear to have taken a more deliberate approach to *parrainage*.

One such club was Stade de Reims which, by the turn of the 1960s, had completed a decade of unparalleled success. In perhaps a more direct manner, the club was overtly engaged in bridging the youth-senior divide through its *école de football* as it was actively seeking out future talent. In a lengthy television report, the director of the ‘football school’, Claude Prodoscimi provided an overview of the programme for

¹²⁹ *La Côte d’Azur Sportive*, 20 April 1930. The Player History database lists a certain Constantin Vitalis of Greek nationality who played for OGC Nice between 1929 and 1932.

¹³⁰ *Match*, 18 August 1936.

approximately five to six-hundred participants that was held every Thursday afternoon, presumably during the school year. The images show a large mass of young boys between ten and fourteen who literally invade the Parc Pommery for their weekly training under the supervision and guidance of the professionals. In describing the activity, Prodoscimi explained that the professional players were directly responsible for the youth teams for the duration of the season. The process of identifying and selecting talented or promising youth occurred at the end of the season was explained by Prodoscimi:

Chapatte: From what age do you take the candidates?

Prodoscimi: From ten years old, between ten and fourteen.

Ch: And you split them into different groups, if possible keeping their canton of origin. They play a competition at the end of the season and the standings are numerous. And so they are directed on the fields by the professional footballers?

P: Yes that's right. This year especially, we will give two teams to each professional player. Twenty-two to twenty-five players. They will stay with them for the entire season, that is to say, it will no longer be the first canton, second canton, it will be Kopa's group, Fontaine's group, Glovacki's group. In practicing some technique, some small matches, it is up to them [the professionals] to sort them and when they find the best ones, they make up a team of the best players from the canton. At the end of the year we have an inter-cantonal championship, the Allez-Reims Cup, of course, and from there, the best ones, we sort them, we underline their names in red, and we bring them up to the minimes. That's where we begin with the minimes, cadets, etc.¹³¹

The process of identifying talent was a well-oiled one. The club itself looked to the *école de football* for some of its future playing talent. Chapatte asked about some examples of the success of the programme:

Ch: Who are the most renowned players who have come out of the *école de football*?

P: Well you have players like Davanne, Jean Davanne who plays at Stade Français who came to the *école de football*. Biernat came to the *école de football*. He plays at Nancy.¹³²

¹³¹ Radiodiffusion Télévision Française, 'Place aux Jeunes'. From 2 minutes 24 seconds to 3 minutes 23 seconds.

¹³² *Ibid.* From 1 minute 59 seconds to 2 minutes 24 seconds. Both Jean Davanne and Edmond Biernat were professionals at Reims in the late 1950s and played pro until the late 1960s.

Surrounded by young boys, three Reims professionals, Just Fontaine, Dominique Colonna and Léon Glovacki, explained the systematised approach to identifying the future first team prospects:

Ch: Dominique Colonna, you are one of these coaches. Have you uncovered the keeper who will replace you one day in Reims' goal?

Colonna: As Prodocimi said, it [our school] is of, let's say, the best organisation, so I think that I see all the goalkeepers. Last year I uncovered a few...¹³³

With the presence of such elite players, the boys who attended benefitted from this direct contact. Chapatte asked the coaches about this

Ch: Can you observe a measurable difference between the moment they arrive here and the moment that they leave? Have they made lots of progress?

Glovacki: Of course, they make great progress. In contact with the professionals, my colleagues here, they [the boys] learn even just by watching the players.¹³⁴

Chapatte went on to ask who among the boys was a centre-forward in Glovacki's team. After searching among the dozens of boys surrounding the camera, he finally found a timid and young volunteer. Bending down to be face to face with the boy who was visibly intimidated by the television interview, Chapatte asked him a few questions.

Ch: Here he is, the little Kopa. Do you regularly score goals? Have you been playing football for a long time?

Boy: Oh no, sir.

Ch: Are you really learning something here? Now do you know how to control the ball?

Boy: [hesitation]Uh...not much.

Ch: Who is your coach?

Boy: Uh...[boy looks around]

¹³³ *Ibid.* From 3 minutes 27 seconds to 3 minutes 44 seconds.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.* From 7 minutes 17 seconds to 7 minutes 33 seconds.

Ch: You are with Glovacki's team today?

Boy: Uh...no.

Ch: No?

Boy: No, not today, but usually yes...I play football but not today [sic]. Today I am playing football but not with Glovacki.

Ch: And who would you like to play with?

Boy: ...With him [Glovacki].¹³⁵

Chapatte was certainly looking for a boy to explain just how much he learned from the professionals, but the intimidating environment of adults, the crowd of boys and professionals, a journalist with a microphone and camera all just proved to be a bit much for the young boy. Nonetheless, the boy was demonstrably in awe of his coaches and just wanted to play alongside them.

This direct contact of *parrainage* or mentorship between senior and young player, at least in the eyes of those professional players who coached the youth, made a significant difference to improving technical ability. Young players learned directly from the older established players, especially the professional ones and through this privileged contact clubs like Stade de Reims identified some of their players of the future. Youth also benefited from the opportunity provided by the curtain raisers to play on the same stage as the elite and to show off their talent in the spotlight. Identification mechanisms in the form of skills competitions like the *Concours du Jeune Footballeur* allowed these youth to be seen by elite recruiters. Such tools were used by both football's organisers in the professional world of the French game but also in the semi-professional, amateur and ethnic worlds of the sport in America. In the decades between 1920 and the 1970s, the adult organisers of the game, whatever the level, amateur or professional, sought to develop specific ways to spot the little Kopa's and little Fontaine's of tomorrow.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* 6 minutes 10 seconds to 6 minutes 44 seconds.

Yet the times were changing and spotting the future players of tomorrow was no longer the only bridge across the youth-adult divide. In the 1970s, the sport was moving away from identification as the only means and embracing a more systematic approach to training and development for youth. A young player who started down the path to professionalism was no longer just seen by potential recruiters, he was part of an organised training regime. For example, a talented Philippe Jeannol from Nancy competed in the younger *Concours* in 1972, won the regional event and finished twelfth nationally.¹³⁶ But his first matches in the senior team of AS Nancy-Lorraine during the 1975-76 professional season were not the result of being seen at the finals in Paris. The future Olympic football champion in 1984 had started at AS Nancy-Lorraine's *école de football* before signing a registration there. In the club's bi-monthly newsletter, *Chardon Rouge*, the youngster's father described in April of 1976 how things had progressed quickly and how excited he was

“when Mister Claude Cuny [AS Nancy-Lorraine's president] brought us in to speak to us about the future of the youngster. When he announced to us that he wanted to take the kid to the conservatory so that he would become a footballer by profession, I was consenting. I consider that professional sport today is a profession like any other.”¹³⁷

This conservatory, or *conservatoire* in the original French, was in fact the newly inaugurated *centre de formation*, or academy, dedicated to training the footballers of the future. The times indeed had changed and the direction for the future was organised development of talent rather than its haphazard identification all within an increasingly international youth football context. It is to this theme that the next section will turn.

¹³⁶ ‘Les Anciens Joueurs’, <http://www.asnl.net/pages/club/joueurs/j.html> (accessed January 8, 2010).

¹³⁷ *Chardon Rouge*, n° 85, Friday 2 April 1976. Because she wanted him to go on with his studies and maybe become a doctor, Jeannol's mother initially protested to Philippe's joining AS Nancy-Lorraine's conservatoire...until the President Cuny “presented guarantees” that the young player would finish at least his *brevet* and “continue to go to school until he is twenty if he has to”.

Talent Formation and the internationalisation of youth football c.1974-c.2000

Why a national centre for the formation of football players?

Firstly because it is necessary to profoundly change the current condition of our professionalism.

...

Subsequently because, in modern and highly competitive football, a serious formation of young players is a vital necessity.

- the two reasons given to justify the creation in 1972 of the national football institute, *l'Institut National de Football*¹³⁸

For the first time ever, U.S. Soccer will put the U-17 Boys' National Team in a full-time residency program when the team begins training at the Bollettieri Sports Academy in Bradenton, Fla., on Jan. 17, 1999... The Academy is equipped with state-of-the-art soccer equipment, three Bermuda grass fields, an indoor dome with artificial turf, two swimming pools, newly renovated student apartments, dining facilities, licensed physical therapists, full recreational amenities and an international soccer staff... The U-17s will be in a professional setting during the 10-month residency program.

- on the 1999 opening of the USSF-sponsored training scheme¹³⁹

If the systematic identification of talent was a key element to bridge youth and adult football prior to the 1970s, in the final three decades of the twentieth century the accent fell on a new syllable: development or *la formation* in French. Lanfranchi and Wahl offer a description of the nature of the unequivocal shift in the 1970s and note that the sport in France, under the impetus of Georges Boulogne, the FFF's technical director and national coach, was pushing to substitute a football based on *formation* for an outdated model which was reliant solely on recruiting and detection.¹⁴⁰ This reaction was also related to a wider sport performance crisis from the 1960s to the early 1970s that served as a catalyst for state intervention and a new government-led sports policy focused on elite development programmes.¹⁴¹ Even before the significant laws of 1975

¹³⁸ Fédération Française de Football, *L'Institut National de Football*, Paris, August 21, 1972. The twenty-four page document outlined the justification for the creation of l'INF, its administrative structure and aims, the pedagogical methods as well as the educational and sporting programme, and the conditions for admission and successful completion. A copy of this document was provided to UEFA's Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football during their ongoing discussions about the status of amateur and professional players. See UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football, 'Correspondence on transfer and player regulations from 1964 – 83', Box Barcode RM00002590.

¹³⁹ *Soccer America*, 4 January 1999.

¹⁴⁰ Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, p. 187.

¹⁴¹ Krasnoff, 'Resurrecting the nation', pp. 74-5.

(loi Mazeaud) and 1984 (loi Avice) the Fédération Française de Football (FFF) and sport in general were intimately coloured by the government's more *dirigiste* approach, as evidenced by the continual issuing of state edicts concerning sport.¹⁴²

The government maintained an active involvement in the running of sport through the creation of teaching and coaching institutes, as well as exerting control over these *fonctionnaire* positions' salaries and job quotas.¹⁴³ The best example of the extent of the government's hand is perhaps the signing of the *arrêté du 21 avril 1961* by the high commissioner of sport, Maurice Herzog, which set out specific limits on the dates which could be used for determining the competition calendar in the major team sports.¹⁴⁴ The same Herzog was commissioned several years later by the government for a report on the state of sport in France and he produced a comprehensive document called the *Essai de Doctrine du Sport* which made a number of recommendations for the Secretary of State for Youth and Sport.¹⁴⁵

It was in this context that l'INF, the national institute for football, was founded in 1972. Such a parallel establishment did not exist in the United States until 1999 and the Bradenton Academy. But in the 1970s and 80s youth-centric leisure culture various segments of the sport's organisers did explore more or less systematized mechanisms to develop young American players. In both cases, the deliberate teaching of football skills targeted an increasingly more youthful participant base.

This second section explores two issues of relevance in relation to this shift as well as some further considerations in a Franco-American comparison. The two aspects

¹⁴² Searching with the keyword 'sport' through the 1945-1970 archive of the *Journal Officiel*, the French record of laws and decrees, one finds over two hundred and sixty documents including ninety *décrets*, one hundred and seventy *arrêtés*, one *loi*, and one *décision européenne*. This is by no means a complete listing of all mentions.

¹⁴³ *Journal Officiel*, 'décret n°47-566 du 19 mars 1947', 'arrêté du 6 septembre 1949', 'décret n° 57-1417 du 31 décembre 1957', and 'arrêté du 14 février 1966'.

¹⁴⁴ *Journal Officiel*, 'arrêté du 21 avril 1961'. These limits remained in place until 1968 when they were removed again by government decree. The removal of these limits was one of the key points on a tract distributed by protesting footballers who were inspired by the wider events of May 1968 in France to demonstrate and take over the offices of the FFF. See Alfred Wahl, 'Le mai 68 des footballeurs français', in *Vingtième Siècle*, 26 (1) (1990), pp. 73-82.

¹⁴⁵ See Haut-Comité des Sports, *Essai de doctrine du sport : une étude de la commission de doctrine du sport*, (Paris : Haut Comité des Sports, 1965).

reflect the changing nature of the youth game as significantly different from the period prior to the 1970s: the rise of rationalised development or *formation* – and the subsequent move towards *préformation* or pre-development at even younger ages – along with the explosion of representative national youth teams in an expanding context of internationalisation. The first of these relates to the creation of specific institutions or settings in which the sport of football was taught, albeit not necessarily with the same ultimate aim. In France, these were the *centres de formation* while in America at the same time one means for teaching the game was the summer soccer camp. The second element was the parallel rise of representative and youth national teams in both France and the United States, something which was heavily linked to the international forces pushing the youth game across national frontiers from the 1970s onwards. While the core of this section argues for a differentiation from the earlier period, there was some continuity with the earlier period through the ongoing identification mechanisms that remained present and targeted a progressively more youthful participant base. After the initial period prior to the 1970s throughout which identification mechanisms were utilised to link the youth with the senior game, all of the issues addressed hereafter relate to this ongoing process of bridging the growingly distinct youth and adult sectors of the sport.

Places to learn the game: from the ‘centre de formation’ to ‘la préformation’ and the rise of the American summer soccer camp, c.1974-c.2000

He [The player] can sign a first professional contract only upon the expiration of a *stagiaire* contract of at least one year duration or after a period of formation, according to the specific conditions defined in the statutes for the *aspirant* or *stagiaire* player.

...

Notwithstanding a modification to the school leaving age, only a player at least 16 years of age and no older than 17 years on the 1st of August can sign an engagement as a *joueur aspirant*.

- from the *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 1973-74*¹⁴⁶

With the coming of summer and the end of school, thousands of wide-eyed, happy, enthusiastic youths stream en masse to the various Ukrainian youth camps in their areas. Loaded down with knapsacks, sleeping bags, sports equipment, and even books the campers head for a few weeks of fun, relaxation, and learning at the expertly staffed Ukrainian “tabirs” [camps in Ukrainian] across the United States and Canada....The thousands, of youths that came to the camps will be returning home with their fond memories of the tabirs, hoping the school year will rush by quickly so that they will again be able to come next summer to camp to see the many new friends they made, to sit around “vatras” [camp fires], go on hikes, learn about their heritage, and just have fun.

- from *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 1973¹⁴⁷

The sport of football for youth in the mid 1970s was in many respects vastly different in France and the United States. In the former, French football authorities had come together to build a shared vision for the future of the game that rested on a strong amateur and youth base with the national team and professional clubs at the top of a vertically integrated pyramid. Just as the French were formalising the pathways from youth to professional, the Americans were only just beginning to nationally federate an increasingly mainstream sport with as heterogeneous a membership as could be imagined. In the mid-1970s the NASL entered its brief phase as a truly major US sports league while the youth soccer boom was adding thousands of young players each year.

What was the link between the young *aspirants*, *stagiaires* and Ukrainian-American youth at summer tabirs? Between training professionals and summer camp soccer? Each, in their own way, were at the centre of the changes to player development occurring around them. In France, *la formation* became the exclusive

¹⁴⁶ *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 1973-74*, Titre III, Art. 2, and Titre I, Ch. II, Art. 4.

¹⁴⁷ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 August 1973.

basis for established pathways from youth to elite and thus professionalized the youth game. Between 1973 and the turn of the millennium, the focus of *la formation* continued to push down the age scale to younger and younger players. A similar trend towards younger players was evident in the rise of the American summer soccer camp. What became a truly cultural institution by the end of the 20th century had undergone various transformations from the ethno-cultural camp of the 1960s that included sports just for its drawing power. Throughout the last quarter of the century, the camp phenomenon included direct links to professional, semi-pro, and college programmes and reached out to girls wanting to learn the game. Yet what was the wider context of these two very different loci for actively developing youth players by teaching the game?

The aforementioned 1973-74 *Charte du Football Professionnel* restructured the professional game during a difficult period for the sport in France, labelled by Lanfranchi and Wahl as one of “crisis and renewal”.¹⁴⁸ The *Charte* literally rejuvenated professional football’s ranks as the average age as well as career length dropped over the course of the 1970s.¹⁴⁹ One key aspect of this new professionalism was the requirement that all professional players from that season onwards (save a few foreign exceptions) were allowed to sign professional contracts only upon completion of a defined and approved training regime, *la formation*. Training youth was not entirely new, however. If clubs such as FC Sochaux had actively worked in this area at the turn of the 1950s, the formalisation of training for young players according to this new model took earlier initiatives one step further.¹⁵⁰ As noted in the document which detailed the l’INF, its reasons for existence, criteria for entry and all aspects of the structure of the centre:

¹⁴⁸ The authors called the period between 1961 and 1981 for the professional game “Crisis and Renewal”. See Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, pp. 165-211.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 195-7.

¹⁵⁰ For more about the Lionceaux of FC Sochaux, a programme started in 1949 to recruit talented young players and provide them with employment all while they trained and played football, see Antoine Mourat, ‘Football et mono-industrie- création et évolution d’un ‘style sochalien’ à partir de 1928’ in Yvan Gastaut et Stéphane Mourlane, *Le football dans nos sociétés*, Autrement « Mémoires/Histoire », (2006) pp. 52-63.

“L’Institut National de Football will undoubtedly allow for the launching, each season, in professionalism, of 30 or 40 players ready to ensure the renewal of the ranks.”¹⁵¹

It should be remembered that the context of this institute was in a period during which the French government, far from focusing only on sport, aggressively pushed for structures destined to provide youth with further training and education.¹⁵² Furthermore, the promotion of nationalised youth training for French clubs, and ultimately the national team, occurred in an environment of relatively few foreign players.¹⁵³ This national policy engendered the creation of *centres de formation*, or training centres, at each professional club. Alongside l’INF, the national centre started two years prior to the *Charte*, these institutions were designed to develop talent to a level satisfactory for the professional game. After an initial transition period during which the minimum criteria were phased in, all first division clubs were required to have such an academy. By the start of Pelé’s second season with the New York Cosmos in the summer of 1976 season there were twenty-four such *centres*.¹⁵⁴

Across the ocean the specialised American summer soccer camp did not appear *ex nihilo*. Sport in general had long been included as a key activity in the vast camping culture of which the background history is well chronicled by Leslie Paris.¹⁵⁵ Those in ethnic communities built summer resorts, such as the Ukrainian National Association centre, ‘Soyuzivka’, in the Catskill Mountains of New York state. Sites like these hosted all sorts of events, summer school courses and children’s camps and Soyuzivka’s organisers maintained a variety of sports facilities and boasted about significant

¹⁵¹ *L’Institut National de Football*, dated 21 August 1972, Paris, in *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football*, 25 April 1973, Barcode RM00002585.

¹⁵² In 1971, the French government passed *loi n° 71-575 du 16 juillet 1971* which made training and professional education a national priority and directly linked the public sector to the funding of such programmes. See *Journal Officiel*, ‘loi n° 71-575 du 16 juillet 1971’.

¹⁵³ Between 1954 and 1960 there was an average of no more than 2.7 to 3.4 foreign players on French club rosters. This followed a rule change in 1955 to limit the number of foreigners to two per club. See Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les footballeurs*, p. 131-8.

¹⁵⁴ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1976-77*, p. 16.

¹⁵⁵ Paris’ focus is on the early history of the summer camp phenomenon from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth century. While sport is not the focus of her study, she does explain the role that sport played in the lives of campers referencing the particular popularity of baseball as one of the modern sports alongside the many other activities which “referenced preindustrial and indigenous traditions”. Leslie Paris, *Children’s Nature: The Rise of the American Summer Camp*, (New York: New York University Press, 2008), pp. 116-7.

improvements made to the soccer field and surroundings.¹⁵⁶ Of course, sport was not the exclusive domain of ethnic summer camps. Throughout the 1950s the Boy Scouts' magazine regularly listed traditional outdoors summer camps as well as others held at military, boarding as well as college preparatory schools, but none ever included a mention to "soccer". Alongside the traditional activities at summer camp like woodcraft, riflery and riding, "soccer" was first listed in 1961 among the sports on offer.¹⁵⁷ Sports camps began to claim more and more advertising space in the magazine's regular camp listings and by 1974, the year before the NASL went big-time, the two page section's heading included "Camps and Sport Coaching Clinics" alongside the traditional offer of "Travel and Adventure Programs, Wilderness Survival Groups".¹⁵⁸ From that point on, football, in its global version, never disappeared from the ever growing summer sports camp scene. Unaffected by the demise of the NASL, it actually grew into its own as a legitimate single-sports camp for American youth. Sport's central role indeed had come a long way since these early days of summer camps.

This was the multifarious context within which football's organisers in both countries sought ways to formalise the teaching of the sport to the younger generation. Various French scholars have discussed the new paradigm of *formation*, the consequences on the professional sector, and some of the challenges to balancing the sporting and educational aspects of this system destined to produce sportsmen.¹⁵⁹ What is discussed here are some of the particularities of this move towards rationalised development or *formation* in respect to youth themselves considering the questions of

¹⁵⁶ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 24 May 1958.

¹⁵⁷ *Boys' Life*, April 1961, p. 76. At Camp Northwestern on Lake Geneva some thirty miles southwest of Milwaukee, Wisconsin "soccer" made its first appearance alongside classics like baseball, golf and tennis.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, March 1974, pp. 72-3.

¹⁵⁹ See Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, pp. 187-95; Jean-Michel Faure and Charles Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel à la Française*, pp. 191-213; Hassen Slimani, 'La professionnalisation du football français', pp. 309-57; Hassen Slimani, 'Les deux dimensions constitutives d'un capital sportif à la française entre éducation et compétition', in *Lendemains*, 22 (88) (1997), pp. 51-68; and Jacques Terrien, 'Le métier de footballeur professionnel', (unpublished DEA dissertation, université de Nantes, 1989). Other authors have explored these questions specifically in regard to one club or a comparison between various *centres de formation*. See Cécile Créac'h, 'Le FC Nantes Atlantique au cœur de l'espace national du football professionnel', (unpublished mémoire de Maîtrise, université de Nantes, 1996); Lidwine Bellanger, 'Le dispositif de formation au métier de footballeur : l'apparente unicité des centres de formation', (unpublished mémoire de Maîtrise, université de Nantes, 2003).

age presented throughout the thesis. In France, the reduction of age and the increase of opportunities to follow the official professional training curriculum went hand in hand with a change to the real meaning of *formation* and thus its focus no longer just for the oldest youth. On the other side of the Atlantic, the summer camp phenomenon has been the object of little scholarship other than passing reference to mixed “traditional camp activities with a heavy dose of sport instruction, drilling and supervised play”.¹⁶⁰ This section will explore how camps began to include specialised soccer-only sessions, crossed the sex-divide to include girls and became a recognised place to train and learn the game in the ever waxing and waning shadow of professionalism.

In the years leading up to the 1970s and this new era for talent development or *formation* French professional football was struggling and the numbers of registered professionals plummeted along with those who sought to fill their shoes, the *stagiaires*. These hit an all time low between 1965 and 1967.

Table 6 – Number of *Professionnels* and *Stagiaires* (1955-1967)¹⁶¹

Year	Professionals	<i>Stagiaires</i>
1955	607	117
1959	561	98
1962	570	99
1964	454	53
1965	391	43
1967	419	35

At the very moment that French football plunged into crisis, the Ukrainian-American football community uttered similar concerns for its future. *The Ukrainian Weekly* reported

“the fact that for some time now there has been a nagging lack, of young Ukrainian soccer players on our teams here and in Canada... some Ukrainian clubs, faced with a choice of either relying on unpolished Ukrainian talent from their junior and reserve teams, or importing non-Ukrainian players to maintain the high level of soccer, chose the latter alternative at the expense of the first.”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Ronald B. Woods, *Social Issues in Sport*, (Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 2007), p. 99.

¹⁶¹ Compiled from the Fédération Française de Football’s *Annuaire* (1955-1967).

¹⁶² *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 9 July 1966.

Three key figures in the game, Leonard Lucenko and brothers Walt and Eugene Chyzowych, banded together to orchestrate a Ukrainian football renaissance and started the first ever “soccer camp and clinic”, incidentally the ethnic community’s first ever camp exclusively focused on sport and one sport no less.¹⁶³ Judging from the newspaper’s coverage and continued advertisements, the camp was a success and was repeated each successive summer. In a clear differentiation from other “tabirs”, or camps, the organisers dropped Ukrainian language classes from the advertising in 1970, presumably to sell the camp as a sport-focused session rather than as an immersion experience in the Carpathian ethno-cultural environment already offered at the other traditional camps.¹⁶⁴

At the same time that Lucenko and the Chyzowych brothers dropped Ukrainian language lessons from their soccer school’s curriculum, changes occurred in the archetype milieu of American boyhood. Held at the New York Military Academy the self-proclaimed All-America Camp - “famous for superior instruction” was the heading - included soccer for the first time in 1970 among the sports taught and as a result the first listing of the sport in the sports camp listings advertised in *Boys’ Life*.¹⁶⁵ Indeed, the early 1970s was when football as a sport in America dropped its singularly ethnic association and literally moved into the mainstream camp.

The single-sport camp was on the rise. More and more camps offered multiple sports as their primary attraction, but also single sports for intense and exclusive instruction. In 1971, Zenon Snylyk, a former US Olympian in football, opened a sport camp for his other love tennis.¹⁶⁶ Around the same time the first soccer-only camp advertisement appeared in *Boys’ Life* magazine.¹⁶⁷ It is in some ways ironic as this camp’s director, Hubert Vogelsinger, hailed from the historical bastion of America’s

¹⁶³ The camp was held at ‘Verkhovnya’, another Ukrainian summer resort centre similar to ‘Soyuzivka’.

¹⁶⁴ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 13 June 1970.

¹⁶⁵ *Boys’ Life*, March 1970, p. 73.

¹⁶⁶ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 10 June 1972. In its second edition, the camp was “started with success last year and attended by 37 youngsters”. Snylyk was selected on numerous occasions for the United States Olympic and US national team. He competed at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games and the 1959 and 1963 Pan-American Games.

¹⁶⁷ *Boys’ Life*, April 1972, p. 60.

running game, Yale, and served as its head coach for soccer.¹⁶⁸ This reflected the general growth of the phenomenon of sports camps and single-sport camps. Indeed, of the forty-nine camps listed for the summer of 1972, thirteen were advertised as principally one-sport camps.¹⁶⁹ This was a far cry from a decade before when camping was almost exclusively about tents, hiking and fires. Even then sport camps existed but were few and far between: of the fifteen camps advertised for the summer of 1962, only two were for one sport, baseball.¹⁷⁰

A further evolution of the soccer camp was the inclusion of girls into the summer scene. Following the explosion of girls onto fields at the high school level discussed in Chapter 2, camp organisers sought to bring these players into the fold of summer instruction. If the initial Ukrainian camp in 1966 targeted exclusively boys, by the early 1970s that camp, which had become part of the Chornomorska Sitch Sport School-Camp, was open to both boys and girls.¹⁷¹ A group photo from yet another Ukrainian summer resort, under the auspices of the Ukrainian American Youth Association (SUMA), depicted the girl campers with footballs at their feet.¹⁷² In a way, the lack of young Ukrainian footballers was addressed by the growth of these summer camps and the hundreds of youth who attended and were taught the game each year. Yet at the same time, the glory days of professional teams at Ukrainian clubs from the late 1950s and early 60s were moving into the nostalgic past and the NASL was soon to step into the spotlight.

In addition to the inclusion of girls, the other change to the camp scene was also demographic. The age target for the soccer camp dropped between the first camps in the 1960s and those twenty years later. The initial Ukrainian soccer school was for ages eleven to twenty-one in 1966.¹⁷³ Less than ten years later the entire age group for the

¹⁶⁸ Nearly one century before, Yale's Walter Camp had laid out the rules for a codified American football game. In a sort of strange succession from Camp to Vogelsinger and American football to soccer, the same institution provided the first soccer camp advertised to the Boy Scout community.

¹⁶⁹ *Boys' Life*, June 1972, pp. 79-80. The list included one camp each for basketball, tennis, golf, American football, soccer, and hockey. The remaining seven camps were all for baseball.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, May 1962, p. 80.

