

MANAGING THE PROJECT OF FORMING A REGIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

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Abstract: The subject of this research is a practical implementation of the project management in the process of founding a sports organization for managing sports events such as a football league and in a process of forming a regional football league. Therefore, this research will present theoretical framework and organizational approaches in project management and management in sports, whereas basic project phases will be elaborated through sports aspects. Furthermore, the specific features of project management in sports and organizational structure of football associations will be particularized in order to offer an insight into a possibility of positioning new football organization with an aim to form and manage a regional league. Taking into the account all the specifics of the sport and project management, the aim of this research is to offer an idea of forming a regional football league, and furthermore, to impose the necessity of founding an independent and impartial organization which will manage cited league.

Key words: management, management in sports, project management, football, regional football league

1. INTRODUCTION

The golden age of Serbian football was unexpectedly broken by the breakdown of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in 1992. The same fate was experienced in terms of football in all other republics of the former Yugoslavia, although the football of that time was producing significant results.

The SFRY football league was one of the most qualitative and competitive leagues in Europe of the time. It had also had a great concentration of football talents. However, after the break-up of the country, the football potential that existed in all the entities of the SFRY was dispersed. From that moment the clubs that had been competing in the federal league of the SFRY competed in significantly more narrow frames. Those events have had a great impact on all aspects of life, and also football. War and inflation have made football less important, and the overall situation had led to the fact that the infrastructure and the quality of the game plummeted significantly in the period that followed. After the end of war and with the stabilization of the political and economic situation began the period of

renewal of countries and the improvement of the quality of life in them. With the revitalization of all spheres of everyday life began the renewal of football as a significant integrative factor. The renewal happened within the framework of independent countries and with much smaller resources than they had before. The ball rolled out down the courts throughout the former Yugoslavia and it seemed that football went back to the old path. But something was missing. The decline in the quality of the game was sentient and it was also evident from the lack of sports results. However, to a major part of football fans, the greater loss was the lack of competitive passion.

This stance of the public was often overheard in the years after the war. From that time the political circumstances, the risks of fanatics, but also national conflicts and other factors made it impossible to watch again the games between FC Red Star and FC Hajduk from Split or FC Dinamo from Zagreb and FC Partizan. However, after two and a half decades this stance does come out from time to time, and as a possible solution that is mentioned more and more often is the formation of a regional football league.

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The fact that a project such as forming a regional football league would have the wide scope and a large number of activities that would need to be performed has brought us to conclusion that is very useful to consider the usage of methods and techniques of a project management for precise planning and organization. However, the question of the applicability of the project management in sports is being raised. On the other hand, as the project management approach is very applicable in various fields, the practicability of a project in sports is also significant.

2. MANAGEMENT IN SPORTS

Sport is an important segment of people's everyday life and for years it has become increasingly important as people's free time has been extended. The development of society has led to transformation of sports from the sphere of leisure and entertainment to a professional sphere, therefore today a great number of people is professionally engaged in sports, either by directly participating in sport activities or managing in sports.

The need for a management in sports has evolved as early as the beginning of organizing sports events in the ancient period. It is believed that the antique gangs of gladiators, and then the first Olympics games in the old age, pointed to the need for managing such events. The beginning of the application of sport management was noticed within the organization of these events by forming special teams with different responsibilities - from teams in charge of opening and closing events and protocol monitoring, through teams that were in charge of serving athletes, to teams that were involved in running, organizing and controlling all the activities within the event.

It took a long time for the management in sport to become a scientific discipline what finally happened in the 60s of the 20th century. The fact is that management itself has been applied in all areas of modern life, but what makes it particularly useful is the diversity of applications in various areas. Thus sport management will have a specific application and the specificity of sports and sports organizations must be taken into

account. Zrnić(2009) claims that the management of sport was established as a science by the development of society and the adoption of new practices. She claims that "the emergence of systematic, scientific/structured knowledge about sports management is related to the growth of professionalization of sports and its subordination to the laws of the market/service economy and the emergence of the science of management, first in the profit sector of the corporate business and then, its expansion to the sector of non-profit public and private businesses. (Zrnić, 2009)

