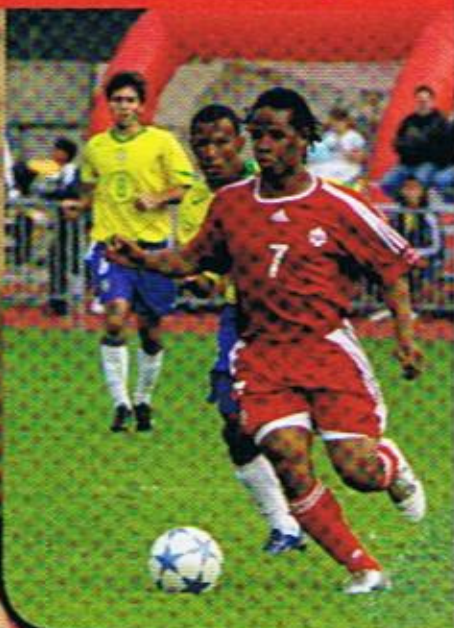


Inside **SOCCKER**

TOURNAMENT & CAMP GUIDE **2007**



Chris Pozniak's Exclusive Interview
U-20 A Testing Ground For Canada
The Futsal Pages
Beach Soccer • Lucky Latso



WIN
 an Official adidas
 U-20 FIFA World Cup
 2007 Match Ball!
 See page 65

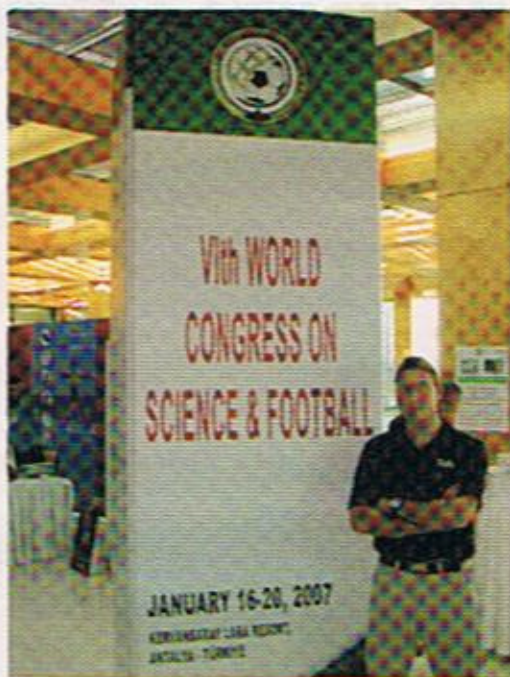
6th World Congress on Science and Football

Richard Bucciarelli

I was about five hours into my first day at the 6th World Congress on Science and Football in Antalya, Turkey, when I realized: I have a lot to learn – and not just about interstitial potassium ions, which was one of the topics keynote speaker Jens Bangsbo was discussing. I felt a little overwhelmed, both by seeing things I had thought were facts being called into question, as well as by seeing things I had never even heard of that were being presented as facts.

I registered for this Congress to learn and gather as much knowledge as I could about various different topics (physiological testing, fitness training, nutrition, sport psychology, motor learning). The World Congress of Science and Football is regarded as the "World Cup" of scientific conferences, held every four years in the year following the actual World Cup of soccer, which is not a coincidence but is done purposely in order to allow scientists to analyze the current trends in the world game.

The amount of research being presented across various different scientific fields from countries across the world, all specifically related to soccer, was amazing.



Everyone from mathematicians developing computerized models for match analysis (very confusing) to applied psychologists discussing the stresses goalkeepers face during penalty shoot-outs (surprisingly interesting) had been gathered together to present their work. More importantly, the ultimate aim of all of this research is to apply it to coaching and training athletes, and hopefully to use it to produce a better quality of soccer as a result.

I sat down to speak with Professor Thomas Reilly, Professor of Sports Science and Director of the Research Institute for Sport and Exercise Sciences at Liverpool John Moores University in Liverpool, England, as well as organizer, moderator and keynote speaker at the Congress of Science and Football. Professor Reilly has authored over 600 research publications, including a number of reviews, and is generally regarded as the biggest name in exercise science pertaining to soccer.

Richard Bucciarelli: How did you become involved with the World Congress of Science and Football, and what is your current position with it?

Thomas Reilly: We decided to hold the 1st World Congress in Science and Football in Liverpool in 1987, after it was suggested that it would be a good way of compensating for the Heysel tragedy in Brussels two years earlier. We took the

idea a step further and thought that the Congress would be a good way to transfer ideas and knowledge across all the football codes. Wigan was the World club champions in Rugby League at the time and the club agreed to put on a demonstration of training practices for the delegates. The outcome was a resounding success.

RB: What is the purpose of the World Congress of Science and Football?

TR: The main aim is to bridge a gap between theory and practice. This aim is achieved by bringing scientists and practitioners together to share the latest information and discuss professional issues and developments.

RB: How has this year's World Congress of Science and Football differed from past Congresses?

TR: Association football is the main game in Turkey so it was not surprising that topics on this code dominated the programme. Nevertheless it was refreshing to see the many representations from Gaelic Football and Australian Rules, in particular. This year also there was no opportunity for delegates to have their own football tournament, although there was an impromptu match between Europe and the Rest of the World (I think those were the names of the teams).

RB: In the future, what changes and/or improvements could be made to the World Congress of Science and Football?

TR: The representation from American Football is still low and it would be good to be able to scrutinize the practices in this game more closely. It is important that practitioners continue to generate new ideas and novel methods and have these examined by world experts.

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