¹⁷¹ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 3 April 1974.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 5 September 1976.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 9 July 1966.

same camp was for children nine to sixteen.¹⁷⁴ By the turn of the 1980s, kids as young as seven or eight were the focus for different soccer camps in the Chicago area and it was not uncommon for camps to welcome six year-olds.¹⁷⁵

Football was part of the summer sports camp phenomenon and by the 1980s *The New York Times* reported on some 2,000 accredited and an estimated 9,000 non-accredited camp establishments according to the American Camping Association.¹⁷⁶ However, this is not to say that the sport-specific camp was the dominant summer experience for American youth. As a reminder of the differences between the approach to summer camps in the North and the South a contributor to the *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* in 1988 wrote, albeit with a conscious reinforcement of North-South cultural stereotypes:

“Summer camps in the South and Southwest are essentially outings for children to paddle canoes, swim, play ball, sing songs and learn how to cuss. Housing is pleasantly rustic. The concrete shower floor is always wet. The highpoint of the day is when the canteen opens. Everybody has a jolly time. But summer camps in the Northeast, the Catskills and New England I found out from perusing advertisements in *The New York Times Magazine*, are quite different. Northeasterners get too serious about most things, summer camps included... Camps in the Northeast have themes. Children go to music camp, or sea camps, wilderness camps or baseball camps, Jewish camps, Roman Catholic camps, camps to lose weight, art camps, soccer camps, computer camps, dance camps and acting camps.”¹⁷⁷

Even if not necessarily spread nationally, the soccer camp was a relevant part of these themed and specialised camps that occupied much of the summer time for many youth.

Contemporaneous to the events that laid the foundations of the American soccer camp, the sport was in crisis in France and football’s leadership saw one exit route: reforms to the footballing profession and its contractual conditions as well as the formalisation of the training regime responsible for providing future professionals. In short, they turned their attention to the youth as the future of the game. Key to this were

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 22 May 1976.

¹⁷⁵ *Chicago Tribune*, 16 May 1979.

¹⁷⁶ *The New York Times*, 1 February 1981.

¹⁷⁷ *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette*, 21 March 1988.

the consequences of the 1973-74 *Charte* and its creation of the *aspirant* player category and the required passage through the *stagiaire* phase before turning professional. The first crop of young hopefuls included thirty-seven initial *aspirants* who began this new era of French football and had to be already sixteen years of age when they signed.¹⁷⁸ This was in line with the government decree, known as the *Réforme Berthouin*, that had fixed the school leaving age at sixteen years of age.¹⁷⁹ Literally free of any scholastic obligations, boys aged sixteen and seventeen could sign contracts as *aspirants* with a *centre de formation* and pursue an approved training regime to one day turn professional.

After an initial growth spurt, the number of *aspirants* averaged just over 130 for much of the decade and the initial signing-on age remained fixed at sixteen through the 1979-80 season. The numbers climbed in the 1980s just as the minimum age for signing went in the opposite direction. The 1980-81 *Charte* lowered the age for signing either as an *aspirant* or the newly introduced *apprenti* to fifteen, albeit as an exception and on the condition that the youth had proved his completion of the “first cycle of secondary education”.¹⁸⁰ If the contract was not signed in theory before age fifteen, the reality was that the recruitment process started even earlier. The 1981 brochure presenting FC Sochaux’s *centre de formation* explained the criteria for entry:

“Around 14 years of age, he can apply. We think that any younger, the child will have difficulty in adapting and the family environment will be greatly missed [by the boy].”¹⁸¹

The opportunities for a young player to step across the youth-elite divide increased as the number of *aspirants* rose. These changes to the regulations on age for the contracts signed at *centres de formation* took on greater importance as the absolute number of young players affected by them rose in the years after 1973. From the initial group of thirty-seven *aspirants*, the various categories of young players on contracts

¹⁷⁸ *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 1973-74*, Titre I, Ch. II, Art. 4. The 1974-75 annual lists 37 *aspirants*, 161 *stagiaires* and 447 *professionnels* for the 1973-74 season. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1974-75*, p. 6.

¹⁷⁹ *Ordonnance n° 59-45 du 6 janvier 1959 portant prolongation de la scolarité obligatoire*, (Journal officiel du 7 janvier 1959), art. 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 1980-81*, Titre III, Ch. I, Art. 6 and Titre III, Ch. II, Art. 5.

¹⁸¹ Football Club Sochaux Montbéliard, *Centre de Formation du FCSM*, October 1981, p. 10.

grew in number and relevance actually outnumbering the professionals in 1986. With the growing numbers of *aspirants* and later *apprentis*, the bridge itself grew wider as more and more younger players had the opportunity to train for a steadily growing profession.

Table 7 – Number of *Professionnels, Stagiaires, Aspirants, Apprentis* (1969-2008)¹⁸²

Year	Professionals	Stagiaires	Aspirants	Apprentis	Total non-pros
1969	376	116			116
1971	365	112			112
1972	419	115			115
1974	447	161	37		198
1976	441	212	138		350
1977	447	251	134		385
1979	495	227	137		364
1981	468	215	149		364
1983	538	245	157	52	454
1986	708	369	361 combined		730
1998	909	295	245	40	580 (704 incl. 'espoirs')
2008	1069	303	76	552	931 (975 incl. 'élites')

If the French centres de formation were a deliberate effort by football's professional elite to train the next generation of players, the lack of continuous national professionalism in the United States did not impede the summer soccer camp from having a similar youth training focus, albeit not directly for professional contracts. The major difference was that these camps did not have the same express objective to develop players for a career in the game. The directors and coaches at these camps were generally college and high school coaches and in some cases former semi-professional players with ASL teams. This represented the highest levels of the game in the years before Pelé's Cosmos. At the time they started their "soccer school", Lucenko and the Chyzowych brothers were college coaches and former players in the professional and semi-professional ASL and German-American Soccer League. Many other former players also regularly coached at these camps. One such player was Mike Noha, a former standout and national champion with the Philadelphia Ukrainian Nationals in 1960. The star striker was born of Ukrainian parents who emigrated to

¹⁸² Compiled from the Fédération Française de Football's *Annuaire* (1955-1986), Ligue Nationale de Football, *Infos*, n° 4, février 1998, p. 3, and Union Nationale des Footballeurs Professionnels, *La Lettre UNFP*, n° 71, mars 2008, p. 15.

Argentina where the athletic youngster grew up and learned the game in Buenos Aires.¹⁸³ Noha and the aforementioned Snylyk were regular coaches at the Ukrainian soccer school over its first decade.

If coaches like Noha were accomplished players, and even in some cases Olympians like Snylyk, the comparison with other sports camps puts this in context. Summer camps for American football and baseball were linked with recognised national sporting heroes. For example, among the advertised camps in *Boys' Life* for the summer of 1972 were baseball camps directed by former professionals such as “The Mickey Owen Baseball School” and the “Ted Williams Baseball Camp”.¹⁸⁴ The American football camp listed Hank Stram, head coach for the Kansas City Chiefs of the newly formed NFL, as its director, three of the Chief’s professional players, Ed Podolak, Jan Stenerud and Aaron Brown, and no less than three well-known university coaches, Joe Paterno of Penn State, Bob Devaney of Nebraska, and Bill Battle of Tennessee.¹⁸⁵ In comparison with these high profile coaches for the two other sports, aside from Yale’s Vogelsinger, the staff at the soccer camp at the same site as the aforementioned American football camp (Monticello, New York) included coaches from some private and smaller colleges and North-eastern boarding high schools.¹⁸⁶ The contrast between professional teams and big-time public universities with enormous sporting tradition and the smaller private colleges and boarding schools could not have been more pronounced.

¹⁸³ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 June 1960. It was said that prior to moving to Philadelphia Noha played with ‘Chacarita’ of the Argentine First Division. While Club Atlético ‘Chacarita’ Juniors was a regular in the 1940s and 1950s in the Argentine First Division, the club was relegated in 1956 only to return in 1960. Given that Noha was twenty-one in 1960, the chances are slim that he played with ‘Chacarita’ in the First Division in 1956 at age seventeen. A more likely answer was that he continued with the club in the Second Division until moving to the US in either late 1959 or early 1960.

¹⁸⁴ Williams, whose number 9 was retired by his club, played professionally for only one team, the Boston Red Sox, throughout his entire career that lasted from 1939 and 1960. Owen was a catcher who had a lengthy career in the late 1930s, 40s and 50s, with St. Louis Cardinals, Brooklyn Dodgers, Chicago Cubs and Boston Red Sox. A third baseball camp was run by Art Gaines, who promoted himself as a scout for the professional Pittsburgh Pirates. See *Baseball Digest*, June 1962, p. 25.

¹⁸⁵ *Boys' Life*, June 1972, p. 79.

¹⁸⁶ The list included Klaas de Boer, Bentley College (Waltham, Mass), Peter Gooding, Amherst, Robert Oliver, Johns Hopkins University, Rick Sewall, The Foote School (New Haven, CT), Tom Scattergood, Moses Brown School (Providence RI).

The move to the mainstream over the decade of the 1970s was helped by the NASL and its rise to the national scene. The league may have helped create the critical mass necessary to legitimize the sport and this had its effect on the camp scene. For example, the *Chicago Tribune* reported in 1979 on the various clinics and camps hosted by the professional Chicago Sting team that were expected to attract some 1,200 youth and which were directed by Sting coach Willy Roy. A mix of promotion and instruction, the Sting ran twelve week-long summer camps all over the Chicago area between mid June and early August and the sixty-five dollar fee for five days coaching included a ball, a bag, a T-shirt and tickets to a Sting game.¹⁸⁷ The Tampa Bay Rowdies were another NASL club to start an extensive summer camp programme, called ‘Camp Kikinthagrass’, for which they hired former English league referee and educator, Gordon Hill.¹⁸⁸ Foreign star players such as Gordon Banks and Glenn Hoddle were among the coaches brought over for the camp throughout the 1980s.¹⁸⁹ Another Englishman, Gordon Bradley, the former coach of Pelé and the Cosmos, routinely travelled up and down the East coast coaching at summer camps from New York to North Carolina. The local newspaper in Lumberton, NC presented Gordon in this way:

“Gordon Bradley, former head coach of the New York Cosmos and Washington Diplomats of the North American Soccer League, has been added to the staff of the All-Star Soccer Camp at Guilford College...Bradley, who led the Cosmos to NASL championships, has coached some of the world’s greatest players, including Pelé, Franz Beckenbauer, Georgio [sic] Chinaglia and Johann Cruyff. At the Guilford camp, Bradley will work with all age groups, but will concentrate on the varsity circuit for high school players.”¹⁹⁰

The profile raising accomplished by the NASL during the mid-to-late 1970s was finally able to put the soccer camp on par with other sports camps as to the claim for “professional coaching”.

¹⁸⁷ *Chicago Tribune*, 16 May 1979.

¹⁸⁸ *Sarasota Journal*, 18 June 1980.

¹⁸⁹ The ‘Tampa Bay Rowdies Appreciation Blog’ has collected various memorabilia related to the NASL club including vast newspaper clippings, photos, programmes, etc. Among the photo collection are a variety of images taken from ‘Camp Kikinthagrass’ over the years including a number of images of camp life with coaches such as Hoddle and Banks demonstrating skills to the participating kids. See ‘Tampa Bay Rowdies Appreciation Blog’, <http://mytampabayrowdies.blogspot.com> (accessed April 5, 2009).

¹⁹⁰ *The Robesonian*, 9 July 1981.

Yet with the eclipse of the league by the mid-1980s, the real brand of soccer camp was often linked to individuals such as Bradley and the ever growing number of collegiate programmes. One such individual demonstrated the natural link between the college game and the local soccer camp. David Reiss, who co-directed 'Soccer Camp Chuck' in Columbus, Georgia, was not only the head coach for the small Columbus College but also former president of the local youth soccer association.¹⁹¹ The intertwining network of the soccer camp director who was also the regional college coach and sometimes local youth association leader helped to subtly turn the focus of instruction at these summer camps to teach potential future university-level players. Pete Mehlert, coach for American University, also ran summer soccer camps with the objective to "immediately put into practice what we teach them" which is what led *The Washington Post* to conclude the following about the summer sports camp phenomenon:

"For colleges and private high schools, the camps provide an additional benefit beyond pure profit: They can be a wonderful showcase and recruiting tool for the institution. And if some youngsters show promise of becoming athletic stars, the coach can have an immediate edge."¹⁹²

The benefits for the collegiate game were obvious: summer fundraising and opportunities to train and scout future players on both the men's and women's side. By the time that Gordon Bradley returned to Guilford, North Carolina for their 15th annual camp in 1989, he represented the school he coached, George Mason University, and was accompanied on the staff by the Guilford men's coach and the N.C. State University women's coach.¹⁹³

With the birth of the MLS in the wake of the 1994 FIFA World Cup and then the women's league, WUSA, in 2001, professional clubs returned to the summer camp scene. This gave new impetus to the focused development of players. Even if the soccer camp phenomenon still maintained an aspect of a summer activity for kids whose parents both worked, the accent of the camps was on real *professional* player development at a young age. Directed by former D.C. United and US National team

¹⁹¹ *Columbus Times*, 16 July 1981.

¹⁹² *The Washington Post*, 18 July 1986.

¹⁹³ *The Dispatch*, 15 June 1989.

“captain-for-life”, John Harkes, the 2005 United camp targeted both the recreational player from age eight and the elite player from age ten for separate skills sessions. The brochure, whose cover featured the recently crowned 2004 MLS champion and teen phenom Freddy Adu no less, encapsulated this professional approach rather well in its motto for the camp “Train like the pros”.¹⁹⁴

Training like the pros was precisely what French youth had already been doing for more than fifteen years. In 1989, the national training centre at l’INF and its *stagiaires* aged fifteen to eighteen moved to the new site at Clairefontaine some fifty kilometres southwest of Paris. Within a couple of years its focus had turned to *la préformation* for youth aged thirteen to fifteen, a programme that was replicated between 1994 and 1996 at four other sites, called *Pôles Espoirs*, across the country.¹⁹⁵ The 2000-01 version of the *Charte* was then the first to formally include this *préformation* status in its regulations containing the various conditions for the signature of these contracts that started at age thirteen.¹⁹⁶ In twenty years the *Charte* marked off a lower and lower “contractual age”. From the initial drop to fifteen in 1980, and after almost a decade of de facto *préformation* throughout the 1990s, the 2000-01 *Charte* finally officially included the younger age of thirteen. *Préformation* continued to expand and three years after its formal inclusion in the *Charte*, there were seven such FFF *centres de préformation* with that number growing to twelve in 2008 and fourteen by 2010.¹⁹⁷

By the start of the twenty-first century the terms ‘*formation*’ and ‘*préformation*’ had become part of the standard vocabulary and the age at which one spoke of forming, or *former*, a young player had reached an all-time low. The latter term itself saw significant evolution. The word ‘*préformation*’ had been used by FC Nantes’ coach Jean-Claude Suaudeau in a 1986 interview in reference to the changes already observed at that time to the focus of developing professionals. Suaudeau noted how players in

¹⁹⁴ D.C. United, *2005 D.C. United Academy*.

¹⁹⁵ Slimani, ‘La professionnalisation du football français’, p. 338.

¹⁹⁶ *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 2000-01*, Titre II, Annexe n° 2, ‘Règlements des centres de préformation’, pp. 29-30.

¹⁹⁷ See Bellanger, ‘Le dispositif de formation au métier de footballeur’, p. 21 and ‘Les Pôles Espoirs Interrégionaux FFF’, <http://www.fff.fr/presentationfff/coordonnees/1230.shtml> (accessed July 2, 2010).

the mid-1980s were competitive at a younger age in comparison with his prior experience:

“Today everything has accelerated...what is essential is no longer the same anymore: it’s that players must be competitive as quickly as possible. It’s almost *préformation*...They are competitive at twenty or twenty-one years old.”¹⁹⁸

His definition of *préformation* for the late teen to twenty-year-old age group was outmoded within less than a decade when the FFF published its 1994 guide appropriately entitled *La préformation à l’INF (13-15 ans)*.

One of the principal authors of this text was French national team coach, Gérard Houllier, who returned to the FFF in 2007 as the Directeur Technique National. Upon his return, the specific focus was on the cream of this younger age group and producing talented under-fifteen youth for the *centres de formation*. During a visit to the *centre de préformation* in Nancy during 2009, Houllier explained:

“The objective will be to have the best players between twelve and fifteen without uprooting them. They will come Monday to Friday to train and will go back to see their families on the weekend...We want to put the best youngsters from a region together so that they train around one theme: technique, technique and always technique. With this tool [the new centre de *préformation* in Nancy] we will surely have a better generation of players for the centres de formation. With a superior quality and creativity and of course fewer injuries. The Federation’s mission is to have around fifteen of these inter-regional centres spread out across all of France. There was nothing in the East, it’s a good opportunity to take. We will cover the Alsace and the Lorraine. The clubs in these regions will be the first to benefit. We have set an objective of 50% of youth who will go on to a centre de formation.”¹⁹⁹

The expansion of the *centres de préformation* was not enough however. In a different interview, he explained how the focus of *préformation* pushed even further down the age ladder and began to actively include girls as well:

Philippe Mayen: The term ‘formation à la française’ is it out-of-date today?

¹⁹⁸ Faure and Suaud, *Le Football Professionnel*, p. 109.

¹⁹⁹ *Républicain Lorrain*, 27 October 2009.

G. Houllier: Absolutely not. On the contrary. Our system of formation continues to work very well and remains known and recognized...Our préformation has also largely proved itself with the Henrys, Mexès, Ben Arfas, etc.

PM: So what needs to be changed?

GH: From now on we mostly need to concentrate on the quality of our work for the 8-12 year-old age group, even if I have to admit that the recent entrance exam at l'INF impressed me as to the quality of some technical moves. But the future is there. We need to bring more attention to the learning in this decisive age category...otherwise our football will regress...In this regard we are in the midst of a key season with an evaluation project for our youth football, boys and girls, for the medium and long term, a project which we hope will be operational in 2009-10. We are all convinced of the necessity to focus our efforts on the 8-12 year-olds.²⁰⁰

The inclusion of a younger and younger age under the term *formation* followed the proportional growth of these younger age categories and the number of registered players so that, by 2008, it also meant the eight to twelve year-old group. If in 1974, when *la formation* was officialised, the youngest age category (*poussins*) accounted for forty thousand kids or a meagre four percent of the total registered players, they were largely irrelevant to the process of *formation*. However, by 2008 the two youngest age groups (*poussins* and *débutants*) numbered almost four-hundred and twenty thousand or twenty-one percent of the total registered players.²⁰¹ Indeed, Houllier's new target for the FFF was to be on the significant population of future players who now represented one-fifth of footballers in France.

La formation underwent significant changes after its introduction in 1973. The focus on teaching a progressively younger age group in preparation for professionalism also opened the door to girls at the start of the new millennium. It created a rationalised pathway from youth to elite according to a rigorous training regime and more opportunities to climb each step of the ladder to professionalism. The American summer soccer camp also changed as it grew out of its initial ethnic and multi-sport camp roots. Like the French though much earlier, it also opened the door to the girls'

²⁰⁰ 'Préparer le football de demain', <http://www.fff.fr/formation/accueil/472172.shtml> (accessed November 13, 2008).

²⁰¹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1974-75*, p. 6, and Fédération Française de Football, 'Statistiques Licences – Saison 2007/2008', in *FFF Informatique 26/05/2008*, p. 7.

side of the game. The brief windows of professionalism helped to legitimize the sport and bring the higher calibre of coaching that was already on offer at other sports camps. Over time, the camp's target audience got younger meaning that the training focused on a younger age group and by the twenty-first century the American summer soccer camp was also about "training like the pros".

The training of young players at the *centres de formation* and summer camps was one of the means for talent development in the post-1970 era. A second consisted in grouping the very best young players per age group at a local, regional and ultimately national level to compete across the frontier. The importance of representative football, embodied in the rise of the youth national team and international youth competition, was another fundamental aspect of this period and it is to these themes that the chapter will now turn.

The rise of youth national teams and the internationalisation of youth football, c.1974-c.2000

All the children of the world
 Have a meeting in Montaigu
 From all the parts of the world
 Singing and dancing they're coming
 ...
 The contest is a party
 Given on the grass
 When everyone gets ready
 To be master of a ball
 Of a ball that flies
 And rises to the sky
 And rises even more, shining and round
 Just like a new sun

- Lyrics to 'Le Rendez-vous de Montaigu', c.1980²⁰²

The phenomenon of selecting a team of youth to represent a country exploded onto the international scene in the 1970s. The international cap was resized for smaller

²⁰² Guy Raffin, *1973...L'Air Pur du Football...1997: Montaigu Mondial Minimes 25^e anniversaire*, (Montaigu: 1997), p. 7. The first stanza was the only part of the song in English. The original text of the second was "La lutte est une fête, Donnée sur le gazon, Lorsque chacun s'apprête, À la conquête d'un ballon, D'un ballon qui s'envole, Et monte jusqu'au ciel, Et monte encore, brillant et rond, Comme un nouveau soleil".

heads as the game's traditionally highest honour was accorded to the best youth of a country's footballing populace. Published in 1997, the 25th anniversary book for the Montaigu Mondial Minimes explains that the event was conceived in 1972 and, after much planning, started the following year as an Easter weekend club tournament that included big names such as Ajax, Bayern Munich, Anderlecht and FC Nantes.²⁰³ Within several years the organisers matched the club tournament with a competition for *minimes* national teams, youth fourteen and under, that became a reference in international youth competition and the main claim to fame for Montaigu for years to come. Metaphorically speaking, it was on the fields of Montaigu where youth national teams came into their own and where the youth game truly went international.

This section addresses the rise of youth national teams and their inclusion in the apparatus of talent development in the process of strengthening the bridge between youth and elite. Four specific points are covered here. Firstly, national teams for youth did have a limited existence prior to the 1970s in which they were restricted to the oldest age groups and confined within a moral and political rhetoric for which elite competition was not the exclusive *raison d'être*. Secondly, the expansion of youth national teams at a variety of age groups coincided with a general increase in international competition and travel for youth at all levels and went well beyond a federation's rigorously picked representative side. Thirdly, youth national teams were gradually fielded at younger and younger ages even if they did not, however, necessarily follow a set logic of proceeding from oldest to youngest with the under-eighteen's being the first national side and the under-five's the last. Lastly, if youth national teams were, at least initially, composed of boys and reflected a boy's game, by the 1990s, girls' national sides began to make their place in the national youth team structure. In sum, this section argues that the 1970s were a crucial decade during which the perception of international youth football transformed from its roots based on the desire to cultivate international fraternity and solidarity into a fundamental pillar in the organised development of football in a country.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

The identification of a national youth elite to represent a particular country existed, of course, well before this decade of change. What was different in the years prior to the 1970s was twofold: firstly, the limitation of national youth teams to the oldest age groups only and secondly, perhaps more importantly, the evolution away from a specific political and moral rhetoric, at least in the case of France and European competition, in which the “international gathering for youth” shifted its focus towards elite competition in a professional sport.

As with many things in football it was the British who set the precedent with their schoolboy internationals early in the twentieth century which already seized significant public interest at that time.²⁰⁴ The trend was set and the rest of the world followed suit with junior football. The composition of a national youth side at only the top end of the age range was evident both in France and the United States. These teams existed in parallel to existing mechanisms to identify talent at slightly younger ages. In France, the FFF instituted a competition for *cadets* in 1945 that saw the best young players from each regional league play against each other. There was, of course, no *cadets* national team selection for the best performers. But, it, together with other talent detection mechanisms such as the *Concours du Jeune Footballeur* discussed above, certainly served as a breeding ground and talent spotting exercise for those gifted boys who moved up an age group and were picked for the first ever FFF-sponsored *juniors* team in 1949.²⁰⁵ Interestingly, the FFF’s annual made no mention in the post-war era of earlier French national *scolaires* teams which did apparently play internationals for under-eighteens as early as the late 1920s. Why these teams are not included in the FFF’s history of junior teams is a mystery. The “first” 1949 team was incorrectly listed as a *cadets* national team in the 1955 FFF annual which leads to wonder how little attention or importance was given to the national youth team at this time.²⁰⁶

²⁰⁴ English Schools’ Football Association historian Colm Kerrigan has noted that the schoolboy internationals regularly attracted crowds of ten and twenty thousand during the first three decades of matches. See ‘Chapter 16 - International matches - 1908-39’ in Kerrigan, *History of the ESFA*, pp. 140-52.

²⁰⁵ *L’Echo sportif de l’Oranie*, 17 March 1929.

²⁰⁶ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1955-56*, pp. 165-6.

In the United States, the ‘District League’ for the city of St. Louis’ Catholic Youth Council helped to groom the best players regardless of parish or locality. James Robinson, in his 1966 thesis, recounted how the elaborate network of clubs and leagues in the city produced talent. By the 1960s, the CYC had introduced ‘Junior District leagues’ that selected the best youth players regardless of parish affiliation for higher competition, a precursor in talent identification which provided for the most successful college programme nationally from 1959 to 1974.²⁰⁷ This went as far as supplying two youth to a national team, Chuck Zoeller and Bill O’Leary, who “were named for a junior national team which will be selected to play in a Latin American country this spring [1966]”.²⁰⁸ The US national junior team in the 1960s was not only composed of St. Louis boys but a composition of East and West. Two Ukrainian-American youth, Peter Matiyclo and Alex Popovych, both of the New York Ukrainian Sports Club, made the 1964 Eastern team which flew out to St. Louis for the final selection weekend before the CONCACAF youth tournament in Guatemala in April.²⁰⁹ Despite a plethora of competitions at younger ages, there is no evidence of a national team for an age category under juniors until after the 1970s.

Aside from the restriction to the eldest segment of footballing youth, the second aspect of national youth teams in the period prior to 1970 was a specific rhetoric about their ultimate aim. The first major youth competition for national teams was the appropriately called International Youth Tournament. Largely founded on the impetus of Sir Stanley Rous, the first edition took place over the 1948 Easter weekend in London.²¹⁰ After several years under the patronage of FIFA, the event was entrusted to

²⁰⁷ Over the sixteen year period, the University of St. Louis men’s team was crowned champions eleven times, co-champions once, and finished second on two occasions. Bob Guelker who was the first football coach at the college and later coach of the US Olympic team, also served as the Executive Sports Director for the Catholic Youth Council from 1946-1967. For a history of the CYC’s football section, see Chapter 11 in James Robinson, ‘The History of Soccer in the City of St. Louis’, (St. Louis University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1966), pp. 235-251, and Chapters 1-3 of the CYC History, available on their website - <http://www.cycstl.net/history/cyc-sports-history> (accessed June 16, 2009).

²⁰⁸ Robinson, ‘The History of Soccer’, p. 242. Zoeller went on to play for the two-time national champion St. Louis University Billikens in 1969 and 1970 during his collegiate career before graduating from the School of Commerce and Finance. See *Archive 1970*, (St. Louis: St. Louis University, 1970), pp. 106, 180-1.

²⁰⁹ *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 7 March 1964.

²¹⁰ Curiously perhaps, there appears to have been no overt link with the concomitant 1948 Olympic Games despite the fact that Olympic events were held all throughout the year. In his memoirs, Rous

the newly formed continental body UEFA.²¹¹ The competition was of enough importance to the confederation that it routinely included in its organisational committee the UEFA President or one of the vice-presidents. One such committed leader was President Gustav Wiederkehr who, immediately following his death in 1972, was praised by the Committee for “the great interest he always demonstrated in regards to junior football”.²¹²

There was a tension in the organisation of the tournament between those who saw it as elite sporting competition and others for whom youth national team football was as much, if not more, an active pursuit of international fraternity and the European idea. For Rous, the initial view of the event in 1948 was motivated by the “hope that friendly and close relations could be established through football between countries which had been divided by the war”.²¹³ Indeed, this was part of a wider desire to reconcile and rebuild after World War II and was rooted in some of the organiser’s first-hand experience of the divisions and horrors of war. In Rous’ autobiography, he explained the approach to sport in the first years of peace time for those who, like himself, had lived through the events:

“In soundings with the government I was advised that the best way to bring Germany back into the sporting community of Europe was through youth fixtures. That seemed entirely appropriate with a new start for a new generation uninvolved in the causes of war. So I arranged for matches between UAU teams and German university students and then exchanges of youth sides in 1949.”²¹⁴

To this end, sport was only part of the focus of this first youth national team tournament and for many years the programme included a variety of cultural visits and activities outside of the normal competition schedule. In 1972, UEFA President Wiederkehr explained this

makes no reference to the Olympics in his description of the origins of the youth tournament. Stanley Rous, *Football Worlds: A Lifetime in sport*, (London: Faber and Faber, 1978), pp. 117-26.