In the literature, there are more definitions of management in sports, and what can be noticed is that everything points to the application of classical management phases: prediction, planning, organizing, managing and controlling. Thus, according to Tomić (2007), management in sports is "the process of prediction, planning, organizing, managing, securing personnel and controlling human, material, financial and other organizational resources of a sports organization, in order to achieve set goals." (Tomić, 2007)

The application of management in sports extends to the field of studying the theory and practice of managing sports organizations as separate entities, but also to studying the application of this knowledge to the organization and performance of the sporting activities themselves. As the aforementioned, management in sports uses the principles of general management as a process and science, thus encompassing sporting prediction, sports planning, sports management and sports control (Eksteen, 2014).

3. SPECIFICS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN SPORTS

In their article Byatt G. and a group of authors presented the similarities noticed in functioning of sports teams and project management having reached a conclusion with regards to similarities in functioning, all sports teams can achieve multiple benefits by applying project management approaches at their work. The following assertions are highlighted in the following article as the basic similarities between project management and sports teams (Byatt, 2011):

Individual talent does not guarantee success: therefore it is very important to know how to select talents, to harmonize their qualities and to fit them into the team in the best possible way in order to achieve as much success as possible.

"Thinking as a team" is necessary for success: beside the need of having good quality equipment for maximizing chance of success, the project and sports team also needs a team spirit, a way of thinking that encourages teamwork. The attachment to a visual symbol that easily identifies them, such as the company or sports team logo is the best way to connect the members of one team.

Create a "game plan" and know how to implement it: research confirms that projects achieve better results when they have a carefully designed plan. Likewise, sports teams create a game plan, which is a plan how to access the game, a tactic they will use. When the plan already exists, it is important that each team member knows exactly what is its role, as well as how to achieve the connection between the activities of the members of the project team and the players in the field.

Motivation and leadership are crucial: since it often happens that projects and the sport game do not take place according to the established plan, it is very important that the manager or the game leader knows how to position members of his team and how to motivate them to achieve success.

Goals must be common: each member of each team, in addition to its individual itineraries, should be identified with the common goals of the team to which it belongs. In project management, this is achieved through success planning, just as sports teams align their goals with expectations during the competition.

Learned lessons: gathering experience through learned lessons is very characteristic for sports and sports teams, which analyze all played games. Based on that experience they correct their game and future plans. The authors believe that project teams should take this property out of sports and carry on control in progress, not just at the end of the project.

In line with all the above-mentioned similarities between project management and sports teams, it can be concluded that the principles of project management can be very successfully implemented in sports teams and sports organizations in general. In this regard Vencel(2015) in his guide to projects in sports organizations states the activities such as organization of a sports event, renovation of training and other work space, introduction of a new sports program, introduction of new equipment and branded goods for the sale and transformation of the organization that can be managed in sport using project management.

Taking into account the classification of projects by Jovanović (2012) who classifies projects into three groups (investment, business and social projects), projects in sports are mainly classified as social projects. However, as sport is still a widespread area and increasingly involves much more activities than the sporting activities itself, sports projects could also be classified in accordance with the general classification of Jovanović (2015). Thus, investment projects in sports would include all those projects that include the construction or renovation of sports facilities or the workplace of sports organizations. Business projects in sports would relate to projects of changing ownership structure in clubs (privatizations) and transformation of organizations, projects for the introduction of new sports equipment, selling tickets for matches, selling food and drinks in games, etc. Social projects in sports would include all those projects that organize sports events to which contributes to the community.

With this in mind, there are several approaches and methodologies that could be applied to the management of social projects such as customized YUPMA or PMI methodologies and approaches based on project life cycle management. However, since these projects are often small-scope projects, it is usually considered that methodology for managing these projects is not necessary to be used, although this group might include some projects that are of great importance. (Jovanović, Kilibarda, Šobajić, 2015)

4. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE IN FOOTBALL

The fact is that football is the most popular sport in the world. This means that there is a large number of stakeholders who, for various reasons, keep track of everything that happens in the football world. For this reason, it is clear that football had to be very thoroughly and systemically institutionalized at all levels.

