NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2026
2#
EDU DC
DUAL CAREERS
IN FOOTBALL

MAKE DUAL CAREER PART OF PLAN A AT YOUR CLUB!

Looking back at the EDU-DC International Conference 2026



On 25 September 2026, the iconic BayArena in Leverkusen, Germany, welcomed football clubs, national associations, coaches, researchers and dual career experts from across Europe for the EDU-DC International Conference on Dual Career in Football.

Under the message “Make Dual Career Part of Plan A at Your Club!”, participants came together to explore how football organisations can support young players in combining sporting ambitions with education, personal development and preparation for life beyond the pitch.

From inspiring keynote presentations and panel discussions to six interactive workshops, the conference brought together different perspectives, practical experiences and one shared goal: creating better opportunities for the next generation of football players.

Co-funded by the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

SETTING THE STAGE: DUAL CAREER IN EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

The conference was hosted by **Ole Keldorf** and **Laura Christensen Hald** from the Danish Football Association (DBU), with opening remarks from **Jefta Bresser**, Head of Academy at Bayer Leverkusen. **Bart Goudswaard**, EDU-DC Project Leader at KNVB, presented the project's journey and its work in strengthening dual career support across European football. The opening keynote by **Stephan Hakkers**, EDU-DC Dual Career Expert, highlighted international best practices and the importance of learning from different football environments.



PUTTING PLAYERS AT THE HEART OF DUAL CAREER

The morning programme introduced the EDU-DC Ambassador Team, bringing the players' perspective into the conversation through videos and interviews. A special highlight was the video presentation of **Jeremie Frimpong**, Dutch international and Liverpool FC player, who joined the team as a new EDU-DC Ambassador, inspiring young footballers to pursue their ambitions both on and off the pitch.





DEVELOPING THE PLAYER MEANS DEVELOPING THE PERSON

Ariël Jacobs, an experienced Belgian football coach, delivered a keynote on holistic talent development in elite football, highlighting the importance of looking beyond sporting performance.

The discussion continued with the panel “Dual Career as Part of Plan A in Football”, featuring **David Rincon** (Athletic Club Bilbao), **Bernd Baumbach** (DFB), **Jan Verlinden** (KV Mechelen) and **Art Langeler**, an experienced Head of Academy.
The central message was clear: dual career should not be seen simply as a backup plan, but as an essential part of developing young players from the beginning.



FROM EDUCATION TO EVERYDAY PRACTICE

How can dual career support become part of a club's daily environment?

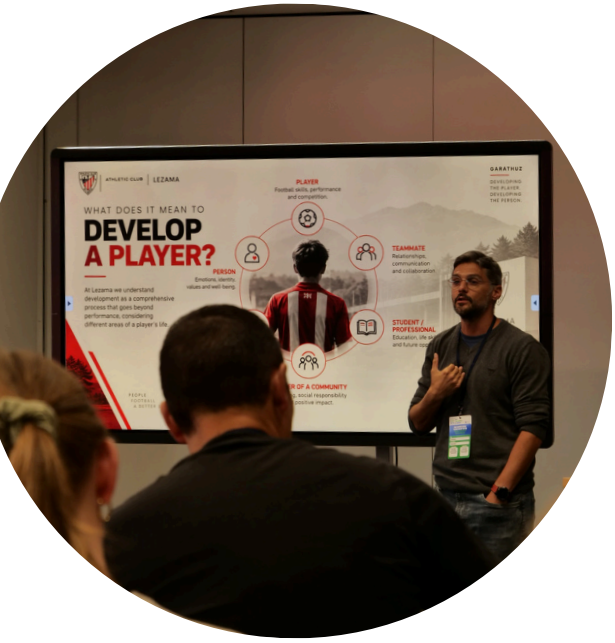
Nik Jongbloed (AZ Alkmaar) and **Rory White** (Finn Harps), two Dual Career Coordinators educated through EDU-DC, shared their experiences and highlighted the importance of dedicated professionals supporting players throughout their development.
The morning concluded with reflections from the Danish Football Association on dual career experiences and the implementation of EDU-DC in Denmark.



SIX WORKSHOPS, SIX PERSPECTIVES, ONE SHARED GOAL

The afternoon featured two rounds of six interactive workshops, giving participants the opportunity to explore practical approaches to dual career support and learn directly from leading European football organisations.