²¹¹ After the creation of the first three UEFA committees – Executive, Club Champions’ Cup, and European Nations Championship – and before a finance, appeals, or amateur body, the fourth committee created at the confederation in 1956 was the Youth Committee or *Commission des Juniors*. ‘UEFA – 200903_Committees’, consolidated file of all UEFA committees, foundation dates, provided to author by Elisabeth Bühlmann, Records Manager, UEFA.

²¹² *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 13 July 1972, Barcode RM00009009.

²¹³ UEFA, *Les 25 ans du Tournoi des Juniors de l’UEFA*, (Bern: UEFA, 1973), p. 18.

²¹⁴ Rous, *Football Worlds*, p. 117.

“other phenomenon, not at all secondary, which distinguishes the Youth Tournament from other competitions: the cultural programme which the organisers must submit along with the match calendar and which is an integral part of our tournaments. The feverish pace that characterises modern international football means that elite players traverse with a disconcerting ease national boundaries and make nothing of these distances. The time available for the deepening of human and cultural contacts is, however, minimal. As such, it still continues to be the moral duty of our sport to promote the European idea through bonds of friendship and mutual understanding.”²¹⁵

Another member of the organising committee Kosta Popovic of Yugoslavia recounted some significant memories of the evening dinners and cultural events which included instances like the Argentine junior players – one of two times a non-European team was invited – who took hold of the band’s instruments at the official banquet and played and danced a lively samba for the enjoyment of the other youth and officials.²¹⁶

With the passing of *Wiederkehr* and the changes to the composition of the UEFA committee membership over the course of the 1960s and early 70s, this “other phenomenon” began to take a back seat to the ever important end of elite competition. Earlier efforts to limit the overly competitive focus had included the deletion of a final between group winners for 1955 and 1956. However due to the pressures from the participating countries this was reinstated from 1957 onwards. Originally restricted to amateur players, from 1958 onwards the tournament went open. This was of particular benefit to the British teams where juniors could turn professional at age seventeen and still be eligible for the under-eighteen international tournament. Further attempts at reducing the competitive elements included the removal of the qualifying round in order to have all nations represented at the final tournament, a modification which only lasted two years in 1964 and 1965.

The organiser’s difficulty in balancing the desire for solidarity and international fraternity with the pursuit of competition and performance was made more difficult as the professional game took on more importance in the post-war years. In 1972, Rous explained retrospectively some of these changes:

²¹⁵ UEFA, *Les 25 ans*, p. 11.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 85.

“Since its inception, though there has been no individual prize to be won [e.g. a cup or trophy], the tournament has been highly competitive, and the winning of the tournament has been considered a high honour. Many outstanding senior players 'graduated' in the Youth Tournament; and the tournament is watched closely by representatives of the professional clubs, who regard it as a recruiting ground when looking for talented youngsters. Although such a development was not intended by those who first organized the tournament, it is a tribute to the quality of the competition and the skill of the young players it attracts. What was intended, and what, I think, has been achieved, was the bringing together, for their own enjoyment and pleasure, of a body of young men who have been enable[d] to travel to other countries, make friends and broaden their experience of the game. It has created a common sporting language and contributed to the game in individual countries and internationally. The emphasis has been less on winning, than on taking part.”²¹⁷

The initial intention of cultural exchange and rebuilding a devastated European continent may have been important to the first committee men, but it was impossible to hold off the forces of professionalism and the growing internationalisation and commercialisation of the sport from the 1970s onwards. In this light, the French federation proposed further changes to the competition in 1975 in order to favour the bigger teams. The suggestion was to introduce a qualifying round of group play rather than the traditional draw for home-and-home fixtures which heightened the risk for a big country of being eliminated even before the tournament proper. The committee minutes reported that such a proposal had already been discussed and rejected the prior year since

“the tournament would be transformed into a European Championship for youth and its [the Juniors Tournament’s] primary goal, that is the forging of bonds of friendship between young footballers, would no longer be reached.”²¹⁸

But the pressure would not subsist. Long-time youth committee president, Karl Zimmerman of Germany, reflected on the changes to the nature of the competition and to youth national team football:

“Through the organization of the International Youth Tournament in England, the year 1948 became a turning point in the development of youth football in Europe. The Tournament was conceived as a meeting place for young people playing football, as a contribution to friendship, and it corresponded with the

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

²¹⁸ *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 15 July 1975, Barcode RM00009009.

ideas of a young generation which started to calculate with greater distances and dimensions. The element of sporting competition was in the centre of the activity, not so much in respect of performance, but much more as an experience. With the years, however, the emphasis was shifted on other factors....When it became no longer possible to eliminate the idea of high performance from the UEFA Tournament, the Youth Committee concentrated its concern on a sporting education for fair-play.”²¹⁹

Indeed, two years after the publication of the 25th anniversary book that celebrated the international exchange and non-sport experience of the event, the cultural programme had entirely disappeared from the planning of the tournament.²²⁰ Furthermore, the teams were lodged at four different sites, a not irrelevant fact in the decrease of the human and cultural contacts so precious to the earlier generation like *Wiederkehr* and *Rous*.

By the mid-1970s the competition had moved on from its initial vocation for amicable relations between youth between different countries in a specific context of European Reconstruction. In a discussion about FIFA’s new under-sixteen world championship and the effects on the current UEFA youth competitions, the same UEFA youth committee planned a total reorganisation of its events. The document entitled ‘The Reorganisation of junior competitions’ summarized the shift in the early 1980s:

“The juniors have evolved. For the ‘under 18 years’ category the concept of a ‘friendly rendez-vous for European youth’ no longer corresponds to reality. In many cases these are young professionals who have considerable expectations. Thus, they insist on staying in luxury hotels, for example. There are only three or four federations which could organize such a tournament for sixteen teams. Moreover, the players’ clubs do not want them to be freed for a prolonged period. Consequently, a restructuring of the junior competitions has become necessary.”²²¹

The change was complete and the rhetoric of national youth team competition was moving away from the international ties of friendship and towards another step in the path from youth to professionalism. The notion of the national youth team by the 1980s was vastly different from its origins in the immediate post-war era.

²¹⁹ UEFA, *Les 25 ans*, pp. 41-3.

²²⁰ *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 6 May 1975, Barcode RM00009009.

²²¹ Annexed document entitled ‘La Réorganisation des compétitions Juniors’ in *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 19 October 1983, Barcode RM00002594.

What made the 1970s the decade of change for the youth national team? To a degree not seen before, it was the decade that *internationalised* youth football. Beyond just the representative youth national side, the 1970s witnessed an explosion of the youth game across country boundaries at the club and national level. This second section explores the changes to the youth game in this international context.

As discussed above, both France and the United States fielded a national junior team at various times in the period prior to 1970 though there is more regular evidence for the former than the latter. But it was limited to just one national team at the oldest end of the youth range. The 1970s revolutionized the youth national team portfolio. In the seven year span between 1972 and 1979 the FFF organized four additional youth teams, each in a different age group, while the USSF fielded at least two new teams and revitalized a third which appears to have been dormant. While both federations continued to add teams in other age categories in the 1980s, 90s and 2000s, this short span in the 1970s stands out as perhaps *the* defining moment for the rise of the youth national team.

Table 8 – First appearance of national youth teams in the 1970s²²²

Year	France	United States
1972	<i>Scolaires</i> (under-15)	
1976	<i>Minimes</i> (under-14)	
1977	<i>Cadets</i> (under-16)	Under-20 and Under-18
1978		Under-14
1979	<i>Juniors A.2</i> (under-18)	

This expansion of youth into the national team world was a reflection of the growing international context of youth football generally. Never before had so many youth travelled beyond their frontiers with a ball at their feet. This exchange was connected to the increased mobility offered by new forms of transportation such as high-speed jet travel. In this new world of democratized travel, non-elite youth teams ventured abroad just for the international experience and to play foreign teams. For example, the California-based AYSO organisation sent two teams, one boys' and one

²²² Consolidated from Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire* (1972-1980), *New York Times*, 1977-1978, *Hartford Courant*, 1977.

girls' to tour Germany and play a number of matches against teams from Lower Saxony. According to the newspaper, during their successful tour of twelve wins, one loss and one tie, the youth played in some curtain raisers in front of sixty-four thousand in Hannover with some impressive photographs of a large and full stadium in the backdrop.²²³ Europeans also travelled in the other direction. The twenty-four girls of Germania Mulheim of Cologne, spent two weeks during the summer of 1980 in East Granby, Connecticut to play local teams.²²⁴ The market for international youth football experiences was such that the *New York Times* ran advertisements by travel operators which organised two-week summer package tours for American youth to go abroad, receive "player training and strategy sessions, international match films and discussions with professional players".²²⁵

In response to these increased travel opportunities of "sightseeing with the ball", up sprouted international football tournaments for youth club teams all across Europe and even in the United States. For example, in its sixth year the 1976 Junior Orange Bowl soccer tournament in Florida hosted some 1,800 players and teams hailing from Canada, Venezuela and Mexico and organisers expected teams the following year from Brazil, Sweden, Colombia, England and West Germany.²²⁶ The tournament phenomenon was such that the FFF began to publish an annual guide in 1981 which listed a selection of the most prestigious and widely recognised events held in France. As noted in the Guide's preface by FFF President Fernand Sastre, the need for such a listing had been felt for several years:

"The extraordinary boom of football tournaments for youth is a recent phenomenon – ten years at most – with which I am of course very pleased as it is a undeniable sign of the good health of our sport...The interest in publishing a guide which lists these tournaments and allows everyone – organisers and participants alike – to find information difficult to attain until now, understandably manifested itself quite quickly. Announced for a while, the first

²²³ *Los Angeles Times*, 11 September 1975.

²²⁴ *The Hartford Courant*, 16 June 1980. The East Granby Angels soccer club had visited Cologne the prior summer for a two-week tournament in August. During the stay, the team "worked with their [Germania Mulheim's] coach, who demonstrated new ideas and tactics".

²²⁵ One such tour was organised by Orbitair International, a New York tour operator for their summer Irish Soccer Clinics under the direction of Dave Bacuzzi, former professional with Division One Arsenal in the 1960s. *New York Times*, 11 December 1977.

²²⁶ *New York Times*, 29 December 1976.

edition of the guide for youth tournaments – 1981-82 season – finally appears now, undoubtedly belated and with some imperfections. But was not the important thing that it come out?”²²⁷

Indeed, the vast majority of events listed in the *Guide* were recently created tournaments. Of all those listed in the initial edition, only sixteen had been started before 1970 while over eighty of the tournaments were created in 1974 or later.²²⁸

In total, the 1981-82 *Guide* included ninety-seven tournaments in its first edition and most always included at least one or two foreign teams. Indeed, one of the main target audiences of this annually printed listing was the vast number of clubs from European national football associations. As mentioned by Sastre in his preface to the second edition in which he explained the reasons for the limited scope of the tourneys included, the aim of the *Guide* was not only to facilitate contacts for foreign clubs, but also to list only a certain level of tournament. In the second edition of the *Guide* President Sastre was unequivocal about its focus:

“The aim is not to neglect the efforts of smaller clubs, much to the contrary – many reputed tournaments today had humble origins – but the credibility of this guide, which is diffused to European federations – is the price of this rigour.”²²⁹

While the tournaments did often seek foreign youth teams, few appear to have targeted youth national teams. Across all the tourneys the participants were almost exclusively clubs. Of all the tourneys listed in the first *Guide* (1981-82) only three were restricted to youth national teams and two included a mix of club and foreign regional sides. The ‘Mondial Minimes de Montaignu’ was the only event that was not for *juniors*; all other tournaments including national sides were for the oldest age group only.²³⁰

²²⁷ Fédération Française de Football, *Guide des Tournois de Jeunes – Saison 1981-82*, pp. 1-2.

²²⁸ Admittedly, the *Guide* is not the exhaustive list of all tournaments but reflects only a sample of those deemed important enough to be listed. Even so, the trend for all those which were listed reflects the exponential growth of the 1970s. Three tournaments began in the 1950s while nine started in the 1960s. Between 1970 and 1973 another seventeen events were added with the remaining eighty-seven tournaments from 1974 up to 1981. These total to more than the ninety-seven tournaments because some had multiple event categories (e.g. *juniors*, *cadets*, *minimes*...).

²²⁹ Fédération Française de Football, *Guide des Tournois de Jeunes – Saison 1982-83*, pp. 1-2.

²³⁰ The two other tournaments for national youth sides were Cannes (est. 1950) and Saint-Malo (1966). Forbach (est. 1972) and Ferney Voltaire (1977) were the two events that mixed club and foreign regional select sides. Fédération Française de Football, *Guide des Tournois de Jeunes – Saison 1981-82*, pp. 33, 37-8, 50, 87.

While there were more tourneys for juniors than any other category, the younger age groups were very well represented in the club sector.

Table 9 – Total number of Tournaments per age group in France, 1981-82²³¹

Age category	Number of tourneys only for this age group	Number of Tourneys with multiple age groups including this age group
<i>Juniors</i>	31	5
<i>Cadets</i>	17	7
<i>Minimes</i>	21	10
<i>Pupilles</i>	15	8
<i>Poussins</i>	2	6

The relationship between international tournament and the formation of a national youth team was nevertheless a close one and in many cases the first appearance of a youth representative side was at one of these events. However, the initial creation of these teams was not necessarily at an official championship organised and sanctioned by FIFA or a continental body. For example, the French under-fifteen *scolaires* national team, who were said to have “represented in a very encouraging way our elite of tomorrow”, played their first matches as friendlies against England and Germany in the spring of 1972.²³² A French under-fourteen *minimes* team was first fielded for the 1976 Montaigu tournament at which clubs and national sides mixed.²³³ Montaigu was also the setting for the youngest ever American team in 1978 coached by Bill Muse and under the overall supervision of national team coach Walt Chyzowych.²³⁴ If national federations like the USSF and the FFF actively sought to organise youth national teams during the 1970s, it was for essentially unofficial competition.

One of the difficulties in these international youth tournaments was the correlation of age groups and it is unclear whether all the teams were the same age.²³⁵

²³¹ Consolidated from Fédération Française de Football, *Guide des Tournois de Jeunes – Saison 1981-82*.

²³² Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire 1972-73*, p. 16.

²³³ Raffin, 1973...*L’Air Pur du Football*, p. 111.

²³⁴ *New York Times*, 19 March 1978.

²³⁵ In the case of the 1978 US team that played in France, *New York Times* regular soccer reporter Alex Yannis had reported on a team aged fifteen and under, but the Montaigu tournament at this time was for players fourteen and under. Regardless of a potential age advantage, the Americans finished last in 1978 and did not field a team in this age group again until returning in triumph to the Montaigu tournament for its twentieth anniversary in 1992 where they finished first ahead of fifteen other youth national teams. See Raffin, 1973...*L’Air Pur du Football*, pp. 58-9.

Since not all countries defined their age groups in the same way, the differences in age could translate into advantages in size, speed and general ability. While each tournament in a given country respected its own national standards, there was no guarantee that the definition of a ‘junior’ in Bellizona (Switzerland), Cannes (France) and Chicago (USA) were the same. Even the notion of ‘under-...’ could be problematic since the player’s age was still dependent on a specific date limit and not all countries used a cutoff date of January 1st. The third edition of the FFF *Guide* went one step in the direction of standardisation in 1983 when it included a table listing the French age groups and two other recognised European age groups all while specifying a cut-off date of August 1.²³⁶

The harmonisation of age categories for national youth teams was, in effect, a matter of supra-national relevance and regulation. However, with the exception of the Youth World Championship begun by FIFA in 1977, supra-national bodies such as UEFA or CONCACAF – which were theoretically well placed to oversee and organise international youth competitions – deliberately stayed out of younger youth national football until the turn of the 1980s and later. This delay was not due to lack of opportunity at least in regards to UEFA.

Representatives from scholastic football competitions had solicited UEFA regarding international youth competitions on several occasions in the 1970s but to no avail. T.R. Ticher, Secretary of the Irish Secondary School FA wrote to the continental association in 1970 to suggest the formation of a European School Football Association supported by UEFA and regular competition at this level. In his letter, Ticher reported on the first European Schools Football Championships held in 1969 organised by Germany in which 9 countries took part. Following the competition a committee was formed at the event to discuss the future editions and included German, Austrian, Belgian and Irish representatives who worked on a plan for an annual tourney and a host for 1971. In writing to UEFA, they sought the creation of a European body with the title and approval being given by the confederation and backing from national associations and national ministries of education (including financial assistance) “in

²³⁶ Fédération Française de Football, *Guide des Tournois de Jeunes – Saison 1983-84*, p. 27.

view of the pursuance of the European idea in this new association”.²³⁷ Mr. T.R. Ticher’s letter went all the way to UEFA’s Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football and was discussed but with the resulting view that “UEFA should not take any action in the matter for the time being.”²³⁸

UEFA’s Committee for Juniors was perhaps the better suited arena for discussion of the issue of international youth football at scholastic age levels. Indeed, within the committee were those most dedicated to the youth cause. Several years after Ticher’s failed attempt to seize the interest of the continental body, the issue of *le football scolaire* returned. Qualified by young General Secretary, Gerhard Aigner, as “becoming more and more important”, the committee commissioned a report on the subject to be completed by former committee president, Professor Karl Zimmerman.²³⁹ Upon reading Zimmerman’s report, the UEFA Executive Committee requested that the Committee for Juniors carry out a survey of schoolboy football in all member associations.²⁴⁰ The appointed working group, which included others such as Engelbrechtsen (new president of the Committee for Juniors) and an external expert and president of the German federation’s youth committee, Finkbeiner, prepared their questionnaire and sent it to all European national associations during the summer.²⁴¹

In the results presented by Zimmerman to the Juniors Committee the following year, all national associations reported the existence of a schoolboy football scene and thirteen countries had already organised international matches at the under-fifteen

²³⁷ Letter from T.R. Ticher - Chairman of the Irish secondary schools football association – to UEFA, in ‘Addendum’, *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football*, 28 October 1970, Barcode RM00002584.

²³⁸ *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football*, 28 October 1970, Barcode RM00002584. After youth, the following point on the agenda was ‘Women’s football’ and after reviewing a number of reports from national associations, the committee concluded that “at this stage, this was no subject for UEFA. It was decided however, to suggest to the Executive Committee to recommend to the National Associations to keep an eye on the further development of women’s football in their country.”

²³⁹ *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 24 July 1974, Barcode RM00009009. The committee generally met only three times per year: once at the start and finish of the Juniors Tournament and a third time in the months after the event in order to finalize plans for the following year’s competition.

²⁴⁰ *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 6 May 1975, Barcode RM00009009.

²⁴¹ *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 15 July 1975, Barcode RM00009009. The committee decided no longer to refer to the topic as schoolboy football “but rather football under-fifteen years of age”.

level.²⁴² According to the committee minutes in 1976, while fourteen federations governed directly or had an indirect relationship with affiliated schoolboy associations, in the majority (nineteen countries) *le football scolaire* was under autonomous or unaffiliated organisations; virtually all national associations expressed their desire to see UEFA take over schoolboy football at a European level. In response, the Committee for Juniors recommended four things.²⁴³ Firstly, it urged for further regional tournaments like the one organised by the German federation and, secondly, that UEFA should, in so far as financially possible, assist in sponsoring these events. Thirdly, it did not recommend that UEFA should actually organise international competitions at this level; in its final point, it stated that it was up to the national associations to control schoolboy football and integrate the autonomous bodies under their affiliation.

The following year the FFF presented a proposal to the conference of national association presidents and general secretaries in which the eternal internationalists, the French, suggested that UEFA introduce a new competition for national teams at the schoolboy under-fifteen level. The minutes of the Committee for Juniors report that the body was asked for its position in response to the French proposal and Engelbrechtsen – who by this time was now not only president of UEFA’s juniors committee but also a member of FIFA’s new Youth Committee in charge of the under-twenty Youth World Championship – presented his committee’s report on the topic and simply replied that the Committee for Juniors was against such an international tournament.²⁴⁴ In a way this was surprising and not representative of the results of the original questionnaire in which the national associations of Europe strongly favoured the organisation of an international under-fifteen tournament. We are left to wonder if this was the result of a conflict of interest with Engelbrechtsen wearing two hats and perhaps wanting to protect FIFA’s competition and his new role in the world governing body. It would be another three years before UEFA actually stepped on the field of international

²⁴² *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 7 July 1976, Barcode RM00009009.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁴ *Minutes for the UEFA Committee for Youth Football*, 23 November 1977, Barcode RM00009009.

competition for youth other than juniors when it organised its inaugural under-sixteen national team event in 1980.²⁴⁵

Thus, the motor for the internationalisation of youth football in the 1970s, with youth national teams at its summit, was at the national federation level, with the significant impetus from individual clubs and tournament organisers who saw new opportunities for youth across national borders. That all of this occurred outside the direct involvement of the supranational regulators like FIFA and the confederations, reveals the true drivers behind this international push. It was the national associations, clubs and tournaments that laid the groundwork rather than the international federations which, in one sense, could have been better placed to oversee such developments. This was somewhat different from the drivers behind youth national team football on the girls' side some twenty years into the future.

The expanding international youth football scene and fielding of new national teams in other age groups continued over the 1980s with the United States adding three new teams in different age groups for various tours and competitions. Into the 1990s, the panoply of youth national teams was virtually complete at least on the boys' side with teams at most age categories. In the fifteen years between the early 1990s to the mid-late 2000s, the new arrivals on the national youth team scene were the girls. Such that the evolution of youth national teams over time looked much like this.

²⁴⁵ The first competition was over two years and was only changed to a one-year annual event in 1985. See report on the third conference on Youth Football in Vienna (18-22 February 1991), UEFA, *European Youth Football*, Barcode RM00000673, p. 13.

Timeline 1 – Historical evolution of French and American National Youth Football Teams
(notes first recorded apparition of team)²⁴⁶

French cat.	Benjamins	Minimes	Scolaires	Cadets	Juniors				
Year	Age U-12	U-13	U-14	U-15	U-16	U-17	U-18	U-19	U-20
1949	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"> Key: France youth national team USA youth national team </div>							1949 - Boys - Juniors (A1)	
1960s								1960s - Boys Junior Team	
1972				1972 - Boys - 'Scolaires' (B2)					
1976			1976 - Boys - 'Minimes' (ends in 1990)						
1977				1977 - Boys - 'Cadets' (B1)			1977 - Boys - Under-18		1977 - Boys 'National Youth Team'
1978			1978 - Boys Under-14						
1979							1979 - Boys - 'Juniors 1ère année' (A.2)		
1981								1981 - Boys Under-19	
1983						1983 - Boys Under-17			
1985					1985 - Boys - Under-16				
1991								1991 - Girls Under-19	
1992				1992 - Boys Under-15					
1994						1994 - Girls - Under-17			
1997							1997 - Girls - Under-18		
1998	1998 - Boys*				1997 - Girls Under-16		1998 - Girls Under-17		
1999	1999 - Boys*		1999 - Girls Under-14*						
2002								2002 - Girls - Under-19	2002 - Girls Under-20
2003						2003 - Girls Under-17			
2004				2004 - Girls Under-15					
2008					2008 - Girls - Under-16				

* Not true national teams:
 - At U-12 level, these were club teams which competed at the Danone Nations Cup
 - At U-14 level this was a National Development Camp but not a real team per se

When considering this evolution two things stand out: non-continuity and a decrease in age. Firstly, not all teams necessarily continued regularly from their first appearance. For example, despite fielding a fourteen and under team for the 1978 Montaigu tournament, the USA did not manage this age group again until the USSF launched a national development programme for under-fourteen's in 1997 as the basis

²⁴⁶ All above dates are consolidated from Caroline Arnold, Soccer: From neighborhood play to the World Cup, (New York: Franklin Watts, 1991), Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire*, (1955-81); 'Eurofoot Danone Cup and Danone Nations Cup', in Rec.Sport.Soccer Statistics Foundation, <http://www.rsssf.com/tables/danone.html> (accessed 26 June 2009); *New York Times*, 1977-1978; Fédération Française de Football 'Palmarès', in www.fff.fr (accessed 17 January 2008); Robinson, 'The History of Soccer', p. 242; *The Ukrainian Weekly*, 7 March 1964; 'Youth National Teams', <http://www.ussoccer.com/Teams/Youth> (accessed July 30, 2007); United States Youth Soccer Association, *Annual Report 1979-80*; *The Washington Post*, 1992.

for development for both boys and girls.²⁴⁷ Even then, the team was selected not for international competition but to gather together a pool of elite players for this age group in a competitive setting.²⁴⁸ Secondly, the representation of a country's football included a younger and younger selection of ages. After having fielded teams in most age groups down to the under-fourteen level, the final step was the involvement of the *benjamins* of youth football, the under-twelve age category. In this case, sponsorship of the competition came from dairy giant, Danone, though the teams were not actual national teams but clubs. D.C. United was the first American youth team to represent the United States at the 'Danone Nations Cup' in 1999 and finished eleventh out of sixteen teams from all over the globe.²⁴⁹ Indeed, by the turn of the twenty-first century, the face of the youth national team reflected the whole range of youth footballers. The national youth side was as young as thirteen year-old Soony Saad and as old as nineteen year-old Nathalie Jarosz.²⁵⁰

Thus, the decade of the 1970s was the watershed moment for youth national teams and the general internationalisation of the youth game. In a shift away from its social and political focus as an agent for international solidarity and fraternity in post-war Europe, the youth national team phenomenon exploded in the 1970s as a relevant part of the newer focus of rationalised talent development for a professionalised sport. Over the subsequent decades more youth teams filled the age gaps and eventually reached the youngest of the family, the under-twelve *benjamins*. At the same time, the identity of the youth national team was broadened such that, by the beginning of the

²⁴⁷ 'U-14 Girls' National Development ID Camp Kicks off on Monday, July 30', <http://www.ussoccer.com/News/U-14-National-Development-Program/2007/07/U-14-Girls-National-Development-ID-Camp-Kicks-Off-On-Monday-July-30.aspx> (accessed February 18, 2008).

²⁴⁸ 'YOUTH: Sixth-grader called up for U.S. national youth team', in *Soccer America*, 11 November 2005.

²⁴⁹ *The Washington Post*, 10 May 1999. The D.C. United team was coached by Dave Sarachan, the professional team's assistant coach at the time, and stunned the English representative Manchester United in the opener.

²⁵⁰ Soony Saad was part of the US Under-14 pool of players in 2004. He later went to college for one season before signing an MLS contract in 2011 after which he was assigned to Sporting Kansas City. Nathalie Jarosz was selected for the French Under-19 team that won the 2002-03 UEFA European championship. After topping Europe, Jarosz went on to work as a coach at one of the FFF's regional training centres for girls at Liévin. See 'U.S. UNDER-14 BOYS: National Team Roster', *Soccer America*, 23 November 2004; 'Un nouveau statut à défendre', in <http://www.fff.fr/selections/fem19ans/65177.shtml> (accessed November 18, 2010).

twenty-first century, girls' national teams also wore Uncle Sam's red, white and blue and *le bleu, blanc, rouge des Tricolores*.

In order to support such a diverse youth national programme, something had to be different, especially from a financial point of view. If the driver for the early youth national teams of the 1970s and 80s was principally at the national level with tournament organisers and the national federation, the motor for the formation of girls' youth teams in the 1990s and later occurred with the parallel organisation of official international tournaments at the continental and world level. For example, the French under-eighteen team was assembled for UEFA's European championships at this age group.²⁵¹ The involvement of the continental confederation UEFA brought never-seen-before development and investment available for the girls' game.²⁵² The situation was similar in the United States and FIFA's organisation of world competitions. In 2001, Tracy Leone, head coach of the USA Under-19 women, explained that with "FIFA sanctioning that event, all the governing bodies around the world are increasing their funding, and U.S. Soccer is stepping up its funding for the U-19 program" and that the budget for her team would be the second highest of all youth teams including the boys side.²⁵³ These were competitions that did not generate any income after their organisational costs.²⁵⁴ Indeed, at the start of the new millennium, the organisation of youth national teams and competitions was just as much about the overall development of the sport by wealthy national and international federations as the prior era pre-1970 was about the forging of international friendships through the medium of sport.