Institutionalization in football has been carried out by linking and networking football organizations from the lowest to the highest level since sports organizations are generally established at all levels, from a municipality or a city, across countries, regions and continents, to global associations. There are several reasons for connecting sports organizations into associations. Some of them are establishing and representing common interests, regulating mutual relations, participating in the competitions organized by associations, participating in developing funds of the association, as well as exercising other rights and obligations.

In order to adequately examine the institutional structure of football organizations and position the regional football organization, it is necessary to conduct an analysis of football organizations from the highest levels, i.e. beginning with FIFA, through UEFA to national organizations, such as the Football Association of Serbia.

4.1 FIFA

The world's largest football organization in charge of regulating the game of football rules is the International Federation of Football Associations – Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). It was founded in 1904 in Paris as an umbrella football organization that needs to unite football associations around the world and manage and control the development of football in the world. FIFA headquarters are now located in Zurich, and it operates in accordance with Swiss legal standards.

FIFA is a non-profit organization that accounts for 90% of revenues according to the financial statements from the sale of TV and other marketing rights, as well as the licensing

for the World Cup. Nearly 75% of the realized costs represent investments in the development of football through financial support to confederations and national associations, development programs mostly in the field of youth and women's football and financing of competitions.

In its activity FIFA manages the objectives set forth in its Statute which are:

- Continuous improvement of the game of football through global promotion in the light of educational, cultural and humanitarian values, and especially through youth and development programs;
- Organization of international competitions, most famous being the World Cup in football;
- Preparation of regulations and provisions and ensuring their implementation;
- Controlling all types of football associations by taking relevant steps to prevent violations of the FIFA Statute, regulations and decisions or the Laws of the Game;
- Promotion of integrity, ethics and fair play in order to prevent corruption, doping or manipulation, what could jeopardize the integrity of matches, competitions, players, officials and members, or lead to the abuse of association.

In its membership FIFA has 211 national football associations which in terms of territorial affiliation are joined in the following six confederations:

- Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol – CONMEBOL
- Asian Football Confederation – AFC
- Union des associations européennes de football – UEFA
- Confédération Africaine de Football – CAF
- Confederation of North, Central American and Caribbean Association Football – CONCACAF
- Oceania Football Confederation – OFC

In addition to the dominant regulatory role FIFA also deals with organizing competitions at the highest worldwide level. Thus FIFA organizes the following competitions:

- men's competition - World Cup, World Championship up to 20 years, World Championship up to 19 years, World Championship up to 17 years, Confederations Cup, World Club Championship, Futsal World Cup and Beach Soccer;
- in women's competition - Women's World Championship, Women's World Championship for women under 20 and World Championship for women under 17.

4.2 UEFA

One of the six FIFA confederations is the European Football Confederation – UEFA. For decades UEFA has a leading role in terms of formulating the rules of the game and regulating all aspects of football. Empirically speaking, football is the most popular sport in Europe and it is not surprising that UEFA is an organization with the strongest influence in FIFA.

The European Football Union (The Union of Associations Européennes de Football - UEFA) was founded in Basel (Switzerland) in 1954, after the negotiations of the national football associations of Italy, France and Belgium. UEFA headquarters today are located in Nion, Switzerland.

UEFA today represents an association of 55 national associations of Europe that organizes competitions for national teams and clubs. Also UEFA regulates the rules of play and behavior on the European football scene. The most important competitions that UEFA organizes are:

Club competitions: UEFA Champions League, UEFA Europe League, UEFA Super Cup and UEFA Youth League,

National Teams Competitions: UEFA EURO - European Championship, European Championship Qualifiers, UEFA Champions League and UEFA European Under-21 Championship (U-21)

Also, UEFA organizes and conducts competitions in the field of women's, youth

and amateur football, as well as futsal, and in these categories there are UEFA EURO for women and UEFA Futsal EURO, UEFA Champions League for women, UEFA Futsal Cup, UEFA Regional Cup for women amateurs.