ATLETIC CLUB BILBAO

A STRONG AND BROAD IDENTITY AS A SOLID BASE IN LIFE AND FOOTBALL

Speaker: David Rincon

Who are players beyond football? David Rincon addressed the importance of building a strong personal identity outside the pitch, helping young athletes develop confidence, resilience and a sense of purpose that extends beyond their sporting careers.



TSG HOFFENHEIM & ANPFIFF INS LEBEN

CAREER COUNSELLING FOR INDIVIDUAL PATHWAYS AND SOCIAL SKILLS



Speakers: Teresa Bernhard, Jule Schneider and Konstantin Mantel

Every player has a different journey, and their educational path should reflect that. Through personalised career counselling and social skills development, TSG Hoffenheim and Anpfiff ins Leben demonstrated why successful dual career support starts with understanding individual needs, interests and ambitions.



THE FA & CHELSEA

TEAMWORK IN OPTIMAL PLAYER CARE



Speakers: Wayne Cahill and Yassin McLynn

Supporting young players takes teamwork, both on and off the pitch. Drawing on experiences from English football, the speakers demonstrated how collaboration between coaches, educators and player-care professionals can create a stronger support network around every athlete.






ARSENAL WOMEN & WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE



BEYOND FINANCIAL LITERACY: BUILDING FINANCIAL EMPOWERMENT IN ELITE WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Speakers: Jane Holden and Maimee Titmuss-Morris

Financial wellbeing is about more than managing money. Addressing the realities of elite women's football, from short-term contracts to career uncertainty, the speakers introduced a Psychological Financial Empowerment framework designed to strengthen players' financial confidence, wellbeing and long-term security.








BAYER LEVERKUSEN

SCHOOL EDUCATION: A SUCCESS FACTOR FOR SPORT CAREER?!

Speakers: Frank Ditgens and Malte Kalsbach

Can education contribute to sporting success? Bayer Leverkusen challenged the idea that school and football compete for a player's time, showing how educational development can complement sporting ambitions and contribute to long-term player development.






SC CAMBUUR & KNVB

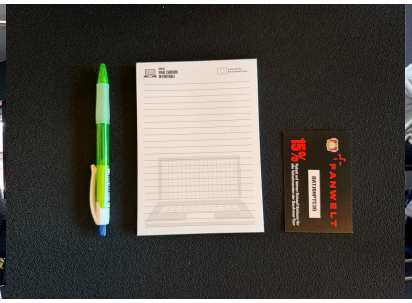
DUAL DEVELOPMENT

Speakers: Bart Goudswaard, Jan-Hendrik de Roos and Jelmer Hofstee

Football development goes beyond technical skills and performance. SC Cambuur and KNVB presented their Dual Development approach, demonstrating how cooperation between clubs and national associations can connect sporting progress with education and personal growth.








FROM GOOD PRACTICES TO IMPLEMENTATION

After the workshops, participants returned for a panel discussion focused on implementing the EDU-DC educational programme.

Michael McCarthy (FAI), **Sunny Debarska-Paneva** (BFU), **Stephan Hakkers** and **Anders Juul** (AGF Aarhus) discussed how the knowledge, tools and educational resources developed through EDU-DC can become part of everyday practice within football organisations.

The discussion highlighted the importance of moving beyond awareness and turning dual career principles into sustainable support structures for young players.



LOOKING AHEAD: THE FUTURE OF DUAL CAREER



The final thematic session brought together **Stephane Ehrhart** from UEFA Academy and **Bart Goudswaard** from KNVB to reflect on the future of dual career in football.

Their contribution reinforced the conference's central message: education, personal development and preparation for life beyond sport should be part of every young player's journey from the beginning.

The conference officially concluded with closing remarks from **Ole Keldorf** and **Laura Christensen Hald**, representing the Danish Football Association.



MORE THAN A CONFERENCE

Beyond the presentations and workshops, the EDU-DC Conference was also about bringing people together.

From networking breaks and conversations over lunch to sharing experiences between clubs, federations and experts, the BayArena became a place for new connections, fresh perspectives and a shared commitment to the future of young football players.











One Team, One Goal – Thank You!





A special thank you to **Bayer Leverkusen** and **the BayArena team** for hosting the conference, and to all EDU-DC project partners, organisers, speakers, workshop leaders, ambassadors and participants who contributed to making the event possible.

The conference demonstrated what European football can achieve when organisations work together, share experiences and put players' long-term development at the heart of their work.

The conference may be over, but the mission continues.

MAKE DUAL CAREER PART OF PLAN A AT YOUR CLUB!