²⁵¹ The team played one friendly against Switzerland before embarking on the qualifying and final round of the 1997-98 UEFA Under-18 women's championship. Fédération Française de Football, 'Palmarès', p. 27.

²⁵² The late 1990s saw the drastic increase in income for UEFA and the subsequent creation of various investment funds and development programmes. The year 1996 was the first time that UEFA's solidarity contributions totalled more than twenty-thousand swiss francs. By the time that UEFA's re-formatted the Under-18 championship into an Under-19 competition, it had invested three and one-half million swiss francs over two years into a specific fund for the development of the women and girls' game alone. See UEFA, *Financial Report 1996/97* and UEFA, *Financial Report 1999-2000*, *Financial Report 2000-2001*.

²⁵³ *Soccer America*, 25 June 2001.

²⁵⁴ The organisational costs for all UEFA Youth competitions in 2001-02 (CHF 5,274,000) and Women's competitions (CHF 3,867,000) increased over the subsequent years and the 2004-05 budget foresaw expenses over twelve million swiss francs for these events. The FIFA youth women's competitions were even more costly. The organisation of the 2004 Under-19 event and 2003 Under-17 competition totalled over fifteen million swiss francs. UEFA, *Financial Report 2002-2003*, p. 36, and FIFA, *FIFA Financial Report 2004*, p. 75.

Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the themes of talent identification and development, or *la détection et la formation*, as crucial pieces of the efforts by football's organisers to build a bridge between youth and elite. As the roads for the youth and adult segments of the sport forked with reduced and restricted age, independent competition and separate rules and equipment, the map also depicted a contrasting sort of confluence. The conjoining of these two distinct parts of the sport rested on the deliberate linking of youth and elite through the abovementioned mechanisms.

If the focus for the period prior to the 1970s was on identification and *détection*, the accent shifted over that key decade through the opening of professional *centres de formation* in France and the resulting increased opportunity for *aspirants* and *stagiaires*. In addition, over the last quarter of the century the age focus of *la formation* continued to decrease to such an extent that the concept became associated with eight year-olds under the term *préformation*. In America, the single-sport camp became a distinct feature of the otherwise traditional outdoors and ethno-cultural camping landscape. It was at these camps that coaches, sometimes from NASL teams or former international stars themselves, introduced the ideas of "training like the pros" to a younger and younger audience that included a tidal wave of girls. Lastly, in a general climate of internationalisation, a joint effort by clubs, tournament organisers, and federations sowed the seeds of the rise of national youth teams over the last quarter of the century.

Yet what were the fundamental differences between France and America in the manner in which these historical processes occurred? If both countries did witness a similar shift in focus towards a dual model of identification and development, or *detection et formation*, this did not necessarily occur at the same time or pace. Nor did the latter replace the former. Talent identification in France continued after this important decade and followed the trend of decreasing age. For example, the *Concours*

du jeune footballeur, which began in 1929 for *juniors* added a separate younger category for *minimes* (*le plus jeune footballeur*) in the years after the Second World War, before disappearing from the record in the mid-1970s. However, a national skills competition to identify talented youth continued under other names. It appears that the older *Concours* effectively passed the baton to the *jeu adidas* which began at the turn of the 1970s. While the contest included age categories for sixteen and under as well as thirteen and under, the age of participants declined further as the event continued into the following decade and beyond.²⁵⁵ For the 1981 event which was documented in a promotional video jointly produced by the FFF, adidas and Coca-Cola the contest winner, Arnaud Mangini, was from the *pupilles* age group.²⁵⁶ Another ten years later, it was for *poussins* aged eight and nine like Cédric Michelin of Entente Sportive la Forêt.²⁵⁷ In a final twist, the ‘Foot Challenge’, sponsored by the FFF towards the end of the first decade of the new millennium, appears to have raised the age slightly to ten and eleven year-old *benjamins*.²⁵⁸ While the girls side of the game was a fundamental part of Gérard Houllier’s vision of the future of *préformation*, it is unclear from that these skills contests ever really included both sexes beyond two brief attempts in the 1980s.²⁵⁹

In America, talent identification came to the forefront nationally in the mid to late 1970s, a period that coincided with the high point of the NASL. With a professional league desperately seeking young American talent to put on the field as quickly as possible, a national skills contest made sense even if it was run by the USSF

²⁵⁵ *France Football*, 5 January 1971.

²⁵⁶ Arnaud Mangini from an amateur club in the Bourgogne region, AS Chagny, was congratulated by FFF President Sastre when he received his trophy at the Parc des Princes. DABS OBJECTIF 17, *Cadets du Football*, (January 1, 1981; Institut National de l’Audiovisuel). From 23 minutes 42 seconds to 23 minutes 57 seconds. The date given for the video is incorrect as the events took place in the late spring of 1981. Thus, the actual production date was probably later in the summer of 1981.

²⁵⁷ The club’s newsletter proudly listed Cédric Michelin, a *poussin*, among the finalists in the departmental qualifying for the *jeu adidas* in 1991. Entente Sportive la Forêt, *ESF Informations*, n° 60, juin 1991, p. 8.

²⁵⁸ *Le Télégramme*, 14 June 2009.

²⁵⁹ Philippe Leroux, a regional coach and technical director, wrote a text on coaching methodology and cited a “Concours du plus jeune footballeuse” which existed in 1986 and ’87. It is unclear if girls participated in the boys’ *Concours* outside these two editions. See Philippe Leroux, *Football, planification et entraînement*, (Paris: Éditions Amphora, 2006), p. 237. More recently, the results list for the 2009 competition at the departmental and regional league level do not include a single girl’s name among the top forty ranked youth. See District de Football d’Ile et Vilaine, *Résultats Concours Départemental Foot-Challenge des Joueurs 2009* and Ligue de Bretagne de Football, *Résultats des tests – Foot Challenge – 10 juin 2009*.

in partnership with Coca-Cola and had the air of a promotional campaign for the sport rather than a focused talent ID mechanism. As it was presented in local newspapers, the ‘Kick Me’ contest was “open to boys and girls ages 16 and under” and was intended to introduce “youngsters to the fastest growing sport in the United States”.²⁶⁰ There was a direct link with the NASL nonetheless as the list of state winners was submitted to the league’s offices for consolidation and selection for the national finals.²⁶¹ The national finals themselves were routinely held in conjunction with the NASL’s Soccer Bowl.²⁶² Without the big stage of a national professional league, it appears that this national skills contest disappeared in the years between the NASL and MLS.²⁶³

However, once the MLS assumed Division One status from 1996, it continued the use of talent identification mechanisms. Its version of the skills contest was called ‘Dribble, Pass and Shoot’, modelled after the other professional sports youth competitions and which even included an innovative “compete against the pros” segment for the final round.²⁶⁴ In an even more explicit effort to spot precocious professional talent and to reach beyond the suburban middle class, MLS extended another contest, Sueño MLS, to several regions. Initially started as ‘Sueño MLS: Chivas USA Wants You!’ by the Mexican-owned Chivas USA club for the Los Angeles

²⁶⁰ *The Hour*, 22 March 1977. A similar event appears to have existed prior to the Coca-Cola sponsorship as early as 1975 when a young Bruce Murray won the national finals at age nine juggling “a ball 1,079 times without stopping”. Murray would later go on to play on the Olympic and full US National teams and his professional career took him overseas to Luzern, Switzerland, England and Scotland. See *The Morning Record and Journal*, 8 April 1977.

²⁶¹ *The Hour*, 27 May 1977.

²⁶² The 1977 event took place at halftime of the match which saw Pelé end his competitive career as a champion with the New York Cosmos at the Civic Stadium in Portland, Oregon. Beckenbauer, Pelé and Giorgio Chinaglia all met with the winners including fifteen-year-old Steve Kobren. The 1979 edition was scheduled for the Soccer Bowl at Giants Stadium in Newark, New Jersey. *The Washington Post*, 31 August 1977; *Boca Raton News*, 28 June 1979.

²⁶³ Of all the newspapers surveyed for this research, none make any mention to a national skills contest or the ‘Coca-Cola Kick Me’ competition during the period throughout the mid to late 1980s and the mid 1990s.

²⁶⁴ The MLS competition in 2001 took place in Columbus, Ohio the day before the MLS Cup Final. The winners from the girls and boys contest both competed against professionals Clint Mathis and Tim Howard in a special skills contest filmed for kids’ television station Nickelodeon. See *Lawrence Journal-World*, 10 November 2001. Both the NFL and MLB had their own contests in the form of ‘Punt, Pass and Kick’ and ‘Run, Throw and Hit’ that pre-dated the original NASL competition. See *Rome News-Tribune*, 18 May 1978.

area, the competition's first winner, seventeen year-old Jorge Flores eventually signed professionally with the club after the nationally televised skills contest.²⁶⁵

While there was a shift towards development or *formation* in the period from the 1970s onwards, the first theme discussed in this chapter – identification or *détection* as the primary focus prior to the 1970s – did not simply disappear. Quite to the contrary, the earlier mechanism of seeking out future talent through skills contests and curtain raisers marched forward as a relevant aspect of the youth game throughout the last quarter of the century in both America and France albeit with a different pace and focus. Consistent with other areas, the French drove the participant age focus down to younger and younger boys. In America, the skills competitions which overtly included girls ebbed and flowed with the waves of professionalism. Albeit in some ways disparate, mechanisms for talent identification did continue as a part of the youth game.

As for the differences in pace and time for the shift to development and *formation*, once again the presence and absence of elite professionalism had a preponderant role to play. The national training centre, INF Vichy, was founded in 1972 and the many *centres de formation* at the professional clubs shortly thereafter. A professional elite was indeed a motor for this shift. In contrast, the brief window of nationalised professionalism offered by the NASL was probably not long enough to provide the momentum for a similar occurrence nationally across America. But the sport in the United States was not without attempts to build similar training programmes for the pros even if they never managed the same widespread impact or longevity. Indeed, it is precisely these “failed” attempts which are interesting to consider.

One such project was headed by Everett Germain, founder of the successful Annandale Boys' Club soccer programme in Northern Virginia.²⁶⁶ In response to the

²⁶⁵ 'Sueño MLS Past Winners', <http://www.mlssoccer.com/sueno/winners> (accessed April 11, 2011). Flores, who took his mother's name Villafaña in 2011, was regularly selected for the Under-20 USA national team as well as appearing fifty-two times, including twenty-four starts in 2011, for Chivas USA since winning the inaugural Sueño MLS 2007. 'Jorge Villafaña' <http://www.mlssoccer.com/players/jorge-flores> (accessed November 23, 2011).

²⁶⁶ The Annandale club was in many ways a very different profile from the traditionally strong youth clubs which hailed from specific pockets of the country (Philadelphia, St. Louis, Chicago, and the greater New York area) and were often part of ethnic or Catholic organisations. Annandale was the first of this

ultimately failed professional career of his son Kip, Germain Sr. sought a solution for earlier and more intensive football training in order to help American kids turn pro. In 1981 he proposed the “Annandale Soccer Apprenticeship Program”.²⁶⁷ Working with the local community college, Germain sketched a plan for talented youth to study their books four hours a day and train with a ball for three, a system which would allow the boys to pursue a two-year associate degree. Germain Sr. based his programme on British-style apprenticeships but with a strong dual education-sporting focus as he recognized the importance of education in America:

“The community college is perfect. Rather than have them [young players] go off to school and drop out, they can find themselves locally and then they can turn to the four-year colleges...There are a lot of parents who are leery of the program because it's not a conventional education program. We realize in America we can't sacrifice the academics.”²⁶⁸

His long-term hope was that the programme would become sufficiently “economically viable for the NASL to start considering apprenticeship programs” and that one day the NASL would actually finance it.²⁶⁹ Unfortunately for Germain, by the time the programme was up and running for the 1981-82 season, his city of Washington, D.C. no longer had an NASL team and thus his apprentices nowhere to go.²⁷⁰

The marriage of education and professional sport training was also prevalent in France in the *centres de formation* though the picture could not have been more contrasted. French professional clubs, which all had to pursue the conscious

new type of club to win multiple titles in the national junior cup in 1976 and 1982. The club also reached the finals of the Under-16 national cup in 1979 – a team which included 1977 *Boys' Life* poster child, Craig Myers.

²⁶⁷ Kip Germain played on the 1976 Annandale Under-19 national championship team and attended the College of William and Mary and playing soccer under then coach Al Albert. Despite a serious injury in 1977 which forced him to red-shirt for the season, in 1979, he was drafted by the Washington Dips of the NASL at age twenty-two. Two years later he was out of the professional game (after apparently not having appeared once in an official match), a fact not helped by the steady demise of the NASL and the lack of opportunity to continue playing professionally. See the 1978 *Colonial Echo*, (Williamsburg, VA: The College of William and Mary, 1978), pp. 176-7, *The Washington Post*, 9 January 1979, and Al Albert, *William and Mary Men's Soccer*, (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2010), pp. 26, 28, 34.

²⁶⁸ *The Washington Post*, 22 July 1981.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ After initially folding at the close of the 1980 season, the Diplomats were resurrected the following year when the Detroit Express moved to the capital city. The new Diplomats folded once again at the end of the 1981 season. Team America in 1983 was a one-season experiment and the city had no outdoor professional team again until 1988 with the semi-pro American Soccer League.

development of young players, were not regularly threatened by foreclosure at the end of the season like in the NASL. In this context, they could more serenely build development programmes which offered more than a dim hope of turning professional. While the sport in Germain's Washington, D.C. area was in professional hiatus in 1986, French regional television ran a news story on the *centre de formation* at Division One club, A.J. Auxerre. The centre's daily programme was not that dissimilar to Germain's proposal and included three hours of normal study and two to three hours of football training.²⁷¹ The link between the professional club and its development programme was an intimate one and certainly what Germain would have eventually hoped for. A proud Daniel Rolland, the director of the programme, reported that of the thirteen players on the professional team sheet for the prior week's Division 1 match, no less than eleven came from the club's *centre de formation*.²⁷²

Indeed, with a professional league firmly in place, the process towards rationalised development was accelerated. Germain's ideas about a dual study and training programme simply needed the elite professional platform to succeed. It is not a coincidence then that once the United States hosted a successful 1994 World Cup which served as the launching platform for a new major professional league in 1996, what followed suit shortly thereafter was the USSF-sponsored national residency programme for under-seventeen players at Bradenton in 1999. Who ran these programmes? It was not the local boys' and girls' club like Germain's grassroots Annandale organisation, however large and well-managed it was. No, the arrangement for the development of these young players was "patterned after the boarding schools run by major professional teams in Europe and South America".²⁷³

²⁷¹ France Régions 3 Dijon, 'Le centre de formation de l'AJ Auxerre', video archive, (December 16, 1986; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel). From 1 minute 54 seconds to 2 minutes 19 seconds.

²⁷² *Ibid.*, from 0 minutes 34 seconds to 0 minutes 41 seconds. This was unusually high as a ratio for many other clubs during this period. Rolland himself expressed his surprised satisfaction at the success: "Yes it is pleasantly surprising, especially the percentage which is very high for these last two groups [of trainees] since eighty-percent of the professional team comes from this centre. Moreover, these youth are winning matches and in fifth position at the moment...It is a percentage that is very high for a centre in comparison with the national average." From 0 minutes 45 seconds to 1 minute 16 seconds.

²⁷³ *The Washington Post*, 23 January 1999.

Without stable professionalism at the top of the pyramid, a formalised training and development programme was difficult to sustain and would struggle to go beyond the summer camp level. After some ultimately failed attempts in the 1980s which rode the wave of the NASL but went out with the tide, what had existed thanks to continuous professionalism in France was made possible once again by the arrival of national professionalism in the mid-1990s in the United States. Coupled with the internationalisation of the youth game, this made building a bridge from the youth game to the elite a reality. The timing and the pace of the bridging between youth and elite in America and France was certainly different. But by the turn of the millennium in both countries, the sport had marked off the path from child's play to the game as a *métier*.

Concluding thoughts on a transatlantic bridge

This thesis has proposed an extensive transnational comparison of two countries' youth footballing phenomena over a broad period of eighty years. The four themes – the relevance of age as a method of participant separation, the organisation of distinct competition, the sizing down of the game, and the bridging of youth to elite – illustrate some of the major pillars of what constituted youth football throughout the twentieth century. In this final section, the themes of the four chapters are interwoven to summarize the major developments discussed herein. In addition, this conclusion will reflect on some of the wider forces at play that have had an influence on the demarcation of youth football throughout the twentieth century: commercialisation, internationalisation and professionalization.

At its core, this thesis has posited two fundamental arguments in regards to youth football in France and America over the period from c.1920 to c.2000. Firstly, the youth game became its own autonomous sector of the sport and fundamentally distinct from the sport played by adults. This demarcation away from a singular identity of the sport occurred in three ways: the separation of youth from adults according to a measurable quantity, that of age, and the ensuing narrowing of age categories to further split youth themselves; the organisation of competitive places to play reserved for youth; and lastly, by altering the core elements of the sport itself through a scaled down field, smaller ball, shorter match duration and fewer number of players.

The divergence of youth from adult football created a growing gap between the two sectors and the source of the second contention of this thesis: football's organisers contemporaneously orchestrated a series of initiatives intending to bridge this gap. With a growingly distinct youth segment of the sport, football's leaders introduced specific mechanisms to provide clear pathways from the youth game to the elite, whether professional or not. The two constants of this bridging process were talent identification, or *détection*, and talent development, or *formation*, although the accent shifted from the former to the latter over time. How did this occur?

In the decades leading up to World War Two, the structuring of youth football in America included weight along with age, while in France the sport was formulated around age limits as a basis for participation. This distinction on paper, between youth and adult, was translated on the pitch in the form of separate competitions. The administration of these organised contests in schools was fraught with politics of all kinds, sporting, religious and ideological. In France, a centralised governance of the game – in line with the national political context of state *dirigisme* – won out earlier than in America where the fragmented pockets of the sport struggled to establish even standardized age groups (save for the National Junior Cup). Yet strict regulation according to age was not without exceptions, which included playing up, or *surclassement*, or even age cheating. On both French and American pitches, youth games were almost identical to the adult version with some minor reductions in match duration and field dimensions. In this context, the organisers were not blind to promising talent and, consequently, instituted various mechanisms such as *Concours du Jeune Footballeur*, curtain raisers and *parrainage* to identify the little Fontaines and Kopas of tomorrow's ethnic, amateur, professional and even national teams.

In the post-war years the focus turned to organising the sport for younger boys. The school game in France slowly faded after the immediate post-war era. If not quantitatively, *le football scolaire* waned in the shadow of the club in terms of importance.¹ The link between the junior and elite levels was strengthened as the numbers of young players in clubs climbed all while their age dropped in youth sections and *écoles de football* across the country. At the same time, the game in America finally seized the interest of schools from east to west where the sport witnessed a boost in numbers from the late 1960s. Leaving behind football's underground years when ethnic, Catholic and isolated Americanized teams ruled the junior game, the sport took on a new face. These communicates had served as an essential pacemaker for the

¹ Sport participation at school in France did not decrease quantitatively. Rather to the contrary, as explained by Michaël Attali and Jean Saint-Martin, school sport increased more than threefold between 1949 and 1958. Over the same period which saw the 'youth football boom', the total number of *licenciés* in school sport rose from 228,491 (1960) to over 700,000 in the 1970s. By 2006-07, school sport ranked third behind the tennis and football federations at 961,067 youth across all disciplines. See Michaël Attali and Jean Saint-Martin, 'Le sport des scolaires : une institution à la croisée de l'école et du mouvement sportif (1945-2009)', in *Revue juridique et économique du sport*, 91 (juin 2009), pp. 149-65.

continued existence, and arguably contributed to the wider development of the game, until the 1960s and 1970s when the “youth soccer boom” and the NASL translated the game into the American sporting vernacular. Now with a fresh young countenance fit for the American poster boy, football moved into the currents of the cultural mainstream as ‘Soccer Americana’.

At the turn of the 1970s a ‘youth boom’ in numbers exploded from the grassroots and spread across the American Frontier at a pace that exceeded the similar, albeit not exponential, boom that occurred in France. In large part, these league and cup matches resembled the senior game, although the tendency was to use a slightly smaller ball and a field a tad shorter with smaller goals. The final whistle was generally heard well before the full ninety minutes. With a younger talent pool, the talent identification initiatives were extended to feature more juvenile players and, specifically in America, these opportunities began to take place in bigger stadia before real crowds. This intensified the professional connection with these youth in comparison with their French counterparts for whom such experiences were already among the *us et coutumes*.

With the turn of the 1970s, probably the ‘great decade of youth football’ as argued in this thesis, the age ladder extended down once again. These youngsters were quickly placed in competitive spaces of their own while at the same time the conditions of these playing environments changed more drastically. The game itself shrunk: in the 1970s and 1980s, youth specific rules and philosophies sought to guide age-appropriate development and introduced size 3 balls and small-sided play.² With the new youthful debutants came another new population to the game: the young *débutantes*.

Just as the youngest players, boys *and* girls, were being taught a scaled down version of the game, their older brothers (and in some cases sisters) became the first generation to be widely exposed to international youth football. Increased travel created favourable conditions for youth national teams of all age groups in both countries, although the French phased these in more quickly than the Americans and the girls

² By either 1970-71 or 1971-72, the FFF included for the first time the rules for 7-a-side play to be used in the *poussins*, *pupilles* and *minimes* categories. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire*, 1971-72, pp. 280-2.

generally followed the boys. This was part of a new way of detecting and formally training the players of tomorrow. Indeed, the 1970s witnessed a shift in primary focus from talent identification or *détection* to talent development or *formation*. Though this took different forms (*centres de formation* and summer soccer camps were two important examples) and accelerated at different paces in France and America, both targeted younger and younger age groups over the next two decades. Ultimately, by the turn of the twenty-first century, organised youth football included record young age groups of officially registered players and even *pré-débutants* and “little rascals”.³

Establishing chronological borders to the dénouement of any historical timeline always requires a touch of artificiality and it is all the more challenging when dealing with distinct storylines which existed and evolved in their own national contexts. However, there are some signposts that can be planted in the youth football landscape discussed above. This thesis, while structured thematically, has generally followed the same temporal divisions for each of the four major questions and has been roughly divided into three periods covering the interwar years, the post-war era up to the 1970s and from the 1970s to the turn of the millennium. In addition to its two main contentions, this thesis hopes to contribute an initial understanding of the chronological markers for the key shifts within this youth sporting phenomenon and the importance of the 1970s decade as the centre stage for change.

These processes have not occurred in isolation from other key areas of youth society. Indeed, just as the primacy of age stretched the various age markers in the school and working environments, it also began to dominate youth football. The school leaving age was pushed back in several phases from the late nineteenth to the twenty-first centuries at the same time that more regulations appeared on the earliest age at which a youth could work. The process of delaying the entry to the working world paralleled the lengthening of the time spent in school.

³ The Little Rascals Soccer League was an initiative started in 2001 at the Williamsburg Indoor Sports Complex in Virginia “to introduce young children 2-5 years old to the enjoyment of soccer”. Within four years, the Lil’ Kickers programme had been split into different age groups: Sea Turtles (2-3 year-olds), Seals (4 year-olds), Dolphins (5 year-olds) and with the added Tiger Sharks (6 year-olds). See ‘Little Rascals Soccer League’, http://www.thewisc.com/l_rascals.htm (accessed February 5, 2001) and ‘Lil’ Kickers’, <http://thewisc.com/lil-kickers.htm> (accessed February 9, 2005).

In many ways, football has mirrored these social developments by instituting adult-defined limits for where the junior game ends and the senior one begins. Equally, the time spent in youth football has increased to match the longer period of education in school. Football was not the origin of these societal shifts in regards to youth. However, developments in sport, in this case football, have complicated the picture. While reinforcing the trends of a longer period of education and postponing the start of adult work, youth football has also blurred the boundaries of what it means to be junior and what it means to be senior.

Forces external to youth football – changes in the regulation of work and schooling for example – had an important role to play in the shifts described in this thesis. In parallel to trends in those two areas of society, commercialisation, internationalisation, and professionalization pushed and pulled in various ways at the phenomenon of youth football between the 1920s and the turn of the twenty-first century. In examining the youth game across an ocean in two countries there is possibly one further overarching theme to explore. With the three aforementioned forces at work, youth football spanning America and France has gently bent towards a more and more harmonised experience. This harmonisation has not always occurred at the same pace or in an identical way, but the two approaches to this youth sport concatenated, especially since the turn of the 1970s. The remainder of the Conclusion explores this tendency towards harmonisation and forms the final argument of the thesis.

The rising international, commercial and professional forces in youth football, c.1970-c.1980

The tendency for football rules, practices and cultures to harmonise is inherently linked to the game's nature as a transnational phenomenon. As early as the 1920s, the youth game faced the problems of the need for standardisation in Europe across different national contexts. In a regular update of the musings of the FFFA, *L'Écho Sportif d'Oranie* reported on a proposed international *scolaires* fixture between

representative French and Belgian sides. However, the project hit a glitch when it was realised that the age limits in the two countries were not the same for the *scolaires* categories. In response the FFFA fixed an age limit but due to the lack of mutual recognition by the Belgians the match apparently did not take place.⁴

Due to their geographic situation at a perpetual international crossroads, the French faced these issues more quickly and more often than the Americans. Such questions were not necessarily of international relevance to the more isolated American game, although similar debates existed internally across the continent's state boundaries. Even if these questions existed in the early part of the twentieth century, it was only with the development of sport as an international language and linked to globalisation that a true push for harmonisation would become a reality. It is here where our attention turns to the interplay of the three forces that influenced the youth football paradigm in this direction.

In the post-1960s leisure boom, the opportunity was ripe for aspiring multinational corporations to extend their reach into an increasingly consumer-oriented society. The sponsorship of sport had, of course, long been an area where a commercial presence was felt. Following the 1950s and 60s, multinational companies began to replace provincial suppliers.⁵ With the rise in youth participants these companies sought to reach their future consumers. By 1969 the Coupe Nationale des Cadets, a competition for representative teams from the regional leagues, included a sponsor, Perrier, in its official title.⁶ But the bigger market perhaps was appealing not just to a regional select but to youth in clubs all over the country. For the reformatted Championnat National des Cadets in 1977-78 in which thousands of *cadets* played, in

⁴ *L'Écho Sportif d'Oranie*, 3 November 1929. The age limit proposed by the FFFA was eighteen years of age on January 1, 1930.

⁵ In an example of a move from local or national sponsorship of sport to international, Allen, a Parisian-based sporting goods store advertised regularly in the FFF's annual as the major supporter of the organisation with the phrase "Just like the FFF, get your equipment [here]" from the 1950s until the late 1970s. The advertisement was often on the back cover of the FFF's *Annuaire*. By the 1979-80 annual, the local sports distributor from the City of Light no longer shone among the advertisers and the ambitiously global German-based *adidas* had taken over all advertising for shoes, sporting equipment, and clothing. See Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel*, 1979-80, pp. 717-8.

⁶ Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel*, 1969-70, p. 250.

stepped Coca-Cola as the title sponsor.⁷ This was part of a wider sponsorship of a variety of youth football activities under the FFF which covered all equipment and travel costs.⁸

The Atlanta-based drink brand had just begun an international campaign of sports sponsorship which included a 1.2 million dollar pledge to support youth football programmes in America through the USSF.⁹ True to the open market that was American youth sport, various commercial actors pushed and shoved to get a piece of the youth football pie. The ‘Cola Wars’ may have been contested in supermarkets, but they were also played out on the Saturday morning youth football fields. While the USYSA was supported by Coca-Cola (and jointly adidas), the other major sporting organisation, AYSO, had signed up with the eternal rival Pepsi-Cola in sponsorship of a new national tournament, the production of educational material such as films and manuals, and a regular newsletter publication.¹⁰

In parallel to the increased commercial presence, the arrival of an array of youth national teams propelled youth football into an international dimension on a scale not seen before. Yet aside from the nation’s youthful elite, the international exchange for more ordinary youth crossed all sorts of cultural boundaries. It was just a year and a half since the end of the Yom Kippur War when the town of Montaignu, France welcomed a group of boys from Maccabi Tel Aviv who travelled to play in the 1975 tournament under the heavy shadow of a security escort. It was certainly a unique opportunity for the Israeli boys, their opponents and their French hosts to share a

⁷ The competition built on the prior Coupe des Cadets which was only open to professional clubs’ *cadets*, second division amateur clubs and a sprinkling of invite-only amateur teams. In 1977-78, there were 138,519 registered *cadets*. See Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel*, 1977-88, pp. 6, 357.