UEFA's daily work is based on 11 values first presented at the 33rd Regular UEFA Meeting in Copenhagen (Denmark) in March 2009. For the purpose of this paper six of the eleven values that UEFA promotes are highlighted as most important for this topic:

"Football first" - the principle that gives priority to a football game as the most important, because "Football is a game before being a product, a sport before being a market, a show before being a business",

"Pyramid Structure and Subsidiarity" - where a pyramidal football structure points to autonomy in sport, because although football organizations at all levels work closely, the principle of subsidiarity is respected and in this way works in the best interests of football:

"Grassroots football and solidarity" - a principle that emphasizes the importance of grassroots football without which there would be no professional football. In that sense, UEFA is committed to strengthening the principle of solidarity, in order to ensure the future of football on the one hand and, on the other, to contribute to society through the preservation of local, regional and national roots of football.

"Financial Fair Play and Regularity of the Competition" - the principle by which UEFA is committed to fair play both on the field and outside of it, which implies transparency and accountability of financial operations in order to protect sports competitions, but also the clubs themselves.

"National teams and clubs" - a principle that protects and strengthens national teams and clubs as the basic elements of football, on which the development of football depends on the national, European and international levels.

"Respect" - is a key principle for football and refers to respect for the game, integrity, diversity, dignity, players health, rules, judges, opponents and fans. In accordance with this principle, UEFA points to zero tolerance towards racism, violence and doping.

4.3 Football Association of Serbia (FAS)

The Football Association of Serbia (FAS) in accordance with the Statute is "an independent, voluntary, non-profit organization that can be associated in accordance with the sports legislation of the Republic of Serbia". FAS in its base is the only ruling power to organize and regulate football sport on the territory of the Republic of Serbia.

FAS was founded in 1948 in Belgrade. It was a member of the football federations of all former state structures until the final break-up of Serbia and Montenegro on June 2006. The FAS then became the legal successor of the former Football Association of Serbia and Montenegro.

As a national football association, the FAS is engaged in the implementation of FIFA and UEFA regulations. The main aim of FAS is developing national teams (Serbia national football team, national U-21, U-19, U-18, U-17 and U-16 teams, Women's national team, Women's national U-19 and U-17 teams, national futsal team).

In addition to organizing training, games, tournaments and all other activities related to the national teams of Serbia in all categories, the FAS also organizes the following competitions: in the men's competition: Super League of Serbia, First League of Serbia, Youth League of Serbia, Cadet League of Serbia, First and Second Futsal League. Lower-level competitions are delegated to territorial associations; in women's competition: Super League - Women and First League - Women.

The FAS, just as FIFA and UEFA, is territorially divided into five territorial football federations that are further divided into city and municipal football associations.

5. FORMING OF REGIONAL FOOTBALL ORGANIZATION

The process of forming a Regional Football Association should include 4 phases:

1. *Initiation phase*: the initiative to form a Regional Football Association should come from football associations and organizations interested in forming Regional Football League. Regarding this matter, it is necessary to conduct series of meetings of the National Football Organization representatives where the modus of functioning of Regional Football Association would be determined along with a specific suggestion which would be submitted to UEFA. The suggestion must be a compromised solution which would be accepted by all National Associations and which would unanimously be advocated for in the sequel of negotiations with UEFA. When a specific suggestion to form a Regional Football Organization has been created, it should be sent out to UEFA after which the opening phase of negotiations with the UEFA representatives is expected to begin.

After UEFA has reviewed and accepted the initiative a series of meeting of National Football Associations and UEFA representatives is being held with the aim to reach a consent between the existing suggestion with aims and values of UEFA and reach a final a solution to form a Regional Football Association. When the final suggestion has been created, it is necessary to be adopted by the UEFA Congress. After the decision on forming Regional Football Association has been made, the UEFA Executive border is to reach a decision on forming the work group which would form Regional Football Organization. This group should consist of UEFA experts and a single representative of each National Football Association that are to become members of Regional Football Association and their assignment should be to organize and conduct all the activities from making a decision on forming until the activation of the organization itself.

2. *Preparation phase*: in this phase all the activities that precede founding the Regional Football Association should be conducted.

