



For as long as I can remember football has been an immensely important part of my life. My first memory of football, and indeed how it could bring me to tears, was the England vs. West Germany World Cup semi-final in 1990. The fact this event could bring me to tears was perhaps not that surprising as I was only 8, so I assume I still cried with some regularity, yet perhaps what defines this event far more for me is the fact that I do not remember anything else from 1990, or certainly not something that I could pinpoint with the accuracy of time and date as that fateful July evening.

England was and always will be in my blood as this was where I was born and raised but Poland came to the fore as 'my team' during my teenage years. My passion for the land of my heritage began to grow 2 years after the tears of Turin – an Olympic final for the boys in red and white was enough to spark my inherent patriotism. A love affair with Legia Warsaw only strengthened this connection.

However, for all the passion and love for the game there came a time when I became frustrated with it – disappointed that the game I love, a game which delivers such a unique experience to all involved and one that can bring people together from around the world as few other concepts can is not treating its privileged position with the respect that this position deserves. Do football professionals work as hard as they can to push their organisations (and the game) forward? Are the millions of young men and women training football every week being developed correctly and cared for holistically? How much is the financial structure around football distorting the game and creating innate inefficiencies and indeed absurdities in the game we all know and love? These and other fundamental questions in football are being currently analysed by far more competent analysts than myself. What this wave of publications on the subject sparked in me however was a process of reflection; how could a start-up entrepreneur's perspective help in this process of pushing football into the 21st Century.

The Football Innovation Group was born.

For all the positive PR associated with entrepreneurship it is mostly unsexy, tiring and hard work. Countless hours working on any number of topics simultaneously and a constant awareness of all the variables that can impact your business on any given day. However, in football, for all the positive PR associated with it also, hard-work appears to often not be a pre-requisite and many 'experts' appear to support the concept that know-how is all that is important; having a 'football brain' is enough. This would not cut it in a start-up and certainly not in most other industries that I have come into contact with.

There are exceptions in the football fraternity and it is these exceptions that sparked me on my mission to find the people and individuals committed to pushing the game forward, often at a very high personal cost to themselves. They are out there and these entrepreneurial individuals, clubs and companies are helping to bring back my personal love for the game. The purpose in my activities in the football sphere is to find the most hard-working, competent and / or visionary individuals in football and support them in any way possible.

See you on the journey!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hubert Bienias".

Hubert Bienias

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