⁸ FFF President Fernand Sastre explained how the financial support of adidas and Coca-Cola made it possible for all French clubs, from the smallest amateur club to the professional ones, to participate in competitions like the Championnat National des Cadets. *Cadets du Football*, (January 1, 1981; Institut National de l’Audiovisuel). From 14 minutes 0 seconds to 14 minutes 32 seconds. See Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel*, 1977-78, p. 399.

⁹ *New York Times*, 14 May 1976.

¹⁰ AYSO had two other interesting sponsors. The first was Converse, a shoe company which was apparently working on a special licensed AYSO soccer shoe. The other sponsor, the Sunkist Growers corporation, donated bags and produced public service announcements on television. It is reputedly through this sponsorship that the “half-time oranges” in youth soccer subsequently became an inescapable American tradition. *Los Angeles Times*, 23 March 1978.

common experience of the youth game described by one of Maccabi's coaches in this way

“This is the first time our kids have travelled outside the country. They never imagined finding as much friendship around them. In fact, it was the discovery of another world where dreams become wonderful reality. They were really conscious and touched by the sense of fraternity that this tournament radiates.”¹¹

Also in 1975, five teams from suburban Massapequa on New York's Long Island journeyed across the Atlantic to Holland for a comparable international experience, having raised funds for themselves for the trip. The teams attended a summer friendly in the annual Amsterdam tournament featuring Ajax versus Barcelona and then played a number of matches against local youth teams. Floyd Kenyon, the parent who organised the trip for his son's club, explained how they learned a great deal from the overseas experience and presented his perhaps overly optimistic view of how the young Americans matched up with the Dutch:

“Their methods of training were impressive to me. They treat kids according to age and we seem to be using the same methods and equipment for all ages. The field and equipment should grow in size as the boy. I think they learned discipline from us. When it comes to skills, up to the 12-to-14 year category we are equal if not better. When you pass the 14-year group, they are better. It will take 4 to 5 years to catch up at that age.”¹²

Alongside these commercial and international forces, the youth game could also dream of professional glory though the nature of the desired profession differed considerably in America and France. The reorganisation of the elite game in France in the late 1960s meant that youth could seriously entertain the idea of a career in the game. The requirement that all professional players after 1973 had to first complete a period as a *stagiaire* solidified the reality and eligibility for young French players as the primary population base for the future of the professional game as opposed to imported foreign talent.¹³

¹¹ Guy Raffin, *1973...L'Air Pur du Football...1997: Montaigu Mondial Minimes 25^e anniversaire*, (Montaigu: 1997), p. 15. The twelve teams came from all across Europe and even the Eastern block. The final standings were: 1) RC Anderlecht; 2) Bayern Munich; 3) Paris St-Germain; 4) FC Basel; 5) Maccabi Tel Aviv; 6) Eintrach Francfort; 7) FC Nantes; 8) Lodz Varsovie; 9) Ajax Amsterdam; 10) FC Montaigu; 11) Feyenoord Rotterdam; 12) Zoetermeer. *Ibid.*, p. 111.

¹² *New York Times*, 7 September 1975.

¹³ *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 1973-74*, Titre II, Ch. II, Art. 5, p. 13.

While dreams of playing professionally were possible, they were nonetheless restrictive. According to the Charte, both an *aspirant* and the club could demand a *stagiaire* contract at the existing convention's expiration, just as the older *stagiaire* and the club could demand a professional contract at the end of his *stage*.¹⁴ The right to demand a contract was in many ways symbolic, however, since the club could refuse, leaving the player free to sign in another club. If the club offered a contract, the young *aspirant* or *stagiaire* was required to sign at his training club or face a ten year ban on signing professionally anywhere else in France. While there were hopes and dreams, there were no guarantees.

In addition, the implementation of the 1973-74 Charte du Football Professionnel outlined some of the initial opportunities that would forge an important link for the future between the training of youth and compensation. Lanfranchi and Wahl have explained how the new system of *formation* included a standardised training regime for youth aged sixteen to nineteen. The new feature of the system was that in the case that the young aspiring player was not able to succeed at his club, was released but eventually signed somewhere else, the new club was required to compensate the training club.¹⁵ This connection between *formation* and compensation planted a fundamental pillar into the foundations of the modern game in France – and, later, would play a profound role in Europe – and embodied the intimate link between the professional elite and the youth game.

This contrasted with the kind of dreams open to the youth player in America. The passage from semi-professional and 'ethnic soccer' to the short-lived but big-time NASL did not obscure the fact that football as a full-time profession was a rare, and above all imported, existence. With the high and ever increasing cost of a college or university degree, a sport scholarship became a ticket to higher education. This directly benefitted an expanding population of college and university attendees, especially the influx of immigrants who enrolled post-World War Two or who were also recruited

¹⁴ *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 1973-74*, Titre I, Ch. IV, Art. 22, p. 8; and *ibid.*, Titre II, Ch. IV, Art. 20, pp. 20-1.

¹⁵ Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, p. 187.

from abroad.¹⁶ Baptista recounted the situation of schools like the University of Dayton, Ohio where “20 men have come some 57,700 miles to get an education and play soccer”.¹⁷ Others were immigrant DPs like Myron Hura who had the luxury to choose from a variety of scholarship offers in the 1960s to attend college on the basis of his outstanding football skills.¹⁸

These opportunities for using elite college sport as a path to higher education grew significantly across all university sports.¹⁹ This was the parallel elite environment to the ethnic and semi-professional game from the 1960s to the turn of the 1970s. So while the FFF was preparing the final touches on its professional Charte, American colleges such as the University of Alabama were running advertisements for their scholarship offers within the football rich ethnic communities.



Image 24 – A 1973 soccer scholarship advertisement²⁰

¹⁶ Robert Baptista, ‘A History of Intercollegiate Soccer in the United States of America’ (Indiana University: unpublished PhD thesis, 1962), p. 128.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁸ *Ukrainian Weekly*, 18 April 1961. After being selected for William Cox’s International Soccer League ball-boys team and being voted its best junior player in the summer of 1961, Hura finally chose to attend the United States Naval Academy and went on to be a three-time NSCAA All-American and named to the 1964 NCAA All-Tournament team. See *Ukrainian Weekly*, 5 August 1961; United States Naval Academy, 2008 *Navy Mens’ Soccer Media Guide*, p. 33.

¹⁹ In a survey of athletic-based financial scholarships across the NCAA, the average “grants-in-aid expenses” for athletics increased by 100% between 1960 and 1969. See Mitchell H. Raiborn, *Financial Analysis of Intercollegiate Athletics*, (University of Missouri-Columbia, 1970), p. 76.

²⁰ *Ukrainian Weekly*, 20 January 1973.

The fact that the advertisement offered an “opportunity for free education” through a scholarship for “good soccer players” and touted the chance to enter the new medical programme illustrates the type of dream for a junior from an ethnic minority background in an era in which many would have been the first in their family to attend university. The dream of the aspiring youth player in America lay not in a sporting profession as cultivated by the French Charte, but rather in a university education and possible entrance into one of the noble professions, the ticket being sport. In short, sport was a means in both countries but to different ends. In short, sport was a means to a career *in* the game in France but *off* the pitch in America.

Nonetheless, the interplay of commercialisation, internationalisation and professionalization began to create circumstances favouring a common transnational approach to the youth game in the 1970s. One example of the resulting intersection of these growing forces was the Coca-Cola skills contest run under the aegis of the same FIFA development programme which saw the creation of the first Youth World Cup in 1977.²¹ An individual competition for youth which mirrored some of the aspects of the *Concours du Jeune Footballeur*, it was financed by the soda drink company and promoted locally by the national football associations and Coca-Cola marketing offices.²² The 1976 Coca-Cola corporate manual explained the reasoning behind the original initiative:

“One of the keystones of The Coca-Cola Company's marketing success has been the identification of the product Coca-Cola with the youth of the world and their activities. The Company's youth-orientated advertising and promotions pioneered an approach to marketing based on a genuine belief in the social benefit of constructive youth programmes. Every Bottler now has programmes supporting the youth of his community with leisure and recreational activities which would otherwise be unavailable. If recreational activities are an important association for the product Coca-Cola, then on a worldwide basis, football must be the most important association. The Coca-Cola Company chose soccer for

²¹ In a deal brokered by the West Nally agency, the drinks company saw the opportunity to partner with FIFA in the first commercial sponsorship agreement of its kind which provided financial and material support for development programmes to the football federation in exchange for marketing rights and beverage distribution rights at the World Cup, beginning in Argentina 1978. See ‘The Coca-Cola Football Story’, <http://westnally.com/history/coca-cola-football-story> (accessed February 3, 2012).

²² These efforts included full page newspaper advertisements with a cut-out mail-in registration form. See *Wisconsin State Journal*, 17 April 1977.

involvement in the 70's and 80's because it is the most universal sport in the world.”²³

The opportunity for a commercial company to obtain the international reach for their product matched well with FIFA's aim (largely driven by new president João Havelange) to develop the sport across the globe. This relied on youth-targeted initiatives that would have a direct impact on the future professional level of the game world-wide. Along with a Youth World Cup to be sponsored by Coca-Cola and touring educational teams for administration, coaching, refereeing and sports medicine, the project included the FIFA/Coca-Cola Football Skills Competition which was described in this way:

“The Football Skills Competition will be the most universal and important element of Bottler promotion activity based on the Company/FIFA programmes. It will offer direct and varied sales promotion opportunities for Bottlers. The competition has been designed, primarily, as a 'fun activity' for youngsters. They can compete against each other in basic football skills to win recognition and prizes. There will be local contests, national finals and a World Final scheduled at the FIFA World Youth Tournament for the Coca-Cola Cup (or at another major FIFA event in the years when that tournament does not take place). It will be the only FIFA-sanctioned skills competition in the world.

The Coca-Cola Company has entered into an agreement with Adidas, the world's leading manufacturer of sports shoes and other sports equipment (with the famous 'three stripes' brand), for the following reasons: *Adidas have already run this football skills competition in several countries. They have made available this tested and woven contest to the Company and its Bottlers, and will assist in setting up the competition in many countries. * A link with a sporting goods manufacturer is essential for competition prizes and premiums etc. Adidas is a progressive company with a reputation second to none in this field and is a logical choice to fulfil this role. * Adidas has agreed to supply sports equipment as prizes for the Football Skills Competition-at 50% of retail price.”²⁴

Thus, this youth football experience was deliberately designed to be similar for all young players regardless of their origin. The competition was organised globally according to the same standard set of rules, points-scoring structure, and age groups and included five basic skills tests.²⁵ In terms of recognition, the drinks company planned licensed material for the participating youth. Albeit in different languages in order to fit

²³ Coca-Cola Company, *A Guide to the FIFA/Coca-Cola World Football Programmes*, (1976), p. 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-4.

with the appropriate nationalised competition name, even the pins distributed to the kids guaranteed a certain level of globally harmonised youth football experience.



Image 25 - American pin, 'Kick Me' competition



Image 26 - French pin, 'Jeu adidas Coca-Cola'

The skills competition was not just uniformly commercial but also professional and international in terms of the atmosphere. After the local and regional qualifying, the 1977 American national finals were held in conjunction with the NASL Soccer Bowl in Portland, Oregon. The winner in the under-fourteen age group, Joey Scamardi, had the unique experience to rub shoulders with some world stars when Coca-Cola arranged for the winners to meet Pelé, Beckenbauer and Chinaglia of the New York Cosmos.²⁶ The link to the elite game continued during Scamardi's preparation for the international finals in 1978 held during the World Cup in Argentina. In the months prior, the fourteen year-old Texan trained with NASL professional Keith Van Eron of the nearby but short-lived Houston Hurricane before finally placing third in a field of sixteen finalists from some 300,000 worldwide participants.²⁷

The continuation of the event is not entirely clear and somewhat surprisingly, the event did not receive any coverage in the *FIFA Activity Report* for June 1978 to March

²⁶ *The Paris News*, 16 August 1978. Scamardi's mother said of the experience: "I think Pelé hugging Joey made the trip worthwhile for him".

²⁷ At the international finals Scamardi faced competitors from Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile and Holland and finished one point behind the two Argentineans. Van Eron was an American goalkeeper who went on to a lengthy professional career in the indoor game during the 1980s. The Hurricane were the second NASL franchise in Houston (from 1978 to 1980) after the Stars of the 1967 USA and 1968 NASL seasons. See *Sports Illustrated*, 24 July 1978; *Lakeland Ledger*, 26 February 1979.

1980.²⁸ Nonetheless, there was a national competition in the United States in 1978 with the finals planned for the Soccer Bowl at Giants Stadium in New York.²⁹ The French continued to run the event nationally at least through 1981.³⁰ Even if it was short lived, an event such as this provided a new common youth football experience independent of geography. Through a harmonised approach to a youth skills competition, Coca-Cola aimed to expand its market and sprinkle the fairy dust of which professional football dreams were born.

After this crucial decade where youth football was penetrated by commercialisation, upgraded to international travel and enticed by the professional and elite, these forces continued to push the junior game with vigour in the 1980s. Commercial sponsors like Les Fromageries Bel – widely known for La Vache Qui Rit – reached down to the youngest age groups with their inaugural Coupe Nationale des Poussins in 1981. After a publicity campaign that included television spots featuring young boys playing football in one of the brand’s unmistakable round cheese boxes, the competition’s finalists, S.O. Cholet and F.C. Serquigny played a curtain raiser prior to the 1981 French Cup Final.³¹

On the international front, youth football tournaments continued to be some of the unique arenas for cross-cultural exchange spanning the Cold War boundaries of the various East and West political ideologies. Youth from Belgrade, Zagreb and even smaller towns like Nowa Ruda on the Polish-Czechoslovakian border, travelled to France for youth football tournaments and furthered the common experience of sport between the youth of East and West (perhaps trading Panini cards over a refreshing

²⁸ There was, however, lengthy mention to the other Coca-Cola sponsored projects. Fédération Internationale de Football Association, *Rapport concernant la période de juin 1978 à mars 1980*, (Zurich: FIFA, 1980).

²⁹ *Boca Raton News*, 28 June 1979.

³⁰ Arnaud Mancini was possibly the last winner in 1981 when he broke the records for “juggling in movement and shooting” with 9.1 seconds. He featured in the 1981 *Cadets du Football* promotional video documentary in which he is filmed receiving his trophy for first place from FFF President Sastre. Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel*, 1983-84, p. 736; *Cadets du Football*, from 23 minutes 52 seconds to 24 minutes 40 seconds.

³¹ Fédération Française de Football, *Annuaire Officiel*, 1981-82, p. 10; *La Vache qui rit: La coupe de football*, (April 28, 1982; Institut National de l’Audiovisuel), 11 seconds. The Vache Qui Rit sponsorship also included certificates for the participants. See *4e Coupe Nationale de Football à 7 - la vache qui rit*, diploma given to Laurent Lefers, 1984.

Coca-Cola).³² On the American coast of the Atlantic, the youth game also continued to travel abroad for lengthy competitive tours. A group of locally selected players from the Westchester Youth Soccer League, just northeast of New York City, spent twenty-three days of their 1986 summer playing in tournaments in England and Italy.³³ But American youth also hosted teams from abroad in their own tournaments. By 1989, the already-prestigious Dallas Cup was partly financed by eight corporate sponsors and included thirty-seven foreign teams from twenty-four countries. The teams included players from the Soviet Union for the first time, all of whom were hosted by local families.³⁴

The educational stake in the 1980s youth game

While these international and commercial forces were pulling the junior game in a similar direction, a vast transatlantic difference could still be felt on the bridge from youth to elite. Professionalization was indeed a different force in the United States and in France during the 1980s. The choice to attend a French professional club's *centre de formation* was a concrete step on the part of a talented youth player in the direction of a desired professional career in the game. Even if some have argued that the balance of power between the professional club and aspiring youth weighed heavily on the side of the former, some talented youth did have the luxury of multiple clubs beckoning for their young services.³⁵ When sixteen year-old Jean-Michel Ferri was interviewed by regional television in 1985, the future FC Nantes professional and five-time French international explained how he made his choice to come to Nantes.

Reporter: Where are you from?

³² Nowa Ruda played in the Wittelsheim tournament for *cadets*. The Dynamo Zagreb Juniors played and won the 1980 Colomiers tournament. Partizan Belgrade won the 1978 Villefranche/Saône competition for *juniors*. The *cadets* from Red Star Belgrade were perhaps the most successful of all, winning the 1976, 1977, 1978 Feurs tourney and the 1980 Corbie event. Fédération Française de Football, *Guide des Tournois de Jeunes – Saison 1981-82*, pp. 34, 55, 61, 125.

³³ *The New York Times*, 31 August 1986.

³⁴ *The New York Times*, 22 March 1989.

³⁵ Hassen Slimani has argued that over the 1980s and 90s players at *centres de formation* entered into defined sporting hierarchies that were “internal to the footballing space” and that these youth displayed attitudes of deference to club coaches and professionals. See Hassen Slimani ‘La professionnalisation du football français: un modèle de dénégation’ (Université de Nantes: unpublished PhD thesis, 2000), p. 341.

Ferri: From Lyon or l'Ain, from a suburb of Lyon.

R: Well, Lyon is fairly far away from Nantes. What drew you to Nantes since I imagine that you were contacted by other clubs?

F: Uh...first of all, the complex, the environment, and also the atmosphere at the club.

R: Which other clubs contacted you?

F: Sochaux, Monaco and...Nantes.³⁶

Some promising youth like Ferri may then have had some negotiating power with more than one club vying for their talent. Despite some relaxation in the rules, such as a limitation of the ten year ban to seven years (if an *apprenti*, *aspirant*, or *stagiaire* refused to sign the offer from the club), the statutory relationship between the young player and the club remained tilted towards the club.³⁷ Naturally, this flowed from the fact that it was the club (and indirectly the city or municipality in part) which paid the bill for the investment in the youth's future in the pro game.³⁸ On the flipside, the quasi-public status of the French *centres de formation* held these clubs accountable, at least a certain extent, to the state, given their specific status as sporting associations.

This included the club's remit as a dispenser of state-approved education and training off the pitch. The difficulty, of course, lay in the appeal of football over, say, grammar or mathematics for the young player and the fact that going into the 1980s most professionals – the model for the promising *stagiaire* – had little experience of continued education.³⁹ The year after Ferri was recruited to FC Nantes, one *stagiaire* at

³⁶ Télé Pays de Loire, 'Nantes: Centre de Formation du FCN', (October 21, 1985; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel). From 1 minute 8 seconds to 1 minute 34 seconds.

³⁷ *Charte du Football Professionnel Saison 1985-86*, Titre III, Ch. I, Art. 23, p. 38; Titre III, Ch. II, Art. 24; Titre III, Ch. III, Art. 21.

³⁸ In Bourg's study of the budgets for French clubs in the late 1970s he calculated the average percentage for public subsidies across all clubs at 13.5 % with the absolute figure increasing enormously between 1969 and 1979 (from 5,662,372 francs to 30,783,001 francs). Jean-François Bourg, *Salaires, Travail et Emploi dans le football professionnel français*, (Paris: Fédération Française de Football, 1983), pp. 90-1.

³⁹ Lanfranchi and Wahl recount a survey from 1971 that indicated that over 90% of professionals at the time had stopped their educational career before the *baccalauréat* with approximately half attaining an elementary school diploma as their highest degree. This was not all that different from Bourg's later survey which noted that some 80% of professionals had stopped school by age seventeen. See Lanfranchi and Wahl, *Les Footballeurs Professionnels*, p. 202; Bourg, *Salaires, Travail et Emploi*, p. 14.

AJ Auxerre's remarkably successful *centre de formation* explained to France 3 television the hierarchy of priorities in which football took up a large part of each day:

Reporter: Yes, exactly, so in the evening when you have done all that [multiple training sessions and some classes], do you still have the energy to dive into the books?

Youth: Yes it's tough, but you have to do it, so you do it.

R: It is a question of perseverance, but for you is football not too much of a big preoccupation [with respect to studying]?

Y: Well anyways, if I came here, it's for football. Studying is a bit secondary but I do it in parallel just as well.⁴⁰

The difficulty in managing the dual sport-study environment was indeed a challenge for youth at the *centres de formation* where the final objective was the development of professional footballers. As noted by Jacques Terrien in his 1989 dissertation in which he explored the background of professional footballers, "Their [the *stagiaires*'] choice is in response to a profound aspiration which inevitably turns them away from the school system."⁴¹

The impact of professionalization in France contrasted in several ways with America. Firstly, while the marriage of education and sport existed through the university scholarship opportunities mentioned earlier, this did not always follow the same kind of intense recruitment processes which existed in the *centres de formation*. *Boys' Life* poster boy, Craig Meyers, explained that while he did obtain a 'soccer scholarship' to the University of Virginia, this was more the fruit of happenstance than some well-oiled recruitment process. Thanks to spending the summer of 1981 coaching at Middle States Soccer Camp, one of the premier and oldest camps in the region,

⁴⁰ France Régions 3 Dijon, 'Le centre de formation de l'AJ Auxerre', (December 16, 1986; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel). From 1 minute 54 seconds to 2 minutes 19 seconds.

⁴¹ The question of 'school vs. sport' has been the subject of a vast Francophone literature and much of the discourse posits an incompatibility of the two, at least in regards to those pursuing the elite. Jacques Terrien, 'Le métier de footballeur professionnel', (Université de Nantes: unpublished DEA dissertation, 1989), p. 121.

Meyers was spotted by then University of Virginia coach Bruce Arena during the evening staff matches and offered a scholarship to play in Charlottesville.⁴²

The connection between the youth game in its various facets – high school, club, state select teams – was only beginning to build a recruitment network for the elite level, the type of which already existed in France. Beginning in the 1970s, the USYSA had reorganised the finals of the National Junior Cup so that at least the semi-finals, third-place match and final were held over one weekend instead of the old format of matches held independently all over the country.⁴³ The consolidation of the tournament provided scouting opportunities such as those described by the press at the 1976 national finals weekend held at Adelphi University on Long Island, New York at which the final was attended by “more college coaches and scouts than spectators”.⁴⁴ Several weeks later, the regional tournaments for state select teams were similarly scouted by a network of coaches who worked with USA youth national teams coach Walt Chyzowych. Warren Swanson, the Connecticut State ‘A’ Coach explained in the run-up to the Eastern regional finals that “the USSF is using this tournament just for that purpose” and that the four remaining teams included “probably one or two players who deserve a shot [at the youth national team]”.⁴⁵

So by the turn of the 1980s the reality of youth soccer as a ticket to higher education was growing in the minds of high school age players at the higher levels of the youth game. Ricky Wiener, the goalkeeper for the 1985 New York State select team

⁴² Interview with Craig Meyers, 17 September 2011. As it turned out, Meyers had planned to attend another school, Ohio Wesleyan and play Division III college soccer. After a last minute phone call he spent several weeks at the camp coaching youth the summer before starting university. Meyers explained that one initially committed player had declined a scholarship to UVA at the last minute. After Arena had seen Meyers play during the staff matches, the last remaining scholarship was offered to him. The former Annandale soccer star then had to change his plans to attend a different school just a few weeks before the start of the academic year.

⁴³ From the press it would appear that the 1971 competition was the first time that the “final four” was held in one location. St. Louis (Missouri), Baltimore (Maryland), Trenton (New Jersey) and Long Beach (California) were the four finalists. The Seco club from St. Louis managed to win without three starters suspended in the prior day’s semifinal for fighting. *Chicago Tribune*, 31 May 1971.

⁴⁴ *New York Times*, 21 June 1976. There were apparently approximately 700 in total attendance. But even if more than half were college coaches, it meant that several hundred institutions had come to observe the top four youth teams.

⁴⁵ *The Hartford Courant*, 18 July 1976.

and the regional D.Y.A. Rowdies select side, explained how he viewed the all-important “junior year” in preparation for college applications

“Right now I am looking forward to my upcoming year in school. This is a very important year for me in school – in both academics and soccer. I’ve got a B-plus average and with the recognition the Select Team has brought me, I know some college coaches are watching. If everything falls into place I would like to end up at Columbia University, but right now that’s as far as my goals extend.”⁴⁶

One of Wiener’s teammates had a more nuanced approach to the link between sport and school acceptance. Jonathan Morris said

“I’m going to concentrate on my S.A.T.’s [Scholastic Aptitude Test] this year because I really want to go to an Ivy League school. Unlike some of the other guys on the team, I think soccer will only help me get into a school. At New Rochelle [high school] I’m one of the better players on the team, but on the Rowdies [the regional select side] I’m by no means a star.”⁴⁷

For the talented Wiener, sport was his ticket to school, while Morris intended to rely principally on his academic ability and football was only a “help”. Both however, were focused on football at university rather than professionally – which is probably no surprise given the recent dissolution of their local New York Cosmos and the NASL. Thus, the ambition of the talented youth player of sixteen in mid-1980s America aimed to use his sporting ability as a means to higher education while his French contemporary continued in school since his focus was on sport as a professional end.

The second difference from France was in terms of the regulations and bureaucracy surrounding the youth game. Indeed, the complexity and nuances of the relationship between State and sport are nicely captured in the 1984 *loi Avice* which placed sport governing bodies under the ministry of sport with a “mission of public service” all while stating their “total independence”.⁴⁸ This link to the State created a context which was vastly different than the largely unregulated American sports scene. However, while there were no official mechanisms to offer professional contracts through progression from the high school to university game and then to the pros (in the

⁴⁶ *The New York Times*, 4 August 1985.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Article 16 of the *Loi Avice* states that sporting federations administer their activities “in total independence” and that sport governing bodies are placed under the Ministry of Sport with a “mission of public service”. See *Journal Officiel*, loi n° 84-610.

same way that the French *centre de formation* laid out each step from *apprenti* to *stagiaire* to professional), there were regulatory issues that complicated the relationship between the youth and elite levels. Top players were occasionally forced to choose between the elite level, their place in the college game and their participation in the youth one. For example, when the United States Under-20 national youth team struggled in October of 1981 at the World Cup, the controversy centred on the absence of “key members of the American squad [who] stayed behind to play for their colleges”.⁴⁹ The particularity of the academic sporting environment meant that decisions to play football at university did not always follow a professional logic. The following year’s national youth team included four members, all of whom opted to attend “Ivy League colleges instead of such better-known soccer powers as Duke, Virginia, Indiana or the University of Connecticut”.⁵⁰

The tension between the college level and other sectors of the game did not favour clear pathways from youth to elite. In particular, college eligibility was a delicate issue especially during the spring when the university teams’ official season was over but strict participatory rules still applied. The 1985 national junior champions, Columbia Jays from Maryland, were practically decimated by an NCAA rule which forbade any player who participated in spring training from playing in any other competition. Fortunately for the club team, University of North Carolina college coach Anson Dorrance released four key players so that they could play in the National Junior Cup which they consequently won.⁵¹

That top youth players like those from the youth national teams went straight to college and were not of interest to the NASL in its final years illustrates the weak connection between the professional forces and the youth level during this period.⁵² In this hole the college level filled a major role as the natural progression for the American

⁴⁹ *The New York Times*, 11 October 1981. The team included one of Meyer’s Annandale Boys’ Club teammates, John Stollmeyer, a professional later with the Washington Stars of the American Soccer League (III).

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28 September 1982. The four players were Steve Pfeil (Columbia), Lane Kenworthy (Harvard), Paul Khoury (Princeton), and Jeff Duback (Yale).

⁵¹ *The Hartford Courant*, 14 July 1985.

⁵² In 1981 the NASL had lost three teams from the prior season but still fielded a five division, twenty-one team and thirty-two game season. By the time that the Columbia Jays won the national junior title in 1985, the NASL was no longer in existence.

youth player which incidentally reflected the manner in which other sports, football and basketball for example, relied on the university level as feeders to the professional leagues.⁵³ The choice of where to continue a career in the game was just as much about pursuing a college education and one of the final objectives of the youth game was as potential access to a college scholarship.

What was the reason behind this link between youth football and college education? The lack of professional opportunities similar to other sports like American football and basketball (which in any case recruited through the college level) was certainly only one element. The prohibitive cost of higher education for multiple siblings is what one youth player from the late 1980s suggested. Richard Shermer, who incidentally later opted for an alternative and more professional route, recalled how his father introduced his kids to the game and volunteered as the coach on the AYSO teams of the San Francisco Bay area. Reflecting on the situation years later, Shermer considered the materiality of university educational costs.