This phase would altogether be conducted by a working group. Before foundation and registration of the mere organization it is necessary to create a range of very important documents which would define the business models, relations inside the organization and each and every other important segments. Firstly, it is necessary to make a proposal of statute of the organization, which has to be in accordance with the legal norms of the state where the headquarters of the organization would be allocated, but also with the UEFA statute. The statute defines the name and the head office of the organization, terms and condition for a membership in the organization, tasks and aims, purpose of existing, relational arrangement, organizational structure and the method of forming organizational authorities, method of candidacy and election of representatives and officials, area of competence, way of cessation of work etc. Along with the statute, it is necessary to form a set of other rule books and rules of procedure, among which of the highest importance for the organization to become active would be Rules of procedure of the assembly activity and the systematization of labor and job positions. Moreover, within the phase of preparation job openings are being announced to hire new employees in agreement with proposal for systematization of labor and job positions within the organization, job interviews with the candidates and the selection- process are being conducted.

Composing proposals of the before mentioned documents have made it possible to convey and organize Regional Football Founding Assembly Meeting. One of each of the National Association representatives would participate in the Founding Assembly and whose initiative is the Regional Football Association built upon. After the discussion, at this Assembly's meeting the proposals of the previously conveyed documents are being adopted, respectively Assembly's Activity Rules of Procedure, Statute of the Association and Labor and job positions systematization. Adopting these documents and selecting the administrative bodies and representatives of the Regional Football association would mean that the association has been formed and

therefore, it could be proceeded to the next phase- registration phase.

3. *Registration phase*: in accordance with the legal regulation registration is conducted within the relevant registration state institute where the Regional Association headquarters are located. The list of necessary documentation for registration of the Association depends on the legislation of the state where the headquarters of Association have been located.

All this mentioned, after the Association has been registered with the authoritative registration body it is necessary to submit a request for becoming a member of UEFA and FIFA. Moreover, along with aforementioned actions, before the beginning of organization's activity, it is necessary to conduct a range of activities to capacitate activity such as signing a contract with the selected candidates within the organization, opening call center, creating an official web page, electronic mail domain, opening bank account and other channels of communication inside, but also outside of the organization.

4. *Beginning of activity*: when all previous actions have been performed it is considered that the organization is ready to begin with its activity. At the founding session of Assembly the selected management takes over managerial activity before whom lie many tasks such as forming operational boards and conveying and conducting their sessions, forming commissions and appointing their members. Nevertheless, what is of great importance regarding this paper is making a decision on forming Regional Football League. This decision is being made by the competent body, which should later appoint commissioners for league management and adopt propositions of the competition and other regulative documents.

6. FORMING REGIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

1. *Formation phase*: this phase begins with the last activity within the last phase of the project of forming Regional Football Association, making a decision to form

Regional Football Association respectively. After decision to organize the competition has been made, it is necessary to decide on competitive body, delegate candidates who would have the function of commissioners regarding the competition, a commissioner for discipline and a commissioner for delegating referees and delegates regarding this competition respectively. These two activities mark the end of the formation phase and the beginning of the next phase- structuring phase.

2. *Structuring phase*: this phase assumes organization of the competition which is done by adopting propositions, disciplinary Rule book and the calendar of the competition, choosing the competitors and adopting the list of referees and delegates. The proposal of propositions, the disciplinary Rule book calendar and the structure of the competition is being conducted by the operational group assisted by the competitive body, based on previously reached agreements within the framework of negotiations on forming the Regional Football Association and League and the regulations in effect at UEFA. It is necessary that the propositions of the competition are in accordance with the rules of game, which define regulations of the course of competition. Therefore, the propositions regulate, among other, sections of organization of competition, the method of forming the calendar of competition, schedule and postponement of games, measures for safe and secure conduct of games, the right of players to compete, the method of registration the games and determining the placement and other. Disciplinary rule book defines the responsibility of all contestants in the game of football related to breaking the rules of the game and violating the statute and other organizational regulations and also defines disciplinary measures for violations, therefore it is considered to be a file of high importance to manage the league along with propositions.

Propositions define the method of forming the calendar of the competition and the structure of the league, but is also necessary do determine the proposition of the list of referees and delegates of this competition. This question is also defined by the propositions of the competition, and the mere proposition of lists is defined by the

operational group based on propositions of national organizations with the commissioner for delegation and referees accountable for this competition. When all these propositions are being created, it is necessary to convey a session of the accountable body which would adopt all the suggested documents and therefore legally arrange the competition.

3. *Licensing phase*: it is necessary to conduct licensing of the football clubs, play fields, coaches and representatives of clubs, as well as registration of players which would appear within this league. All these activities are performed by commissions formed within the organization, in accordance with the standards of international competitions which are defined by UEFA and The Rule Book of registration of players by UEFA.

4. *Marketing phase*: which is being conducted along with other three phases. From the moment of founding the Regional Football League it is also being approached to the process of providing sponsors within the marketing function of the organization. Therefore, this phase will include the following activities: sending invitational letters for collaboration and conducting a range of meetings with potential partners and sponsors, preparation of proposal of contracts and signing those, announcing the proclamation of selling TV right to broadcast games, conducting meeting and negotiations with representatives of TV stations and signing contracts of TV rights. This phase is highly important from financial viewpoint, therefore it is necessary that the representatives of the organization together with marketing management conduct all the activities of this phase.

5. *The start of competition*: the regulative norms of the competitions have been adapted and the financial funds being provided, it can be proceeded to the process s of planning the first round of the league. The complete competitive body is included in this phase, commissioner for competition and a commissioner for delegation of delegates and referees respectively who decide on the precise dates of games being held and delegate referees and delegates in collaboration with football clubs.

6.1. Technological solution of the Regional Football League for the Western Balkans countries

In the previous text it has been determined that almost all aspects of the Regional Football League are defined by the competition propositions, therefore the method of forming the calendar and the structure of league as well. However, in regards to this paper, in the text that follows proposition of method to form the calendar and the structure of the Regional Football League for the Western Balkans countries, which would include the participation of football clubs from the territory of Serbia, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and FYRO Macedonia will be presented.

To form this kind of football league, first it is necessary to set the calendar and the structure of competition and agree on the period when the matches will be held as well as the participants in the competition, respectively.

Considering that the football league as a competition would be included within the competitions supervised by UEFA, it is necessary that the completion calendar of the regional football league is in accordance with the official calendar of UEFA and FIFA, which is important to pay attention to, as for the very tight schedule of conducting international matches in the existent football calendar. Following the model of ABA Regional Basketball League, it is considered that the Regional Football League would need to be played at the same time as national leagues, which would assume a period from the beginning of August until the first half of June.

The solution offered within a case study is based on the concordance of two of the major European club competitions, The Champions League and Europe League respectively. Namely, to be able to begin its activity within the next season, in concordance with the given solution, it is of utter importance to wait on qualifications to be terminated for two aforementioned competitions annually held until the beginning of August. The

participants of the qualifications for the Champions League and Europe League are first ranked and second ranked clubs respectively from the premium national leagues who obtain placement in these two competitions through these qualifications and who remain beyond the afore mentioned competitions respectively.

After the final round of the qualifications it is no longer unknown which concrete teams have qualified for the Champions League and Europe League, therefore the structure of the Regional Football League can be determined based on this. The idea is that the list of participants of the Regional Football League should be formed after these qualifications and the reason for it is the interest to provide the top ranked teams in national leagues with a possibility to participate in this competitions in case they do not qualify further in the Champions or Europe League. On the other hand, in case these clubs do qualify further the interest is that the league be completed with the first club from the national competition that has obtained the right to participate by its placement.

There mere system of defining the structure of the Regional Football League for the Western Balkans countries and the number of the participating football clubs is determined by the propositions of the given competition and the proposal of the structure of the league is provided by a commissioner for competition. The structure of the league within the case study will be defined based on UEFA coefficient which value each national football association and each football club separately based on the results achieved in the Champions League and the Europe League in the last five competing seasons.

Therefore, based on the number of contestants and the UEFA coefficient determined by propositions, will also be determined the number of contestants of the Regional Football League that every national selection will provide. Particular clubs should be determined by the placement form the previous competitive season within the national leagues.