“I think looking back on it, he [Shermer’s father] couldn’t conceive of a way of putting his four children through college so he wanted to turn them into the best soccer players he could so that we could pay our own way through college through athletic scholarships. So he was their coach. In fact at the AYSO level he took my twin sisters’ team to Australia to travel and compete...At the time I didn’t certainly have this understanding as to what he was doing, but me and my sisters joke about it. In the summertime we were always enrolled in camps. Camps were a big thing here, at Stanford [University] and there was this other soccer academy that was created by this Australian family called the Irelands. So I was always going to soccer camp in the summer. And I am not just talking for a week. I was there like all summer playing soccer, living in a dormitory or in some cases my dad would drop me off in the mornings and pick me up in the afternoons. I don’t know what his thinking was really. I think he saw an opportunity through sport to have his kids kill some time but also try to excel as best as possible.”⁵⁴

The reality of AYSO youth going on to play in college was omnipresent especially in regards to schools like the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Perhaps Shermer’s father had read stories while coaching his daughters about a variety of former AYSO California youth, like Paul Caligiuri who attended UCLA in the mid-

⁵³ Schneiderman, ‘Professional Sport-Involuntary Servitude’, p.76.

⁵⁴ Interview with Richard Shermer, 6 September 2011.

1980s at a time when the programme offered eight scholarships.⁵⁵ Incidentally, Shermer's three sisters left the sport as teenagers and none of them went on to university on the fabled "soccer scholarship".

The difference in funding models was a crucial one in the surrounding context of the relationship between the elite level (whether professional or college) and the youth game. In France, the elite or professional game invested resources for the training and development of future pros all while supplying education as a back-up route for the unsuccessful. The far more expensive cost of higher education in America meant that excellence in youth football could be rewarded, not with professionalism, but with a "free ride" to university. This important distinction was due to various factors such as the structure of the sport in each country, the lack of national continuous outdoor professional football once the NASL folded, and the general trend of increasing educational attainment. Such differences regarding professionalization, while important, did not impede the slow but steady movement of youth football in the same international direction in the 1990s.

Towards international harmonisation in youth football, c.1990-c.2000

If the impact of professionalization on the youth sector had not always been the same in France and the United States over the 1980s, the following decade built on common experiences of what youth football was and continued the baseline of international harmonisation especially in the light of a converging elite. The 1990s were the decade in which both the United States and France hosted a World Cup. America's national team returned to the world's stage participating in its first World Cup since 1950 and became a regular at Italia 90, USA '94 and France 98. In parallel, the professional game on both sides of the Atlantic was fundamentally changed. In America, a real national league was launched for the first time in over a decade while the French faced the 'Bosman revolution'. The youth game was not unaffected by the

⁵⁵ *Los Angeles Times*, 9 September 1986.

ebb and flow of these events. The three aforementioned forces continued to pull the two coasts of transatlantic youth football towards each other so that by the start of the new millennium youth football was a transnational, professionalized and commercialized phenomenon.

Just as the press published the list of selected players for the TEAMS/USA programme of young talent from ages twelve to eighteen chosen to go to Europe for international tours and competition in the summer of 1991, the leadership of the youth game in Europe met for the second UEFA-sponsored international conference on youth football.⁵⁶ The conference in Vienna brought together the senior leadership of UEFA (its President, Treasurer and General Secretary), the federation's thirteen member Youth Committee, and over eighty officials from thirty-five European national associations.⁵⁷ The European nations used the opportunity to exchange knowledge about the various practices in the youth game. Dr. György Szilagyi from Hungary was thus able to consolidate a European-wide report on the different age groups, competitions and organisational structure of the youth game, the number of players per team according to age, pitch size by age and even match duration.⁵⁸ As Europe headed into the post-Maastricht era, these defining elements of the youth game were being compared and contrasted at a truly international level with lessons to be learned from what was considered best-practice in other countries.

One year after the publication of the UEFA report, the French professional game was embroiled in a major match fixing scandal causing public opprobrium.⁵⁹ Only a few weeks after the "VA-OM" corruption case exploded in the spring of 1993, the president of USYSA and later the USSF, Bob Contiguglia, who was possibly unaware of the

⁵⁶ *Palm Beach Post*, 8 February 1991. The TEAMS/USA was a national amateur youth soccer organization associated with the USYSA and the prior year it sent 1,340 players on 98 teams from 30 states to play and travel abroad.

⁵⁷ UEFA, *European Youth Football*, report of Youth Football Working group approved April 22, 1992, pp. 58-9, in UEFA Committee for Juniors, Barcode RM00000673.

⁵⁸ György Szilagyi, 'Structure and organization of youth football', in UEFA, *European Youth Football*, pp. 39-41.

⁵⁹ For an account of the "VA-OM" affair, see Christian Bromberger, *Le match de football: ethnologie d'une passion partisane à Marseille, Naples et Turin*, (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1995), pp. 355-77.

situation in France, discussed the one key missing ingredient for the future of the youth game and its contribution to the elite: an American professional league to call their own.

“We must have a professional league. You are faced with a dilemma. Do you tell 16- and 17-year-olds to go to Europe and play with a professional club and give up their education or go to college and compromise your soccer career?”⁶⁰

The question of college versus professional – Europe being the understood implication – was a difficult one as it implied major life decisions at a young age. In the run up to the 1994 World Cup some American youth responded to Contiguglia’s question by packing their bags for the European game.

The example of senior players from the Olympic or full national teams like John Harkes or Brad Friedel, inspired promising youth to also look overseas for opportunity to make a career in the game.⁶¹ One such young player was Richard Shermer, Jr. from northern California. Born in 1978, Shermer was one of the thousands of youth who learned the game in the widely successful AYSO programme.⁶² Thanks to regular contact with the US men’s national team which played and trained regularly in the area, Shermer made contact with Paul Caligiuri who was a former California AYSO player and had played professionally in Germany. Inspired by West Germany’s victory in 1990, the boy set his mind on learning the game over there. Thanks to contacts through Caligiuri and UCLA coach Sigi Schmid, Shermer’s father arranged a trial with

⁶⁰ *USA Today*, 15 July 1993.

⁶¹ Harkes went abroad to England between 1990 and his 1996 MLS return while Friedel tried his luck in Denmark and Turkey in 1995 and 1996. See John Harkes and Denise Kiernan, *Captain for Life: And Other Temporary Assignments*, (Ann Arbor, MI: Sleeping Bear Press: 1999) and Brad Friedel and Malcolm Maclean, *Thinking outside the box*, (London: Orion Books, 2009).

⁶² Interview with Richard Shermer, 6 September 2011. Of German and French-Canadian lineage, Shermer was unable to trace back to what generation his ancestors arrived in America and explained that “We are pretty much as American as you get”. He stated that his great-grandfather was born in the United States and that one grandfather fought in World War Two as an American. Shermer himself was born on January 10, 1978 and began playing with AYSO teams in 1984 until 1988 when his father started a travel/select team for the Mountain View Los Altos area. His father, who knew very little about coaching the game, sought to place Richard on a team with better players and coaching. After two years Shermer, Jr. was invited to join a primarily all-Hispanic youth immigrant team in Watsonville after forging a bond with some of the players through the Olympic Development Program. The team, Watsonville Chivas, was managed by Tony Morales, a Mexican immigrant who owned and operated a strawberry farm. The boys played in the USYSA affiliate-California Youth Soccer Association, and won back-to-back northern California state championships. Shermer’s father drove him several times per week to Watsonville for training and matches, a distance of fifty-five to sixty miles each way.

Hamburger SV in which the youngster impressed the coaching staff enough to be invited to be in the youth programme

“I told Paul I was interested in coming to Germany to play soccer, and he gave me the address. Then the club and I spoke together. It was decided that I would come to the club for the last part of the summer [August 1993] and start training with the team. After one practice, they asked me if I could play for the club. Of course, I said yes! I’m playing on the youth team, and they’re hoping to turn me into an athlete that will one day be able to play for the pro team. That’s what they try to do.”⁶³

In the northern German port city, Shermer experienced something that was still entirely foreign in America but which European professional clubs had long been in the business of doing: investing in their own youth with the aim of producing professionals. The contrast with the game in the United States could not be more evident for him and years later he noted that the

“whole pyramid of the game is backwards in this country [America], you pay to play, whereas in Europe, while I was playing at HSV, they were giving *me* money under the table for bus money, food money, they were giving me shoes, there were no travel expenses. I wasn’t paying the coaches anything.”⁶⁴

In this connection, Shermer’s dreams at the time were clear: “I definitely want to play pro. And it would be a dream to play for the U.S. national team.”⁶⁵ Unfortunately for him and in spite of continuing to impress during his second year, the combination of injury and being unable to prolong his student visa forced him to return home mid-season by December of 1994.⁶⁶

The desire that burned inside of Shermer was not all that different from his French contemporaries in that he had aspired to become professional and trained in a professional environment as a teenager. This was also the case for the blossoming Thierry Henry at the same time in France. Several months after Shermer returned from

⁶³ *Sports Spectrum*, September 1994, p. 11. After a first year staying with a host family, he then stayed with the club’s youth manager until a spot opened in HSV’s *internat* where other youth players roomed. Most of these other players were on the youth team one age category up from Shermer. These players included youth from Ghana, Yugoslavia, as well as Germans which included some from former East-Berlin. At one point the club had brought in more young players than there were rooms available, so Shermer actually had to sleep in the hallway for a short time. Interview with Richard Shermer.

⁶⁴ Interview with Richard Shermer.

⁶⁵ *Sidekicks*, volume 1, number 2, February/March 1994, p. 51.

⁶⁶ Interview with Richard Shermer.

his second German season, the future Arsenal pro and France international expressed his aspirations while still only seventeen:

“I hope to play in a Division 2 club and play a couple good games to attract the eye of a Division 1 club, you never know. You have to succeed, all I want to do is succeed...to play in Division 1.”⁶⁷

The native of Les Ulis, southwest of Paris, Henry was spotted during the 1991-92 season as a *minime* by a recruiter for AS Monaco who had actually come to observe another player. He was eventually offered a *stagiaire* contract two years later while playing with the national *pré-formation* academy at l’INF Clairefontaine.⁶⁸

In many respects, once Shermer made the transatlantic jump, he and Henry followed similar initial trajectories as sixteen year-olds training at a professional European club, albeit with contrasting outcomes. One main difference lay in the surrounding opportunities to pursue a professional career in the game. The Frenchman played locally within a fifteen kilometre radius all while moving from small village club to larger ones and then to the national training centre, l’INF Clairefontaine, before finally travelling the nine-hundred kilometres to sign with AS Monaco. In contrast, the California boy had to leave his native land where there was no similar professional setting and go abroad, a journey of some *nine-thousand* kilometres. Despite the converging international, commercial and professional forces at play since the 1970s, the surrounding environment in which these opportunities were available was still fundamentally different in 1995 – something evidently clear when juxtaposing Shermer and Henry’s stories.

In playing the elite game on both sides of the Atlantic, Shermer had experienced first-hand that fundamental difference between youth football in America and Europe. In the former, the youth game was a pay-to-play operation in a highly competitive environment that ultimately served as a recruiting ground for the college level and offered the hope, however slim, of financial assistance in going to university, the whole without room for professional aspirations. In the latter, the youth game was largely

⁶⁷ France 3, ‘Le Magazine Olympique: Thierry Henry et le club des Ulis’, (April 29, 1995; Institut National de l’Audiovisuel). From 1 minute 16 seconds to 1 minute 40 seconds.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, from 0 minutes 58 seconds to 1 minute 14 seconds.

funded by the professional level as a type of ‘research and development’ for future playing resources onto which a classroom education was grafted in order to satisfy public accountability. But this context was changing and unfortunately for Shermer, he may have been born just too soon.

American youth football’s shift away from a strictly grassroots approach – which is largely what made it a massive success from the 1960s onwards – is well illustrated by the 1995 AYSO newsletter which featured Shermer. The article recounted the journeys taken by Shermer and two other former players who were seeking professional futures in the game through international experiences in European youth football. All three were quoted on the vast differences in approach across the Atlantic, how the game was “more like a business than a sport”.⁶⁹ The fact that AYSO, the epitome of a grassroots “everyone plays” philosophy, overtly featured its own youth as aspiring professionals exemplifies the changing recognition of professional possibilities and that, by the mid-1990s, the youth game was now bridging to this elite level.⁷⁰ The only missing ingredient was a professional level at home instead of abroad.

The context surrounding young players such as Shermer and Henry was completely revolutionized in 1996 by the Bosman ruling and the arrival of MLS. Over the subsequent decade the elite youth football paradigm moved incontestably into an

⁶⁹ AYSO, *Soccer Now*, Winter 1995. The two other youth were Ian Dyckman and Dominik Przybylski. Dyckman was said to have gone to Sweden to train with OIC in Gothenburg, but it is more likely that this was OIS, or Örgryte IS in Gothenburg, where US international Hugo Perez had played professionally in the early 1990s. Over a three year period, Przybylski trained with Slez in Poland, Chelsea FC, and professional Legia Warsaw. Przybylski’s father was a former professional in Poland. After the experience abroad, Przybylski returned to California for a soccer scholarship at the University of La Verne. Regarding the European-American contrasts Shermer said “It’s more like a business than a sport, and there’s a lot of pressure to win. Playing well on the youth teams can help a player move into the pro ranks”. Dominik contrasted the “everyone plays” picture in southern California with the reality that “[h]ow you do in practice is how you get your starting positions for the games. It’s not that everybody gets to play.” About Sweden, Ian remarked “[t]he training there is really strict. It’s not social. You’re there to train, and then afterward you can go and have fun.”

⁷⁰ A caveat is important here since youth soccer culture in America has cultivated an image about AYSO as entirely focused on participation, fun and that it was not competitive. There is, however, evidence from the press as early as the late 1960s and from the AYSO leadership no less, for a more nuanced reading of the past. Howard Krollfeifer, regional commissioner and treasurer, was quoted in 1968 saying “We are trying to promote better players and a chance for a winning American soccer team for the Olympics.” AYSO director himself, Hans Stierle, said “Don’t be surprised if a number of our graduates make the 1976 U.S. Olympic team.” While there is no doubt about the participatory rules for the organisation, the competitive and elite developmental aspects should not be underestimated. See *Los Angeles Times*, 24 March 1968; *ibid.*, 16 April 1970.

international arena that was fully professionalized and connected to significant commercial and economic realities. That year the youth game in France entered a period of crisis that shook the foundations of the system that had been put in place in the 1970s and had produced the lion's share of professional players since. At the same time in America, youth football began to bask in a renewed professional glow and was thus reborn with a truly elite flavour.

As the Bosman ruling echoed within the stadia of Europe the consequences of the application of Article 48 of the Treaty of Rome extended beyond free agency at the end of contracts and the removal of nationality quotas. It had direct implications on the youth sector as the hopes for the preservation of the transfer system in some form were now inseparably linked to youth development and training.⁷¹ In the month following Advocate General Lenz's ruling members of Europe's football leadership met to discuss the next steps. In the weeks following the decision and after an absence of meetings since October of 1994, the UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football moved quickly to produce and distribute a questionnaire to all national associations on the transfer system and training costs for young players.⁷² The results were astonishing and in many respects foreshadowed the importance of the Bosman ruling in the various countries.

According to the consolidated results which were finalized in the autumn that year, professional clubs in France spent almost five times more on youth development than the European average.⁷³ Indubitably, France, more than any other nation, had the

⁷¹ In Advocate General Lenz's ruling, he admitted that "the aims of maintaining a balance between clubs by preserving a certain degree of equality and uncertainty as to results and of encouraging the recruitment and training of young players must be accepted as legitimate". This was to become an all-important hook on which European football's leadership would build a case for compensation for training of young players as a replacement to the outlawed transfer system. See Case C-415/93, 'Union royale belge des sociétés de football association ASBL v Jean-Marc Bosman, Royal club liégeois SA v Jean-Marc Bosman and others and Union des associations européennes de football (UEFA) v Jean-Marc Bosman', Judgment of the Court of 15 December 1995, European Court reports 1995 Page I-04921.

⁷² UEFA, *Minutes of the UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football*, 26 January 1996, Barcode RM00006143.

⁷³ For 1993, 1994, and 1995, French clubs spent, on average, between CHF 62,889 to CHF 67,376 for the training for one youth player per year. The European average for clubs from Germany, England, Austria, Scotland, Italy, Norway, the Czech Republic, Holland, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and Turkey, was between CHF 13,201 and CHF 13,868. The closest country in terms of annual investment per player was

most to lose in the upcoming years' negotiation with the European Commission on a replacement structure for the international transfer system. Why was this? Simply put, the freedom of movement guaranteed to professional players thanks to Bosman meant that any rules limiting the movement of young players on professional contracts could no longer be enforced. Furthermore, given that the age at which a young player could turn professional was not the same in the different European member states, it would not be long before migration began to occur at the elite youth level. For a country that spent heavily on production of youth but did not offer pro contracts until age twenty, the economics of supply and demand in an open market would soon see richer European clubs bid for a quality, but underpaid, imported youthful product.⁷⁴

While the crisis unfolded in France, the US game applauded the arrival of an elite level not seen since the heyday of the NASL: a national and fully professional division one league. As European football administrators were busy replying to UEFA's questionnaire and calculating the training costs of their youth, the MLS executives were overseeing the recruitment and signing process for the league's own youth. After the initial player signings in 1995, MLS ran an invitation-only combine which preceded the league's inaugural draft in February and the college draft in March of 1996.⁷⁵ With the league in operation, MLS and the USSF planned another major step for youth development.

The programme, called Project-40, was an initiative to sign the best players under age twenty to developmental contracts. In order to compete with the appeal of the

Italy which averaged one-half of the French clubs' spending. See *Récapitulatif des frais de formation en CHF*, in UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football, Barcode RM00006136.

⁷⁴ In order to address some of these discrepancies, various ideas were discussed at the UEFA level. These included a standard European-wide footballer's contract, the creation of a "pool" from which transfer compensation could be paid, a "homegrown players" status. The standard contract was rejected by the European Commission. The "solidarity pool" was in fact created and funded to the amount of over CHF 32.5 million between 1995 and 2001 by deductions from the Champions' League revenues. The pool was unfortunately never implemented after FIFA refused to allow UEFA to regulate transfers by 1997 and it is unclear from the confederation's financials exactly what was done with the investments subsequently. The "homegrown players" idea was perhaps the most creative of all and was finally implemented though only after a decade of negotiation with the European Commission. See UEFA, *Minutes of the UEFA Committee for Non-Amateur and Professional Football*, 1996-1998, Barcodes RM00006137, RM00006143, RM00006140, RM00006140, RM00006142; and UEFA, *Financial Report*, 1995-1996, 1996-1997, 1997-1998, 1998-1999, 1999-2000 and 2000-2001.

⁷⁵ *The New York Times*, 17 October 1995; *Los Angeles Times*, 6 January 1996.

university scholarship and entice high school and college players, the programme was structured so that a player was eligible for an MLS bursary of \$7,500 per year over a maximum of five years should he pursue a university education at some later date.⁷⁶ The youth players, who all earned the league minimum, were not counted against the team's salary cap and by June of 1997, MLS had signed nine players to the programme who were training with their professional team and playing in the lower divisions to gain match experience.⁷⁷ To fund the scholarship programme, the US Soccer Foundation, which managed the surplus from the 1994 World Cup, had made a grant of \$300,000 in April of MLS' second year.⁷⁸

During that 1997 season, the nine initial Project-40 players were settling in to their MLS clubs, but meanwhile in France the crisis precipitated by the Bosman ruling exploded. First in February, then in April, young players at French *centres de formation* slipped out the back door and went abroad to seek their fortunes.⁷⁹ As Anelka, Dabo and Silvestre traded Paris and Rennes respectively for London and Milan, it was a direct hit to French football's investment in its youth and to the nation's pride and joy of over twenty years. Indeed, the French professional game had flaunted its *formation à la française* in the run-up to the 1998 World Cup on home soil. The French league's February newsletter cover article was entitled "La Formation, richesse du football français" and the vast majority of the two page story was dedicated to the various threats and a rhetoric of nurturing and protection.⁸⁰ The trouble for the French, of course, was that the "regulated market" to which they were so accustomed at home had been completely circumvented by the new open European market.

⁷⁶ *NCAA News*, 22 September 1997.

⁷⁷ *Soccer America*, 5 June 1997. The players were Carlos Parra, Juan Sastoque, Tim Sahaydak, Ubusuku Abukusumo, Brian Dunseth, Eric Quill, Joseph 'Joey' DiGiamarino, Nino Da Silva, and Jose Botello.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 10 April 1997. It was the largest of the thirty-four grants awarded that year which totaled 1.9 million dollars. The vast majority were for field construction, improvement or maintenance.

⁷⁹ In February of 1997 Nicolas Anelka, a second year *apprenti* with Paris St-Germain, signed a professional contract with Arsenal in England. Several months later, Ousmane Dabo and Mikaël Silvestre left Rennes for Inter Milan. See France 2, *Affaire Anelka / PSG*, (January 17, 1997; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel); France 3 Paris, *Transfert Anelka*, (February 23, 1997; Institut National de l'Audiovisuel); and *France Football*, n° 2747, 1 décembre 1998.

⁸⁰ Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 4, février 1998, pp. 2-3. The article outlined three dangers: the raiding of French *centres de formation*, the collapse of funding for *la formation*, and foreign investors in French clubs which would neglect training youth for short-term success.

While the examples were initially few, Bosman's door flapped in the wind as a continual reminder of the threat to French football's investment in youth. The weekly *France Football* dedicated ten pages to the crisis in early December 1998. The special dossier entitled "We must save French football" laid some of the blame on "these youth who jump ship" and made an urgent call to FIFA to protect French investments in the game.⁸¹ In parallel, over the coming months the French league's newsletter also regularly featured questions and doubts concerning a variety of aspects of the national training structure.⁸²

The threat to *la formation* extended down the age ladder and began to affect an even younger age group at the *pré-formation* level for example with the departure of fifteen year-old Jeremy Aladière who left l'INF Clairefontaine to sign as an apprentice at Arsenal.⁸³ At stake were the new FIFA transfer regulations which were under discussion. These were subject to approval by the European Commission and would have profound international and professional implications. Just as these events unfolded at the professional end of the youth football spectrum, the junior game continued to be the focus of a surrounding economy.

On the commercial side at this time the grassroots level of the game continued to be an important target for brands such as Coca-Cola, adidas, and Snickers especially at major events such as the 1998 World Cup. In combination with the German sport manufacturer, the soft drink king proposed a whole panoply of activities including flag-bearers, ball-kids, curtain raisers for some one-thousand-six-hundred youth to participate in the France 98 event.⁸⁴ Snickers was not to be outdone and planned to offer fifteen-thousand match tickets through their promotional campaigns aimed at young people from ages thirteen to twenty-four.⁸⁵ The candy bar company, owned by

⁸¹ 'Il faut sauver le football français', in *France Football*, n° 2747, 1 décembre 1998, pp. 3-12. The first article was entitled "Dabo-Silvestre: ces jeunes qui foutent le camp". The second piece was an interview of Pierre Blayau, president of the Rennes club that Dabo and Silvestre left.

⁸² See Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 13, décembre 1998; Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 24, février 2000; Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 25, mars 2000; Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 29, septembre 2000; Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 30, octobre-novembre 2000.

⁸³ Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 22, novembre-décembre 1999, p.2.

⁸⁴ Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 8, juin 1998.

⁸⁵ Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 7, mai 1998. The project included a FIFA Fair Play Flag marathon across seven-thousand kilometres which was to arrive at the Stade de France for the opening

M&M/Mars, had recently launched itself onto the youth scene through a twenty-year multi-million dollar sponsorship of USYSA five years earlier and sponsorship of the 1994 World Cup.⁸⁶

As these companies worked with the organisational leadership of the youth game for grassroots, adidas' major competitor, Nike, signed a sponsorship agreement with the USSF to promote elite player development through a full-time residency training programme. Relying on financial backing of more than \$50 million from the sportswear giant, "[t]he objective", USSF president Rothenberg said, "is to identify and then train players at a younger age, providing the educational and financial support that will get the best players to skip college (even leave high school) to play professionally."⁸⁷ Rothenberg's announcement came on the eve of the 1998 World Cup and this was to support the existing MLS Project-40 by creating a full-time residency programme for the federation's under-seventeen age group and eventually house, train and educate over one-hundred full-time youth.

The former Hamburger SV trainee, Richard Shermer, watched the 1998 world championship from home in San Francisco and it renewed his desire to play at the professional level. He was inspired by the tournament, and Shermer's father offered to pay his son's way to Bradenton, Florida precisely where the new Nike-USSF residency programme was in the works.⁸⁸ He moved cross-country and spent several months training to improve his ankle and fitness. At the Bollettieri Sports Academy which welcomed professional and elite youth athletes in a variety of sports, Shermer participated in a football training programme where he crossed paths with the future elite:

"They had two programs. They had the [Nike-sponsored] national team going on, which unless you are on the national team, you can't really fraternize with these guys. But then they had a program where kids could go to school and play and that was fairly competitive. Now mind you, I am several years older than

match, a nation-wide competition for youth in the host cities, and a "Mini World Cup" for some three-hundred youth from twenty countries world-wide.

⁸⁶ *New York Times*, 1 August 1993; and PR Newswire, 21 July 1993. The company's name was added to the USYSA's national youth championships as the title sponsor.

⁸⁷ *New York Times*, 2 June 1998.

⁸⁸ Interview with Richard Shermer, 6 September 2011.

these guys but I still needed an environment where I could work out and play. So DaMarcus Beasley was part of both programs when he lived there and went to school and finally when the national team came he joined the national team.”⁸⁹

After some time at the Bollettieri academy, Shermer’s ankle was unable to heal and after a third experimental surgery, he

“closed the chapter on soccer...I told myself that it was clear that I would never play competitive soccer and that I needed to make alternative plans. For a kid who had spent so much time with the game, it was extremely...I went through years of depression where I didn’t know what to do with myself.”⁹⁰

In 1999, the Bradenton programme served as a bridge across the parallel worlds of Shermer and Beasley who were born just over four years apart but with a universe in between.⁹¹ The former was part of the last generation born during the ‘youth soccer boom’ who paid his own way to go abroad for a professional career essentially unavailable in his native land since the demise of the NASL. On the next field over was Nike’s multi-million dollar investment into the future of the American pro elite game: the Beasleys, Beckermans, Conveys, Donovans, and Onyewus.⁹² Subsequently, Beasley, who was part of the first Under-17 national team residency programme and with whom Shermer had “rubbed shoulders” in Bradenton, joined Project-40 becoming the youngest player ever to sign an MLS contract (even though he would not officially join an MLS team until the following year).⁹³

In response to D.C. United’s 2000 MLS roster which included no less than eight American players who skipped all or part of college to sign professionally with the

⁸⁹ *Ibid.* Beasley was a resident of the Bollettieri Academy and a member of the USA Under-17 national team.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Beasley was born on May 24, 1982 and Shermer on January 10, 1978.

⁹² The place of the US Under-17 national team is somewhat unique in the American landscape. The team which finished fourth at the 1999 World Cup included DaMarcus Beasley, Kyle Beckerman, Bobby Convey, Landon Donovan, and Oguchi Onyewu. Of the other eighteen players, only two never entered the professional game at all (Gregory Martin and Kellen Kalso) and the remaining sixteen played professionally at various levels for different lengths of time with about a third passing through the college ranks prior to going pro. See ESPN Soccernet, ‘1999 U-17 squad retains special place in U.S. history’, <http://soccernet.espn.go.com/columns/story?id=598473&sec=us&root=us&cc=5739> (accessed December 4, 2008).

⁹³ *Soccer America*, 16 March 1999. In August, Beasley was initially assigned to the LA Galaxy but in a complex arrangement of trades during the 2000 MLS Draft, he was finally picked by Chicago. See *ibid.*, 11 August 1999; *ibid.*, 9 February 2000.

MLS champions, *Soccer America* printed a firm declaration that the professional sector in the United States was finally “taking youth development seriously” even if “it has a long way to go before it can be compared with Nantes, Auxerre, or any of the other youth programs that built France into World Cup champion”.⁹⁴ The four years which separated Shermer from Beasley were in many respects not much. But in the elite youth game, such an age difference can be an eternity and, in this case, it was long enough to witness a paradigm shift in the US youth football environment. Shermer was perhaps born just a bit too soon to be part of a new generation of American players who were professionally developed at home.