Why should the UEFA coefficients be used in defining the structure of the Regional Football League? The main reason to apply UEFA coefficient is that the aforementioned organization keeps track of and gradually evaluates the participation of the clubs in the Champions League and Europe League, as well the participation of the national teams in UEFA competitions, based on what each national association is allocated with its coefficient which ranks it on the scale of most successful national associations in UEFA competitions. This principle is considered to be most objective and that it provides very precise data which could be used in a case study to determine the number of clubs that each national association which participates in

the regional competition will provide. Moreover, in this way the absolute principle of impartiality is ensured which is extremely important and necessary in determine the number of the participants of the regional football league as it clear that any other way might cause tensions which would question credibility of the competition. Additional reason to apply this principle is also that the regional football competition would be under inherence and control UEFA itself.

The national associations that would compete in the regional league based on the submitted principle and applying the stated criteria will be abstracted in the following table:

Country	Select your association	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	Pts	Clubs
16	Croatia	4.375	6.875	4.500	5.125	3.875	24.750	1/4
29	Serbia	2.500	2.750	4.250	2.875	3.625	16.000	2/4
30	Slovenia	2.625	4.000	1.000	2.250	4.125	14.000	1/4
37	FYR Macedonia	0.500	1.125	1.500	1.250	2.875	7.250	1/4
40	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1.500	1.750	1.500	0.500	1.375	6.625	0/4
44	Montenegro	1.250	0.750	1.000	0.875	1.125	5.000	0/4

Figure 1. Ranking of national associations based on UEFA coefficient

As it can be seen in the table above, coefficients that provide ranking to the each national association, can vary drastically depending on the success that their clubs have achieved in the given season meaning that the relation between different national associations in the regional football league from one season to another could be very different.

For example, the table underneath will portray the method of forming the structure of the league based on the UEFA coefficient after the competitive season 2016/2017 was over as the season 2017/2018 is still ongoing, assuming that the league will be formed out of 16 clubs from the territory of 6 former Yugoslavian countries.

Table 1: The method of forming the structure of the league based on the UEFA coefficient

Country	UEFA coefficient	Percentage in Regional League	Number of clubs in Regional League
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0,500	3,92%	0,62 = 1
FNRY Macedonia	1,125	8,82%	1,41 = 1
Slovenia	2,250	17,65%	2,82 = 3
Serbia	2,875	22,55%	3,61 = 4
Croatia	5,125	40,2%	6,43 = 6
Montenegro	0,875	6,86%	1,1 = 1
Total	12,750	100%	16

Note: The values provided in the table above are calculated based on the simple proportion, calculating the share of each national

association within the total score of the selected associations respectively, as well as calculating the share of the clubs from the

national associations in the total number of the participating clubs in the regional football league.

After the competitive period and the method of forming the structure of the league have been determined the question to be asked is what is the motive to participate in the regional football league for the clubs. The fact is that the first ranked and second ranked clubs from the national leagues would gain the right to participate in two of the biggest European football competitions, therefore it is expected that the ranking within the frame of regional football league would bring the winner some sort of breakthrough to the European scene. However, considering that, as stated, this regional league would be a pilot project within the frame of UEFA, it is thought that it is not real to expect a title in the first two or three seasons in the form of participating in the Champions league or Europe League for several reasons. The first one is the inevitability of bringing UEFA competition into imbalance. Namely, years behind Champions league and Europe League are functioning based on the fixed principle which offers equal possibility of participation to European clubs which they gain by competing in their national leagues. With regards to that, it is considered that the placement to European competitions that would be achieved through this regional football league which would in the beginning be unique in Europe, would be unfair to the clubs in different parts of Europe that gain their right to qualify for European competitions through the ranking on the national competitions only.

Moreover, certain clubs from the Western Balkans territories would have a dual possibility to qualify for European competitions which is not in accordance with the policy of UEFA. Another reason would be the possibility of the clubs which would participate in the regional football league to calculate. These calculations could happen if the regional league winner's reward would be a direct placement in the Champions League or Europe League, so it could happen that the clubs would consider the possibility of a meaningful prolapse from the qualifications for these two competitions if they would find

that they could rank as first in the Regional Football League. Also it could happen that the clubs in the national competitions „sell“ its spot so that they could qualify for the regional league instead for to qualify for the Champions League and Europe League.