Youth football in America, at least at the very top for a select few, was shifting from the traditional pay-to-play structure to the more globalized model of professionally funded player development. This was at the heart of the long-term goal for clubs like D.C. United that wished to reverse the cost structure so that players would not have to pay to play with the club. Indeed, in an interview, the club’s technical director, Dave Kasper, expressed that “this is an investment in the long term future of the game in the USA” and this was just a few years after being labelled by *Soccer America* as taking the youth game seriously.⁹⁵ This was occurring at the same time that the political battle for the transfer system and the central marketing of European football television rights were being negotiated across the Atlantic in Brussels. In spite of itself, the French youth sector was now caught up in complex dealings linked to FIFA’s regulations on the qualification of players and UEFA’s bid for exemption from the application of Article 81 of the European Treaty on anti-competitive practices. To wit, the European youth game was now linked to economic interests that went well beyond the simple financing of development programmes nationally.

As youth training and the pursuit of competitive balance were the two possible exceptions allowed by Lenz in the Bosman case, they became the focus of the political rhetoric. Thus, football’s leadership actively sought every opportunity to exploit this and establish a link between any proposed regulatory mechanism and potential benefits to youth. This was to the surprise and dismay of some in professional football who

⁹⁴ *Soccer America*, 21 February 2000.

⁹⁵ Interview with Dave Kasper, 22 November 2005.

were not interested in using UEFA competition income for youth development. One example was during the negotiations on the new format of the Champions League competition in 1999-2000. UEFA and the major European football clubs and leagues did not necessarily always share the same view. In response to the leagues' surprise at a meeting of the Professional Football Committee in which the leagues expressed their reluctance to use the money exclusively for youth schemes, Gerhard Aigner

“reminded the leagues that they had agreed to the new form of the UEFA Champions' League in full knowledge of the possible consequences...central marketing was a key element here, he continued, and the obligation to use some of the proceeds from the 'solidarity pool' for youth support was unavoidable.”⁹⁶

In a rather hazy conclusion, the committee decided that “the professional leagues/national associations must be able to furnish the necessary evidence at UEFA's request that funds from the solidarity pool have been used as intended.”⁹⁷

As the twentieth century closed the youth footballing sector in France and America had fundamentally changed. In the midst of an extended process of distinction from the adult game, the sport's leadership bridged the two – in the interests of their vision of football's future. No longer limited to the confines of national borders and grassroots programmes for kids, the essence of youth football had changed. By the new millennium it was about developing future professionals in both countries within a highly charged international and political sporting environment where youth football was part of a globalized market. Reflecting the new international order of youth football, several top French coaches (including World Cup winner, Aimé Jacquet, and European Championship winner, Roger Lemerre) were among the special invited speakers for some of the massive coaching conventions in America.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ The professional football leagues were surprised that the confederation required that the “share of the revenue from the UEFA Champions' League destined for the European leagues be used for youth support schemes”. According to Pedro Tomas, the leagues' representative, they had “interpreted the rule to mean that they were free to distribute the monies as they thought fit”. See UEFA, *Minutes for the Professional Football Committee*, 9 March 2000, p. 6, Barcode RM00006134.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Jacquet had spoken at the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) convention in Indianapolis and the USYSA Workshop while Lemerre had been present at least at the NSCAA event. The American coaching audience was especially hungry for all things French in the years when *les Bleus* ruled the international game. The NSCAA convention regularly drew several thousand coaches from all across the country by the turn of the millennium. *Soccer America*, 12 February 2001; *ibid.*, 16 December 2002; NSCAA, *Soccer Journal*, May/June 2003, pp. 33-5. When the two returned home, they were

This open transatlantic exchange symbolized the *basso continuo* of the youth game in the new millennium: a professionalized approach to development, major commercial interests, and a truly international arena. The youth football phenomena in France and America entered the twenty-first century on a converging trajectory where the junior game in one country reflected and influenced its trans-Atlantic neighbour even across an ocean. The epitome of this new paradigm in which the youth sector had established its own separate identity, only to be reconnected to the elite, was teenage phenom Freddy Adu. Born in Ghana, the fourteen year-old, who migrated as a child with his mother to America, became the youngest ever professional athlete in that country and possibly the youngest pro footballer in the modern history of the game. His MLS arrival in 2003 personified the new youth football world order. Journalist Grant Wahl recounted

“‘Had Freddy signed with a European club he would not have been able to play in any sort of club match until he was at least 16, and probably not until he was 18, because of the FIFA restrictions,’ said Motzkin [Adu’s agent]. ‘Taking that path, he could have remained a mythical figure who occasionally appeared and dominated in youth competitions. But instead he’s choosing to show what he’s got right now.’ ‘If Freddy had gone to the superclubs, who were all interested, he wouldn’t be as important to them as he is to us,’ said Gazidis [Deputy Commissioner of MLS]. ‘For us Freddy is a unique and precious jewel.’ Significantly, MLS will retain the sole ownership of Adu’s rights, which figures to produce a mega-windfall for the league if Adu approaches his potential and is ever sold to a European team for a multimillion-dollar transfer fee. (To put things in perspective, Manchester United reportedly paid \$21.1 million this year for 18-year-old Portuguese wunderkind Cristiano Ronaldo.)”⁹⁹

Adu was fourteen and professional, with an agent, but unable to transfer to Europe due to the 2001 approved FIFA rules which forbade the international transfer of minors. At the same time he was seen as the developmental property of MLS who hoped to recoup some of the investment in this “precious jewel” in the international football marketplace. In so many ways, this echoed the rhetoric of youth football from across

undoubtedly relieved by the agreement between the European Commission and football’s leadership on the transfer system. Ligue Nationale du Football, *Infos*, n° 33, mars 2001, pp. 2-4.

⁹⁹ Grant Wahl, ‘MLS signs 14-year-old phenom Adu’, in Sports Illustrated.com, 18 November 2003, http://sportsillustrated.cnn.com/2003/writers/grant_wahl/11/18/adu.mls/ (accessed October 25, 2006).

the ocean where the professional game reached down to the junior level and the youngsters saw sport as an end in itself rather than a means to a university scholarship.

In the face of precocious talent, the primacy of age, albeit the basis for the entire phenomenon of youth football, had on occasion been relegated to secondary importance as some of the aforementioned examples so testify. By the end of the twentieth century, the sustained efforts to bridge the gap between youth and elite had in some sense contradicted the notions of separation by age, distinct competition and the scaled-down version of the sport. As encapsulated so well by Postman in his forward-thinking treatise on *The Disappearance of Childhood* (the revised 1994 version):

“The idea that children’s games are not the business of adults has clearly been rejected by Americans, who are insisting that even at age six, children play their games without spontaneity, under adult supervision, and at an intense level of competition... Why is East Brunswick, New Jersey playing Burlington, Ontario [in an international youth soccer tournament]? What are these children being trained for? The answer to all these questions is that children’s play has become an adult preoccupation, it has become professionalized, it is no longer a world separate from the world of adults.”¹⁰⁰

In many respects this brings the discussion full circle and back to one of the initial questions that inspired this thesis: what is youth – *quid est pueritia* – in the frame of football? Drawing historical meaning from the separation of youth from adults according to age in sport, distinctive competitive spaces, and adapted rules and equipment has, of course, certain limitations. The definitive answer to such a question may lie in an extensive study of the various elements of sport, youth and childhood in their wider social and historical environments. This context, to quote Struna, “is the key...only it can enable us to determine whether a piece of rubber was a ball or a sink stopper”.¹⁰¹ Indeed, the evolving context of youth football hints at the very reality of the historical meaning and interpretation of these questions.

A closing example illustrates this rather well. When the *Spalding Guide* reported on the 1916-17 season of the Spalding Midget Association Football League,

¹⁰⁰ Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), pp. 129-30.

¹⁰¹ Nancy Struna ‘Reframing the Direction of Change in the History of Sport’, in *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, 18 (4) (2001), p.12.

the competition was singled out for being “the first league of this kind” and clearly stated that the league was restricted to midgets, those fifteen and under, while highlighting the league’s best forward, one William MacDonald.¹⁰² A youth league for kids then? What followed in the report published after the close of that season places the term ‘midget’ in a whole different context:

“It may be mentioned here that MacDonald, although he is but sixteen years old, enlisted in the 244th Battalion, ‘Kitchener’s Own’, and is now in France playing a greater game.”¹⁰³

The context of war undoubtedly gave a vastly different meaning to the thousands of young men (or boys?) shipping off to France to fight, some of whom were playing “youth football” just weeks prior. In that contemporary world a fifteen year-old started the season as a midget footballer and finished the year as a sixteen year-old enlisted soldier. Nearly a century later, fourteen year-old Adu started the 2003 season as a youth star and finished it with a professional contract. Age as a quantifiable measure may remain constant through time, but the meaning attributed to it may vary drastically. While the saying generally goes “numbers don’t lie”, they can deceive.

Nonetheless, this thesis has argued that the youth football phenomenon did change between MacDonald and Adu. The rise of an administrative apparatus which registered youth at younger and younger ages, the blossoming of separate youth competitive spaces and the adaptation of the sport to match the size of its continually younger participants together altered the essence of youth football making it distinct from the senior level. At the same time, the sport’s leadership bridged the growing chasm in order to populate its fields of the future. These historical processes were shaped by international, professional and commercial forces that guided the youth game through a sort of harmonization, all of which painted a common image of the youth player. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the youth player who gazed across an ocean could have mistaken the figure on the opposing shore for his, or certainly her, own reflection on the Atlantic.

¹⁰² *Spalding’s Official Soccer Foot Ball Guide 1917-18*, (New York: American Sports Publishing, Co., 1917), p. 95.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

Appendix 1

Consolidated non-exhaustive results for the *Concours du Jeune Footballeur* (1930-1976)

Year	Regional or National event	League affiliated	Age	Year born	Month Day	Place of birth	Youth Category	Rank	Last Name	First name	Club at the time of the Concours
1930	National	Lorraine	17	1912	juillet 8	Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina		1	Nuic	Aimé	(unknown)
1930	National	Nord	17	1912	août 5	Douai (59)		2	Delannoy	?Jacques?	(unknown)
1930	National	Nord	18or19	1911				P	Caron	?Maurice?	(unknown)
1930	National	Lorraine	16or17	1913				P	Travers	?Maurice?	(unknown)
1930	National	Ile de France	17	1913	février 18			P	Bugé	Julien	(unknown)
1930	National	Nord	16or17	1913				P	Barbieux	?Robert?	(unknown)
1930	National	Nord	18	1912	avril 15	Roubaix		P	Beaucourt	?Georges?	(unknown)
1930	National	Ile de France	18	1912	mai 16	Chantilly		P	Aston	?Alfred? Fred	US Chantilly
1930	National	Nord							Demartelaere		(unknown)
1930	National	Nord						P	Guéant		(unknown)
1930	National	Ile de France						P	Dessons		(unknown)
1930	National	Ile de France						P	Boursin		(unknown)
1930	National	Ile de France						P	Léger		(unknown)
1930	National	Ile de France						P	Bertrand	?Pierre?	(unknown)
1930	National	Nord						P	Gouble		(unknown)
1930	National	Ile de France						P	Le Goff		(unknown)
1930	National	Nord	17	1912	juin 15			P	Honoré	?est-ce Hono	(unknown)
1930	National	Nord						P	Hucs		(unknown)
1930	National	Nord						P	Duret		(unknown)
1931	National		18	1913	février 18			1	Bugé	Julien	(unknown)
1932	National	Normandie	18	1914	mars 11	Rouen		1	Antoinette	?Bernard?	(unknown)
1933	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	14	1919	septembre 22		junior	P	Gergotich	?Martial?	AS Brestoise
1933	Régional	Lorraine						1	Capelli		AS Homécourt
1933	National							1	Roussin	?Paul?	(unknown)
1934	National		15	1918	septembre 30	Le Teilleul (50)		1	Prévost	Jean-Marie	(unknown)
1935	National	Nord	16	1918	septembre 30	Le Teilleul (50)		1	Prévost	Jean-Marie	SC Fives
1935	National	Lorraine	18	1916	août 21	Moyeuve (57)		2	Lauer	Jean	Moyeuve
1935	National	Nord						3	Théry		Olympique Lillois
1935	National	Nord-Est						4	Robia		Stade de Reims
1935	National	Ile de France						5	Alleaume		Aulnay
1935	National	Lorraine						6	Capelli		AS Homécourt
1935	National	Lorraine						7	Gusse		Hagondange
1935	National	Nord						8	Violet		Palissy Nord
1935	National	Nord-Est						9	Zerbuleky		Stade de Reims
1935	National	Nord						10	Wyffels		SC Fives
1935	National	LOF - Bretagne						P	Prouff		Stade Rennais
1935	National	LOF - Bretagne						P	Chamu		RC Ancenis
1935	National	LOF - Bretagne						P	Le Lay		Gâs de Morlaix
1935	National	LOF - Bretagne						P	Le Daniel		FC Lorientais
1936	Régional	Sud-Est	17	1918	juin 28			1	Dard	Georges	Olympique de Marseille
1936	Régional	Sud-Est	17	1918	juin 28			4	Dard	Roger	Olympique de Marseille
1936	National	Nord	15or16	1921				1	Vandevelde	?Roger?	Roubaix
1936?	National		18	1918	janvier 13	Rouen		2	Blondel	Maurice	FC Rouen
1937	National	Nord	16or17	1921				1	Vandevelde	?Roger?	Roubaix
1937	National	LOF - Bretagne						2	Lavanant	Yves	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	National	Normandie						3	Leroy		(unknown)
1937	National	Sud-Est						4	Samat		(unknown)
1937	National	Normandie	17	1919	décembre 17	Dieppe		5	Pruvost	?Claude?	(unknown)
1937	National	Nord						6	Vercoutère		(unknown)
1937	National	Nord-Est						7	Gavroy		(unknown)
1937	National	Nord-Est						8	Brault	?Jean?	(unknown)
1937	National	Normandie						9	Boitard		(unknown)
1937	National	Lorraine	15	1922	avril 22	Mulhouse		9	Wagner	?Charles?	(unknown)
1937	National	Nord-Est						11	Bardin	?Marcel?	AS Troyes
1937	National	Nord-Est						12	Natteux		(unknown)
1937	National	Lorraine						13	Pennerath		(unknown)
1937	National	Nord-Est	17	1920	février 10	Orléans		14	Petitfils	?André?	(unknown)
1937	National	Sud-Est						14	Sostegni		(unknown)
1937	National	Nord						16	Barrette		(unknown)
1937	National	Lorraine						17	Toré		(unknown)
1937	National	LOF - Bretagne	15	1922	mars 8	Morlaix		18	Combote	Pierre	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	National	Lorraine						19	Hamel		(unknown)
1937	National	Auvergne						20	Guimiot		(unknown)
1937	Régional	LOF - Bretagne					junior	1	Lavanant	Yves	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	17	1919	septembre 12	Peillac		2	Prouff	Jean	St-Pierre de Nantes
1937	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15	1922	mars 8	Morlaix		3	Combote	Pierre	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	Régional	LOF - Bretagne					junior	4	Paugam	René	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	Régional	LOF - Bretagne					junior	5	Cornillet	Georges	AS Vitreenne
1937	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	16	1920	mai 20	Basse-Indre		6	Le Floch	Joseph	US Basse-Indre
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						1	Prouff	Jean	Saint-Pierre
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						2	Vrignaud		US Basse-Indre
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne	16	1920	mai 20	Basse-Indre	junior	3	Lefloch	Joseph	US Basse-Indre
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						4	Le Guillez		RC Ancenis
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						5	Raoux		SCO Angers
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Negueltuard		SCO Angers
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						7	Denoux		SCO Angers
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						8	Charrier		CS Vihiers
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						9	Houdé		SCO Angers
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						10	Floch		Saint-Pierre
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						11	Ruault		RC Ancenis
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						12	Bigeard		RC Ancenis
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						13	Mahé		SCO Angers
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						14	Charrier		RC Ancenis
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						15	Nédellec		FC Chabossière
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	1	Cornillet	Georges	AS Vitreenne
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	2	Desbois	Pierre	AS Vitreenne
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	3	Croc	Roger	AS Cheminots Rennais
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	4	Level	Yves	La Tour d'Avvergne
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	5	Aguilar	Raymond	AS Cheminots Rennais
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	6	Poulet	Pierre	AS Cheminots Rennais
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	7	Haslé	Roger	La Tour d'Avvergne
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						1	Lavanant	Yves	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						2	Paugam	René	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						3	Cadiou		AS Brestoise
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						4	Combote	Pierre	Gâs de Morlaix
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						5	Le Rest	?Alexis?	AS Brestoise
1937	District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Le Houérou		Stade Lannion

Year	Regional or National event	League affiliated	Age	Year born	Month Day	Place of birth	Youth Category	Rank	Last Name	First name	Club at the time of the Concours
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						1	Le Houérou		Stade Lannion
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						2	Pladec		AS Bretoise
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						3	Piriou		Stade Lannion
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne	17	1919	septembre 22			4	Gergotich	Martial	AS Bretoise
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						5	Briant		Stade Lannion
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Landois		Stade Lannion
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						7	Tallec		Stade Lannion
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						8	Hervé		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						9	Piblec		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						10	Le Bras		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						11	Moutréer		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						12	Guéguen		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						13	Le Gros		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	1	Burnel		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	2	Delétang		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	3	Jublanc		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	4	Poulard		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	1	Davoust		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	2	Vallée	H.	(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	3	Champain		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	4	Bansard		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	5	Séchet		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	6	Prudhomme	?André?	(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					junior	6	Vallée	M.	(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	1	Gautry		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	2	Blanche		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	3	Bruneau		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	4	Quesne		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	4	Fleury		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	5	Lamé		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	5	Perrin		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	5	Folloroux		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	5	Folloroux	J.	(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	6	Aubry		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	7	Gagnant		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	7	Bedouet		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	7	Lottin		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	7	Champron		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	8	Levazeux		(unknown)
1937	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne					minime	9	Legall		(unknown)
1938	National	Nord-Est						1	Bardin	?Marcel?	AS Troyes
1939	National	Sud-Est	17	1921	juillet 25	Marseille		1	Robin	Jean	(unknown)
1939	National	Nord						2	Liénart		(unknown)
1939	National	Nord						3	Zotralski		(unknown)
1939	National	Normandie		1921	juillet 2	Neufchâtel-en-Bray (76)		4	Besse	?René?	(unknown)
1939	National	Normandie						5	Dondu		(unknown)
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						1	Fouquat	François	AS Bretoise
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						2	Combot	Pierre	SCO Angers
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						3	Le Cloirec	André	Stade Pontivyen
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	17	1921	août 27	Montmirail (51)		4	Guérin	Henri	Tour d'Auvergne
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						5	Lefur	Louis	AS Bretoise
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						6	De Saint-Hila	Ernest	Tour d'Auvergne
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						7	Le Rest	Alexis	AS Bretoise
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						8	Cadou	Ferdinand	Stade Pontivyen
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						9	Lhommelmals	Jean	Stade Rennais
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						10	Kergrohenne	Raymond	US Véloce Vannetais
1939	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						11	Prouff	René	Saint-Pierre
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne		1922	mars 8	Morlaix		1	Combot	Pierre	SCO Angers
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						2	Prouff	René	Saint-Pierre
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						3	Nouailles	Michel	RC Ancenis
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						4	Plasson		SCO Angers
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						4	Mahé		SCO Angers
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Laurent		UMP
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Loiseau		Saint-Pierre
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						8	Vermillard		RC Ancenis
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						9	Gilles		SCO Angers
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						10	Jahan		SCO Angers
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						11	Mazeau		Mellinet
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						12	Maurois		RC Ancenis
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						1	De Saint-Hila	Ernest	Tour d'Auvergne
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne	17	1921	août 27	Montmirail (51)		2	Guérin	Henri	Tour d'Auvergne
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						3	Lhommelmals	Jean	Stade Rennais
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						4	Sourdin		Drapeau de Fougères
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						5	Pontais		Drapeau de Fougères
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Guillore		AGL Fougères
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						7	Vieren	Raoul	AGL Fougères
1939	District	LOF - Bretagne						8	Vieren	Robert	Drapeau de Fougères
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						1	Guéry		Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						2	Loiseau		Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						3	Vermillard		RC Ancenis
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						4	Nouailles	Michel	RC Ancenis
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						5	Maurois		RC Ancenis
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Mazeau		Mellinet
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						7	Taghetti		FC Chabossière
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						8	Prouff	René	Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne	18	1920	mai 20	Basse-Indre		9	Le Floch	G.	US Basse-Indre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						10	Ruault		RC Ancenis
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						10	Le Gouic		Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						12	Hardouin		RC Ancenis
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						13	Racois		Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						14	Loyen		FC Chabossière
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						15	Danet		US Basse-Indre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						16	Le Floch	R.	US Basse-Indre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						17	Graveau		SS Battignoles
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						17	Perret		Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						19	Desmars		SS Battignoles
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						20	Teignier		Mellinet
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						21	Martin		FC Chabossière
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						22	Druais		FC Chabossière
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						23	Arenas		SS Battignoles
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne						24	Lopez		FC Chabossière

Year	Regional or National event	League affiliated	Age	Year born	Month Day	Place of birth	Youth Category	Rank	Last Name	First name	Club at the time of the Concours
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							P Melène		SS Battignoles
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							P Guivel		Mellinet
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							P Maguène	M	Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							P Jacotin		Saint-Pierre
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							P Ampio		SS Battignoles
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							1 Mahé		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne		17	1922	mars 8	Morlaix		2 Combot	Pierre	SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							3 Jahan		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							4 Plasson		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							5 Gilles		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							6 Bouldais	Arsène	SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							7 Daverdisse		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							8 Jonchère		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							9 Charrier		CS Vihiers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							10 Landreau		CS Vihiers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne		14	1924	septembre 5	Angers		11 Samzun	René	SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							12 Fusillier		CS Jean-Bouin
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							13 Fouillet		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							14 Bouldait	L.	SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							15 Blouin		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							16 Baiquet		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							17 Gourichon		CS Jean-Bouin
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							18 Cornilleau		SCO Angers
1939	Eliminatoires District	LOF - Bretagne							19 Denis		SCO Angers
1940s	Régional	Nord							1 Ducatez		(unknown)
1941	District	Normandie							1 Dumas		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							2 Noël	Guy	Amateurs Alençonnais
1941	District	Normandie							3 Vallée		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							4 Loinard		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							4 Chable		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							4 Toussaert		(unknown)
1941	District	Normandie							7 Lieveux		Lycée d'Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							8 Vaidis		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							9 Callec		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							10 Girault		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							11 Leurson		Oisseau
1941	District	Normandie							12 Sommier		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							13 Boisard		Mesle-sur-Sarthe
1941	District	Normandie							14 Léger		CS Alençon
1941	District	Normandie							15 Bassavent		St Pateme
1941	District	Normandie							15 Monnier		Oisseau
1942	National	Normandie		17	1925	février 11	Rouen	C1	1 Le Prévost	ou?Claude?	FC Rouen
1943	National	Sud-Ouest		17	1926	avril 20	Bayonne	C1	1 Lacaze	Roger	Aviron Bayonnais
1944	National	Sud-Ouest	16or17		1927	mai 18	Montpellier	C1	1 Martin	?André?	(unknown)
1945	National	LOF - Bretagne							2 Marchalot		AS du Likès
1944/45or46	Régional	Auvergne	16to18	1928	avril 22	Auzat-la-Combelle (63)			1 Antonio	Emile	La Combelle
1944/45or46	National	Auvergne	16to18	1928	avril 22	Auzat-la-Combelle (63)			8 Antonio	Emile	La Combelle
1945	National								1 Nicolas	L.	(unknown)
1946	National	Normandie	16or17	1929	juin 3	Rouen	C2		1 Croquet	?Michel?	(unknown)
1947	Régional	Corse							Ligue Corse	organise pour la première fois avec 50	
1947	National	Lorraine		17	1930	janvier 22		C2	1 Pasik	?Léon?	CS Blénod/Pont-à-Mousson
1948	National			18	1930	février 16		J1	1 Grattarola	Jacques	(unknown)
1948	National		15or16	1932	mai 1	Saint-Jean-de	C1		1 Ducasse	Charles	(unknown)
1948	National								4 Le Falhun		SO Choletais
1948	National								28 Heurté		AS Brestoise
1948	National								36 Kerveillant		Stade Quimpérois
1948	National	LOF - Bretagne							35 Morvan		AS Brestoise
1948or49	National	Midi		1932	décembre 24				P Ferran	Robert	Martres
1948	Régional	LOF - Bretagne							1 Le Falhun		SO Choletais
1948	Régional	LOF - Bretagne							4 Kerveillant		Stade Quimpérois
1948	Régional	LOF - Bretagne							5 Heurté		AS Brestoise
1948	Régional	LOF - Bretagne							6 Morvan		AS Brestoise
1948	Régional	LOF - Bretagne		15	1933	janvier 28	Brest	M2	10 Le Borgne	Jean	AS Brestoise
1949	National	LCO		16	1932	mars 26		C2	1 Saupin	Jean	Gallia(unknown)Angoumoisain?
1949	National	Nord		17	1931	octobre 13		J1	2 Kopaszewski	Raymond	US Noeux-les-Mines
1949	National	Corse							3 Léandre		(unknown)
1949	National	Lorraine		19	1930	janvier 22		J2	4 Pasik	?Léon?	CS Blénod/Pont-à-Mousson
1949	National	Lyonnais							5 Gassmann		CO Roche-la-Molière
1949	National	Sud-Ouest							6 Ferrand		Andemes Sports
1949	National	Centre							6 Habert		AS Centre
1949	National	Ile de France							7 Nostlier		Gaziers de Banlieue
1949	National	Lyonnais		16	1932	novembre 25	Bourg-en-Bre	C2	8 Faivre	Jacques	US pont-de-Vaux
1949	National	Sud-Est		17	1931	septembre 4	Bezons (95)	J1	9 Bonifaci	Antoine	OGC Nice
1949	National	Nord-Est		17	1932	janvier 31	Ay (51)	C2	9 Vincent	?Pierre?	Olympique Rémois
1949	National	Lorraine		16	1932	décembre 3		C2	11 Marchal	?Gilbert?	SAS Épinal
1949	National	Normandie							12 Capton		(unknown)
1949	National	Centre		17	1931	octobre 13	Lion-en-Beau	J1	13 Rousseau	?Rémy?	(unknown)
1949	National	Bourgogne							14 Charles		(unknown)
1949	National	LCO							P Barreau	?Jacques ?Ja	SO Châtellerauld
1949	National	Franche-Comté		17	1932	février 25	Belfort (90)	C2	P Tournier	?Pierre?	?FC Sochaux ou AM Belfort
1949	National	Normandie		14	1934	octobre 8	Deauville (14)	M2	P Perchev	?Michel?	AS Trouville-Deauville
1949	National	Normandie		17	1932	février 5	Trouville (14)	C2	P Perchev	?René?	AS Trouville-Deauville
1949	National	LOF - Bretagne		17	1932	janvier 28	Angers	C2	P Bourigault	?Claude?	SCO Angers
1949	National	LOF - Bretagne		16	1932	décembre 25	Sévérac (44)	C2	P Toupel	?Yves?	TA Rennes
1949	National	Sud-Est	14or15	1934			Avignon	M2	P Vintenor	?Marcel?	Entente Association Sportive Avignonnaise Saint Jean
1950	National	Nord-Est	17or18	1932	mai 10	Reims		J1	1 Le Blond	Michel	Stade de Reims
1950	National	Nord-Est							4 Perou	ou Pérou?	Olympique Rémois
1950	Régional	Sud-Est							1 Rossi	Claude	UAV - Union Athlétique Valettoise
1950	Régional	Corse		17	1933	avril 5		C2	P Filippini	Charles 'Char	CA Bastiais
1950	Régional	Corse		16	1933	septembre 12	Bastia	C2	P Bernacchi	Jean	SC Bastia
1950	District	Franche-Comté							1 Koos	Jean	Vesoul
1950	District	Franche-Comté							2 Levernier		Luxeuil
1950	District	Franche-Comté							3 Masson		St Loup
1950	District	Franche-Comté							4 Pey		Luxeuil
1950	District	Franche-Comté							5 Koos		Vesoul
1950	District	Franche-Comté							6 Marchal		Fougerolles
1950	District	Franche-Comté							7 Mourey		Vesoul
1950	District	Franche-Comté							8 Aubry		Lure
1950	District	Franche-Comté							9 Favret		Luxeuil
1950	District	Franche-Comté							10 Juif		Juif St Sauveur