For everything abovementioned it is considered that as long as the Regional Football League for the Western Balkans countries is a single case in Europe, it is not realistic to expect this kind of reward for the first ranked in the league, which questions the sustainability of the regional league.

Nevertheless, what is expected is that the interest of clubs to participate in the Regional Football League would be significant considering that the Regional Football League would offer a possibility which do not qualify for European competitions to compete against each other and achieve significant financial gain which would certainly contribute to the development of football at this territory, improvement of football infrastructure and popularization of football as sport.

Another important segment, in a sense of motivating clubs to participate in the Regional Football League is disengaging clubs from the paying any fees to participate in the Regional Football League. In regards to that the league would be obliged to cover the expenses of the clubs such as travel and accommodation expenses, food expenses, expenses of the officials and other expenses of organizing matches. These expenses would be funded from the funds accumulated from the sponsor contracts and TV rights to broadcast the games within the league which are expected to be sufficient to cover those expenses and the expenses of functioning the Regional Football League.

All these assertions stated, it can be concluded that the Regional Football League would be very profitable for football clubs which would participate in it, especially considering that they would not have financial expenses regarding this, but that they could profit multiply from participating in the Regional Football League.

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF APPLICATION OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN SPORT

For a long time sport has been predominantly business-oriented and in line with short-term rough plans. It has been largely changed after introducing project management as a management concept suitable for sports area. The use of project management in sport has many advantages, and the importance of applying this concept is reflected in the following claims:

- *Higher efficiency in operation.* Using project management and its tools and techniques in sports management helps by creating precise plans and "road signs" which lead to easier, faster and more efficient completion of the project;

- *Higher efficiency in work.* Sport is an area that, although very diverse, operates in more or less similar ways in each of its subspecies. That means that project management allows us to use the principles of a successfully completed project several times. In that circumstances adapting to the characteristics of the each project is needed.

- *Greater flexibility in work.* Although project management could lead as precisely as planning, due to everyday changes and innovations, primarily in the field of sports and then project management, project management also provides the opportunity to adapt effectively to changes and change plans so that the project could be accomplished in a most successful way.

- *Better risk assessment.* In the course of project planning project management also takes into account the numerous risks that may occur during the project's realization, and based on it plans to react to it. This advantage helps the project team in the right way and timely warn and protect from risks in most efficient manner.

Based on the presented advantages of using project management in sports, it can be noticed the great importance of using it in the project of forming a regional football league.

8. CONCLUSION

Project management in sport is still an underdeveloped concept despite proven usability in many other areas. However, the tendency of the use of project management in sports is increasing due to the perceived advantages it provides, especially in the management of major sporting events. It is therefore the view that the project for forming a regional football league should have been implemented with the help of project management techniques and tools, especially since such a project would be a very important step in the development of football in the Western Balkans.

The project of forming a regional football league would have great significance for this region, and the most significant contribution would be to raise the quality of football, which would lead to increased opportunities for clubs from the territory of the Western Balkans to achieve better results in European soccer competitions in the upcoming period, ie in the Europa League and Champions League. Also, such an impact on the quality of the football game would have a positive effect on the football infrastructure as well as the stability and development of football clubs as such, and one could expect a greater interest of sponsors to support and invest in their promotion through one such event.

On the other hand, this project for the formation of the regional football league would have a wider social impact in the Western Balkans region, which would result in the expansion of community and the stabilization of political relations, or the creation of a linkage that could be transferred from sports to the state level and lead to some new forms of interstate cooperation. In addition, another very important social implication is the promotion of football as a sport through the popularization of the regional football league, which leads to an increase in the interest of children and young people to deal with football or sports in general.

In addition to all the potentially good effects of the regional football league, the fact is that it carries with it a number of potential hazards. It is certainly the security risk that is

extremely high in this competition. Therefore, it is necessary to work on several levels to prevent this risk and to reduce as much as possible so that the regional football league can function and direct all its potential to the positive influences it tends to.

Because of all this, it is believed that project management as a concept is very useful in the case of making a decision on the formation of a regional football league in the future. In this regard, the proposal given in this paper could serve as a basis for formulating a wider and more concrete project of forming a regional football league.

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