Year	Regional or National event	League affiliated	Age	Year born	Month Day	Place of birth	Youth Category	Rank	Last Name	First name	Club at the time of the Concours
1951	National	LOF - Bretagne	18	1933	mars 19	Trélazé (49)	J1	1	Roperch	?René?	(unknown)
1951	Régional	Corse	18	1933	avril 5		J1	1	Filippini	Charles Char	CA Bastiais
1951	Régional	Corse						P	Santucci	Noel	CA Bastiais
1951	Régional	Corse	17	1933	septembre 12	Bastia	J1	P	Bernacchi	Jean	SC Bastia
1952	National	Midi	16	1936	janvier 24	Milhars (81)	C1	1	Bourdoncle	Serge	SO Châtellerault
1952	National	LOF - Bretagne						2	Legnard		(unknown)
1952	National	Centre						3	Lemarié		(unknown)
1952	National	LCO						4	Boisdé		(unknown)
1952	National	Nord						5	Seynaeve		(unknown)
1952	National	Lorraine						6	Guerra		(unknown)
1952	National	Normandie						7	Blabus		(unknown)
1952	National	Midi	15	1936	juin 16	Castres (81)	C1	8	Bernard	?Jacques?	(unknown)
1952	National	Nord						9	Huet		(unknown)
1952	National	Ile de France						10	Pellicia		(unknown)
1952	National	Centre	17	1935	janvier 30	Varennes-en-	C2	11	Jublout	?Yvon?	(unknown)
1952	National	Lyonnais						12	Ciambellotti		(unknown)
1952	National	Lorraine						13	Entringer		(unknown)
1952	National	LCO	13	1938	juillet 1	Mirebeau (86)	M1	14	Sabourault	?James?	SO Châtellerault
1952	National	Bourgogne						15	Dumusois		(unknown)
1952/53or54	National	Alger	16	1936	février 24	El Biar	C1	P	Maouche	Mohamed	ASSE - Association Sportive St-Eugène
1952	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						5	Auffret		AS Bretoise
1952	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						7	Le Goff		AS Bretoise
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	De Haro	Jean-Paul	(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Coll		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Segura		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Jimenez		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Bohrer		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Ouldali		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Bagdad		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Chouzenoux		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Lubrano		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Hamadi		(unknown)
1952	Régional	Oranie						P	Madrid		(unknown)
1953	National	Midi	16	1936	juin 16	Castres (81)	C2	1	Bernard	?Jacques?	(unknown)
1953	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						1	Le Goff		AS Bretoise
1954	National	Sud-Est	16	1937	juin 5	Floirac (33)	C2	1	Gouttes	?Guy?	(unknown)
1955	National	LCO	16	1938	juillet 1	Mirebeau (86)	C2	1	Sabourault	James	SO Châtellerault
1955	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	16or17	1938	mai 21	Brest	C2	8	Marzin	Georges	AS Bretoise
1956	National							1	Mela	Emile	(unknown)
1956	National	Lorraine	15	1941	février 22	Yutz	M2	12	Ehrhardt	Roland	Thionville
1956	National	Sud-Est						P	Rossi	Claude	UAV - Union Athlétique Valettoise
1956	Régional	Sud-Est						1	Raynard		Stade Lunaret
1956	Régional	Sud-Ouest						1	Lastrade	Nicolas	(unknown)
1956	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15	1941	janvier 2	Brest	M2	4	Rolland		AS Bretoise
1956	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	17	1939	février 27	Brest	C2	6	Craveur	Louis 'Loul'	AS Bretoise
1956	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	17	1938	octobre 18	Colmar	J1	2	Thénot	?Jean?	AS Bretoise
1956	Régional		17	1941	février 22	Yutz	M2	2	Roux	Guy	AJ Auxerre
1956	Régional	Lorraine	15	1941	février 22	Yutz	M2	1	Ehrhardt	Roland	Thionville
1957	National	Oranie	17	1940	février 6	Oran	C2	1	Sparza	Guy	JSSE - Jeunesse Sportive Saint Eugène
1957	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	16	1941	janvier 2	Brest	C1	3	Craveur	Louis 'Loul'	AS Bretoise
1957	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						7	Diner		AS Bretoise
1957	Régional	Oranie	16or17	1940	mai 14	Oran	C2	1ou2	Mira	Jean-Pierre	JSSE - Jeunesse Sportive Saint Eugène
1957	Régional	Oranie	17	1940	février 6	Oran	C2	1ou2	Sparza	Guy	JSSE - Jeunesse Sportive Saint Eugène
1958	National	Normandie	17	1941	janvier 2	Cambrai	C2	1	Destrumelle	Jean-Pierre	FC Rouen
1958	National	Normandie	17					2	Ducourtieux	Jean-Paul	FC Dieppe
1958	National	LOF - Bretagne	17	1941	janvier 2	Brest	C2	5	Craveur	Louis 'Loul'	AS Bretoise
1958	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	17	1941	janvier 2	Brest	C2	2	Craveur	Louis 'Loul'	AS Bretoise
1958	Régional	Oranie	16	1942	mars 29	Sidi bel Abbé	C1	1	Lacasa	Jean-Paul	SCBA - Sporting de Sidi-Bel-Abbès
1958	Régional	Oranie						2	Rivera		SCBA - Sporting de Sidi-Bel-Abbès
1958	Régional	Oranie						3	Garcia		FCO - FC Oranais
1958	Régional	Oranie						4	Torres	?Daniel?	JSSE - Jeunesse Sportive Saint Eugène
1958	Régional	Oranie						5	Ruiz		FCO - FC Oranais
1959	National							1	Ridel		(unknown)
1959	Régional	Oranie	17	1942	mars 29	Sidi bel Abbé	C2	1	Lacasa	Jean-Paul	SCBA - Sporting de Sidi-Bel-Abbès
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne	16or17	1942			C2	1	Le Gall	André	AS Bretoise
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						2	Jézégou		PL Lambézellec
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne	15to17				cadet	3	Guennou		AS Bretoise
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						4	Cren		AS Bretoise
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne	15to17				cadet	5	Larvor	?Guy?	AS Bretoise
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						6	Joncour		PL Lambézellec
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne	14to16				C1ouM2	7	Sciou		AS Bretoise
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						8	Léocat		PL Lambézellec
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						9	Prigent		E St-L
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						10	Ily		Stade Relecquois
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						11	Boucher		LSP
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						12	Uguen		PL Lambézellec
1959	District	LOF - Bretagne						13	Roudat		Stade Relecquois
1960	National	Bourgogne	18	1942	février 9	Clamecy (58)	J1	1	Guinot	?Jean-Pierre?	?club?
1960	National	Lorraine						2	Koehl		
1960	National	LCO						3	Nau		
1960	National	Nord-Est						4	Burbet		
1960	National	Lorraine						5	Gricar		
1960	Régional	Alger						3	Vichot	Georges	FC Blida
1960	Régional	Oranie						1	Gabarro		(unknown)
1960	Régional	Oranie						2	Sanchez	?Gabriel?	FCO - FC Oranais
1960	Régional	Oranie						3	Laurel		FCO - FC Oranais
1961	National	Sud-Est	16	1944	décembre 29	Montpellier	C2	1	Grannier	William	Stade Lunaret
1961	Régional	Oranie						1	Grattion ou Gration		CALO -(unknown)Athlétique Liberté Oran
1961	Régional	Oranie						2	Garcia		CALO -(unknown)Athlétique Liberté Oran
1961	Régional	Lyonnais						1	Barde	Claude	(unknown)
1961	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15to17				cadet	P	Gargadennec		AS Bretoise
1961	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15to17				cadet	P	Chardonnet		AS Bretoise
1962	National	Nord-Est	15or16	1945	août 18		cadet	1	Herbet	Yves	Vic-sur-Aisne
1962	National	Nord-Est						2	Sibilotte		ECA Chaumont
1962	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15to17				cadet	8	Craveur	Jean-Jacques	AS Bretoise
1963	National	Normandie						1	Bobée		(unknown)
1963	National	Sud-Est						2	Scotti		
1963	National	Alsace						3	Dreyfus		
1963	National	Paris						4	Tardivon		
1963	National	Normandie						5	Medot		
1963	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15to17				cadet	3	Abaléa	Gérard	AS Bretoise
1963	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15to17				cadet	5	Colin	G.	AS Bretoise

Year	Regional or National event	League affiliated	Age	Year born	Month Day	Place of birth	Youth Category	Rank	Last Name	First name	Club at the time of the Concours
1964	National	Sud-Ouest	16	1947	septembre 8	Bizanos (64)	C2	1	Larqué	Jean-Michel	Jeanne d'Arc le Béarn de Pau
1964	National	Paris						2	Goupil		
1964	National	Sud-Est						3	Marres?	Maré?Pierre?	
1964	National	Nord						4	Goudal		
1964	National	Lyonnais						5	Garnier		
1964	National	Ile de France	15	1949	janvier 7	Epinay-sur-S	M2	6	Chazottes	Claude	ASM Romainville
1964	Régional	Ile de France	15	1949	janvier 7	Epinay-sur-S	M2	1	Chazottes	Claude	ASM Romainville
1964	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	14	1949	juin 17	Châteauneuf-	M2	P	Kéruzoré	Raymond	US Chateauneuvienne
1964	Régional	Sud-Est						1	Marès	Pierre	Stade Lunaret
1965	National	Nord	16	1948	novembre 1	Lille	C2	1	Dubreucq	?Serge?	?LOSC
1965	National	Nord						2	Goudal		
1965	National	Nord-Est	17	1948	janvier 20	St. Malo	C2	3	Duguépéroux	Jacky	US Chantilly
1965	National	LOF - Bretagne						4	Elic		
1965	National	LOF - Bretagne						5	Potiron		
1965	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	13to15				minime	2	Elies	Augustin	AS Brestoise
1965	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	15	1949	juin 17	Châteauneuf-	C1	P	Kéruzoré	Raymond	US Chateauneuvienne
1966	National	Nord-Est	17	1949	avril 4	Darnblain (88)	C2	1	Thiébaud	Gilles	ECA Chaumont
1966	National	Paris						2	Cursi		
1966	National	Lorraine						3	Brosse		
1966	National	LCO						4	Chateaufeux		
1966	National	Alsace						5	Plyemding		
1967	National	Auvergne	16	1950	décembre 25	Casablanca	C2	1	Chiesa	Serge	AS Montferrand
1967	National	Auvergne	16	1950	décembre 25	Casablanca	C2	1	Chiesa	Serge	AS Montferrand
1967	National	LOF - Bretagne						2	Barrais		
1967	National	Sud-Est						3	Bombois		
1967	National	Paris						4	Joveniaux		
1967	National	Normandie						5	Outin		
1967	Régional	Picardie	16or17	1950			C2	P	Besson	Jacques	US Ribécourt
1968	National	Sud-Ouest	16	1951	décembre 29	Bayonne	C2	1	Sarramagna	Christian	Avron Bayonnais
1968	National		16	1952	avril 25	Delle (90)	C1	top20	Santini	Jacques	Feschés-le-Châtel
1968	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	16to18				J1ouC2	4	Boniou	Bernard	AS Brestoise
1969	National	Sud-Est	16	1952	octobre 30	Montpellier	C2	1	Dupraz	Michel	(unknown)
1969	National	Sud-Est	15	1953	décembre 2	La Ciotat (13)	C1	2	Rossi	Bernard	(unknown)
1969	National	Sud-Ouest	16	1952	septembre 2	Langoiran (33)	C2	3	Girese	Alain	Girondins de Bordeaux
1969	National	LCO	15	1953	juillet 28	Les Aubiers (C1	8	Rampillon	Gilles	FC Bressuire
1969	National	LOF - Bretagne					cadet	37	Toullec	Jean	AS Brestoise
1969	National	LOF - Bretagne					cadet	46	Charreteur	Hervé	AS Brestoise
1969	National	Sud-Ouest						P	Péjot		(unknown)
1969	National	Sud-Ouest						P	Biais		(unknown)
1969	National	Sud-Ouest	16	1952	août 11		C2	P	Caron		(unknown)
1969	Régional	Sud-Ouest	16	1952	septembre 2	Langoiran (33)	C2	1	Girese	Alain	Girondins de Bordeaux
1969	Régional	LOF - Bretagne					cadet	3	Charreteur	Hervé	AS Brestoise
1969	Régional	LOF - Bretagne					cadet	5	Toullec	Jean	AS Brestoise
1970	National	Nord	16	1954	janvier 4	Valenciennes	C1	1	Desmenez	Gabriel	VAFC - Valenciennes
1970	National	Lyonnais						2	Marchetti		(unknown)
1970	National	Lorraine	16	1954	mars 27	Saint-Amé (8)	C1	3	Philippe	Patrick	AS Vagny
1970	National	Normandie						4	Jacob		(unknown)
1970	National	Midi	16	1954	avril 4	Toulouse	C1	5	Feuillerat	Michel	(unknown)
1970	National	LOF - Bretagne	16	1954	janvier 30	Dinard	C1	6	Cohuet	?Jean-Paul?	(unknown)
1970	National	Midi	15	1954	novembre 21	Castres (81)	C1	7	Gobert	?Serge?	(unknown)
1970	National	Lyonnais						8	Aubert		(unknown)
1970	National	Nord						9	Korus		(unknown)
1970	National	Sud-Ouest						10	Raoul		(unknown)
1970?	National	LCO	15	1955	avril 21	Saintes (17)	M2	20	Sallat	Jean-Pierre	(unknown)
1970	Régional	Lyonnais						1	Pedrini		CASCOL
1971	National	Sud-Ouest	15	1956	janvier 19	Séguier-Pau (M2	1	Vésir	Dominique	Jeanne d'Arc le Béarn de Pau
1971	National	Nord						2	Montchier	Hervé	RC Calais
1971	National	LCO	16	1955	mars 12	Cognac (16)	C1	3	Denis	Lucien	Angoulême
1971	National	Corse	15	1955	septembre 17		C1	4	Santucci	Alain	SC Bastia
1971?	National	LCO	16	1955	avril 21	Saintes (17)	C1	5	Sallat	Jean-Pierre	(unknown)
1971	National	LOF - Bretagne	16	1955	janvier 31	Brest	C1	16	Jousseaume	Jacques	AS Brestoise
1971?	National	LCO	16	1955	janvier 14		C1	22	Rocheteau	Dominique	ES La Rochelle
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	14	1956	octobre 17		M2	1	Stéphan	?Guy?	Louannec
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						2	Rabin		Stade Lannion
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						3	Girard		US St-Malo
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						4	Eléouet	Philippe	AS Brestoise
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						5	Le Brun		Stade Quimpérois
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	16	1955	janvier 31	Brest	C1	6	Jousseaume	Jacques	AS Brestoise
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						23	Quivouron		AS Brestoise
1971?	Régional	LCO	15	1956		St. Maurice a	cadet	7	Massé	Jean-Jacques	Gençay-St. Maurice
1972	National	Nord-Est	15	1957	mai 17	Valenciennes	C1	1	Desmenez	Léon	Stade de Reims
1972	National	Nord-Est	15	1956	août 5	Sedan	C1	2	Brény	Jean-Pierre	CS Sedan
1973	National	Corse						1	Battesti	Nanou	(unknown)
1974	National							1	Rifflet		(unknown)
1974	Régional	Nord-Est	14	1959	août 12	Gray (70)	M2	1	Janniot	Patrick	Sports Réunis Neuilly l'Evêque
1974	Régional	Lyonnais					cadet	2	Ovze		CASCOL
1975	National	Lyonnais	15	1959	août 29	Montpellier	C1	1	Lakière	?Jean-Louis?	(unknown)
1975	National	Midi						2	Corominas		(unknown)
1975	National	Sud-Est	15	1959	octobre 17	Marseille	C1	3	Capodanno	?Denis?	(unknown)
1975	National	LOF - Bretagne	15	1960	mars 6	Le Mans	C1	4	Savignard	?Thierry?	(unknown)
1975	National	Midi	16	1959	janvier 10	Cazères (31)	C2	5	Ferratge	Jean-Marc	(unknown)
1975	National	Picardie	15	1959	août 5		C1	6ou7	Fescourt	Alain	US Ribécourt
1975	Régional	Picardie	15	1959	août 5		C1	1	Fescourt	Alain	US Ribécourt
1975	Régional	Picardie						2	Vautrin	Thierry	US Chantilly
1975	Régional	Picardie						3	Chauveu	Franck	Montataire
1975	Régional	Picardie						4	Terras	Pascal	Creil
1975	Régional	Picardie						5	Closier	Patrick	US Noyon
1976	National	Sud-Est	14	1961	décembre 27		M2	1	Roussey	Laurent	AS Mazargues
1976	National	Midi	14	1961	septembre 2	Castres (81)	M2	20	Puel	Claude	Etoile Sportive Castroise

Appendix 2

Consolidated non-exhaustive results for the *Concours du Plus Jeune Footballeur* (1949-1979) and some results for the *jeu adidas* (1968-c.1993)

Year	Regional or National event	League affiliated	Age	Year born	Month	Day	Place of birth	Youth Category	Rank	Last Name	First name	Club at the time of the Concours
1949	Régional	Sud-Est							1	Maïe		Stade Lunaret
1953or54	Régional	LOF - Bretagne		1939	décembre	20		minime	1	Eon	Daniel	Sporting Club Nazairien
1954	National	Normandie	13					P	Ducourtieux	Jean-Paul	FC Dieppe	
1954	Régional	Sud-Est						1	Berthézene		Stade Lunaret	
1954	Régional	Normandie	13					P	Ducourtieux	Jean-Paul	FC Dieppe	
1954	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	13	1941	janvier	2	Brest	P2	6	Craveur	Louis 'Lou'	AS Brestoïse
1955	National	LCO						1	Hernandez	Roger	(unknown)	
1955	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	12or13	1942				P2	4	Le Gall	André	AS Brestoïse
1955	Régional	Sud-Est						1	Mirouze		Stade Lunaret	
1956	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						4	Marzin		AS Brestoïse	
1956	Régional	Sud-Est	13	1942	novembre	15	Montpellier	M1	1	Bonnet	Jacques	Stade Lunaret
1957	National	Auvergne	11to13					pupille	1	Tylinski	Alfred	La Combelle
1957	National		13or14					P	Lipiec	Henri	AS Troyes-Savigny	
1957	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	12to14					M1ouP2	5	Sciou		AS Brestoïse
1958	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	12to14					M1ouP2	7	Balcon		AS Brestoïse
1959	National	Lorraine	14	1945	avril	26	Eberbach (67)	M1	1	Breitling	Werner	US Forbach
1959	Régional	Lyonnais						1	Dejours	Gérard	USCP - Union Sportive Cheminots de Portes-lès-Valences	
1960	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	12to14					M1ouP2	4	Craveur	Jean-Jacques	AS Brestoïse
1960	District	LOF - Bretagne	12to14					M1ouP2	1	Craveur	Jean-Jacques	AS Brestoïse
1960	District	LOF - Bretagne	12to14					M1ouP2	3	Abaléa	Gérard	AS Brestoïse
1961	National	Normandie						P	Béatrix	A.	USO - Union Sportive Ouvrière de Mondeville	
1961	Régional	Alger	14	1947	janvier	1	Guyotville	M1	1	Savals	Pierre-Richard	(unknown)
1961	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	13or14	1947				M1	P	Kernarrec		AS Brestoïse
1961	Régional	Lyonnais						1	Fugier	Jacques	(unknown)	
1961	District	LOF - Bretagne	11	1949	juin	17	Châteauneuf-du-Faou (29)	P1	6	Kéruzoré	Raymond	US Chateauneuvienne
1962	National	Normandie								Béatrix	A.	USO - Union Sportive Ouvrière de Mondeville
1962?	Régional	Nord	12	1949				1	Mirland	Daniel	VAFC - Valenciennes	
1962	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	12	1949	juin	17	Châteauneuf-du-Faou (29)	P2		Kéruzoré	Raymond	US Chateauneuvienne
1963	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	13	1949	juin	17	Châteauneuf-du-Faou (29)	M1		Kéruzoré	Raymond	US Chateauneuvienne
1965	Régional	Franche-Comté	13or14	1951			Neuilly sur Seine	1	Morisi	Mano	(unknown)	
1967	National	Lorraine	13	1954	mars	27	Saint-Amé (88)	P2	1	Philippe	Patrick	AS Vagny
1967	National	Normandie						P	Lehoux	P.	USO - Union Sportive Ouvrière de Mondeville	
1967	Régional	Lyonnais						3	Pedrini		CASCOL	
1968	National	Nord-Est						1	Laffont ou Lafont?	Jacques	(unknown)	
1969	National	Lorraine	13	1955	juin	21	Joëuf	M1	14	Platini	Michel	AS Joëuf
1969	National	Corse	13	1955	septembre	17		M1	1	Santucci	Alain	SC Bastia
1960 (late)	Régional	LCO		1955	avril	21	Saintes (17)	P	Sallat	Jean-Pierre	(unknown)	
1969	National	LOF - Bretagne						1	Van Straelen	Georges	(unknown)	
1969	International	Nord						2	Desmenez	Léon	(unknown)	
1970	National	Sud-Ouest	14	1956	janvier	19	Séguier-Pau (64)	M1	1	Vésir	Dominique	Jeanne d'Arc le Béarn de Pau
1970	National	Nord	13	1957	mai	17	Valenciennes	P2	2	Desmenez	Léon	VAFC - Valenciennes
1970	National							3	Brogger		(unknown)	
1970	National	LCO	14	1955	juin	26		M2	37	Bossis	Maxime	Saint André Sport
1970	Régional	LCO	14	1956	février	17	Blois	M1	1	Pécout	Eric	FC Noirmoutier
1970	Régional	LCO	14	1955	juin	26		M2	2	Bossis	Maxime	Saint André Sport
1970	Régional	Lyonnais						pupille	2	Pedrini		CASCOL
1970	Régional	Lyonnais						pupille	2	Ovize		CASCOL
1970	National	Nord						1	Desmenez	Léon	(unknown)	
1970	National	par équipes						1				Omni Sports Fivois
1971	National	Nord	14	1957	mai	17	Valenciennes	M1	1	Desmenez	Léon	VAFC - Valenciennes
1971	National	Sud-Est	14	1957	mars	9	Marseille	M1	2	Zambelli	Henri	Provençale Sport
1971	National	Centre						3	Dumestre	Thierry	AS Orléans	
1971	National	Lorraine	13	1957	août	21	Giraumont (54)	M1	4	Zénier	Bernard	Florange
1971	National	Sud-Ouest	13	1957	août	17	Pau	M1	5	Mélan	Pierre	Bleuets de Pau
1971	National							6	Adamuci	Pascal	St Pieste	
1971	National	Auvergne	14	1957	mars	9	Montluçon	M1	7	Larvaron	Alain	Montluçon
1971	National	Sud-Est	14	1957	avril	3	Nice	M1	8	Bocchi	René	St Sylvestre Nice
1971	National	LOF - Bretagne						minime	9	Tanguy	Gérard	AS Brestoïse
1971	National	Nord						9	Léonetti	Pascal	Lexy	
1971	National		14	1957	janvier	13	Tours	M1	13	Baronchelli	Bruno	US St-Pierre
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						minime	1	Tanguy	Gérard	AS Brestoïse
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						2	Morin	Guy	Stade Dinan	
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						3	Allix		AS St. Servan	
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						4	Gaz	Audrin	Le Mans	
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	13	1957	août	13	Le Mans	M1	5	Osman	Patrice	La Suze
1971	Régional	LOF - Bretagne						5	Garnier		(unknown)	
1971	National	Alsace						1	Lacombe	Rémy	(unknown)	
1971	National	par équipes						1				Omni Sports Fivois
1971	International							1	Desmenez	Léon	(unknown)	
1972	National	Midi	13	1959	janvier	10	Cazères (31)	M1	1	Ferratge	Jean-Marc	(unknown)
1972	National	Lorraine	13	1958	août	6	Nancy	M1	12	Jeanol	Philippe	AS Nancy-Lorraine
1972	National	Midi						26	Tine	Jean-Claude	Luchon	
1972	Régional	Midi	13	1959	janvier	10	Cazères (31)	M1	1	Ferratge	Jean-Marc	(unknown)
1972	Régional	Midi						2	Tine	Jean-Claude	Luchon	
1972/73or74	Régional	Nord						1	Ebersberger	Richard	Olympique Solitude Vieux-Condé	
1972	National	Alsace						1	Lacombe	Rémy	(unknown)	
1972	National							1				F.C. Lingolsheim
1973	National	Lyonnais	13	1959	août	29	Montpellier	M1	1	Lakière	?Jean-Louis?	(unknown)
1973	National	Nord	13	1960	février	9	Maubeuge (59)	M1	2	Gillot	Francis	Villers-Sire-Nicole
1973	Régional	Lyonnais						1	Pessia		CASCOL	
1973	Régional	Lyonnais						2	Circus		CASCOL	
1973	National							1				F.C. Lingolsheim
1973	National	par équipes						1				F.C. Lingolsheim
1973	International							1	Lacombe	Rémy		F.C. Lingolsheim
1974	National	Normandie						1	Dufay	Pascal		Pacy Vallée d'Eure Football
1974?	National	Midi	12	1961	septembre	2	Castres (81)	P2	5	Puel	Claude	Etoile Sportive Castroise

Year	Regional or National event	League affiliated	Age	Year born	Month	Day	Place of birth	Youth			Club at the time of the Concours	
								Category	Rank	Last Name		
1974	Régional	Lyonnais	13	1960	août	15	Oullins (69)	M1	1	Ogier	?Michel?	CASCOL
1974	Régional	Lyonnais							2	Dimateo		CASCOL
1975	National	Sud-Est	13	1961	décembre	27		M1	1	Roussey	Laurent	AS Mazargues
1975	National	Sud-Est	14	1961	janvier	4		M2	2	Sirvent	?Nicolas?	(unknown)
1975	National	Ouest	13	1962	mars	25	St. Brieuc	P2	3	Morice	?Pierre?	(unknown)
1975	National	Bourgogne							7	Marion	Denis	AS Chagny
1975?	National	Midi	13	1961	septembre	2	Castres (81)	M1	20	Puel	Claude	Etoile Sportive Castroise
1975	Régional	Picardie	12	1962	novembre	2		P2	1	Holenka	Stéphan	US Chantilly
1975	Régional	Picardie							2	Colin	Philippe	Senlis
1975	Régional	Picardie							3	Pérello	Christian	Crépy
1975	Régional	Picardie							4	Fouquet	Bruno	US Chantilly
1975	Régional	Picardie							5	Ferret	Philippe	Choisy
1976	National	Centre							1	Rio	Yvon	AS Issoudun
1977	National		14	1962	août	27	Alençon (61)	M2	1	Poullain	Fabrice	Saintes?
1977	Régional	LOF - Bretagne							1	Le Coat	Ronan	AS Brestoise
1977	Régional	LOF - Bretagne	14	1962	novembre	11	Château-Gontier (53)	M2	2	Goudet	Thierry	Emée
1977	Régional	Lyonnais						minime	1	Romeuf	Gino	Olympique Sathonay
1977	Régional	LCO							5	Vilain		ES Buxerolles
1978	National	Midi	14	1963	septembre	25		M2	1	Torreilles	Serge	Jeanne d'Arc le Béarn de Pau
1978	National	Corse	14	1963	août	7		M2	2	Gravini	Stéphane	SEC Bastia
1978or79	Régional	Sud-Ouest	14	1964	mars	11	Anglet	M1	1	Canton	Pierre	Aviron Bayonnais
1978or79	Régional	Sud-Ouest								Canton	Alain	Aviron Bayonnais
1979	National	LOF - Bretagne	13	1966	février	5		M1	1	Cloarec	Joël	(unknown)
1981	National	Bourgogne	12						1	Mancini	Amaud	AS Chagny
1991	National	Ile de France						poussin		Michelin	Cédric	Entente Sportive de la Foret
1993or94	National	Atlantique	13or14	1980	septembre	24	Fontenay le Comte (85)			Lafleur	Vincent	La Caillère

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