

FIFA Talent Identification Webinar Series

Webinar 1 of 3: What is Talent Identification & What Are We Looking For?

Learner Guide · Sep 17, 2026

About This Webinar

Webinar 1 of 3 in FIFA's *Talent Identification in Football – A Global Conversation* series, delivered 17 September 2026 by **Mirelle van Rijbroek** (FIFA Talent ID Specialist), hosted by **Lisa Fallon** (FIFA Training Centre). Runs alongside the free **FIFA Talent Identification Foundation Course**.

- **Webinar 2 (15 Oct 2026):** Seeing Talent More Clearly – Identifying the Player of Tomorrow, with Richard Allen
- **Webinar 3 (19 Nov 2026):** Identifying Female Talent – Seeing Potential Through a Female Lens, with Maria Khan

What You'll Take Away

- Explain FIFA's Why / How / What approach to Talent ID education.
- Explain why talent ID is complex, and why it's a process, not a moment.
- Use the Football Action Cycle to observe players objectively.
- Describe the Holistic Player Profile and its five areas.
- Start building your own football reference framework.

1. Talent ID Education – Why, How & What

FIFA's vision: **give every talent a chance**, ensuring every talent with the highest potential is identified everywhere. Talented players are missed daily – not for lack of talent, but for lack of awareness, understanding, and quality in ID systems:

Awareness → Understanding → Quality → Visibility – visibility (more players seen) is the outcome, not the starting point.

"Better educated people make better decisions. Better decisions change player pathways."

How FIFA works – three building blocks: **Learn** (free courses, open to all), **Support** (uniform tools for FIFA's experts and MAs), **Empower** (helping MAs build and own their systems). One framework – the **FIFA Talent ID Dimensions Model**, built on coverage, depth, and quality – underpins all three across 211 MAs and 270M+ players.

Foundation Course – free, online, entry-level. Module 1: Talent ID & football talent, the global landscape, development, the scout's role. Module 2: The Dimensions Model, foundation, environment/people/resources. Certificate on completion.

2. Talent Identification Is Complex

Evaluating a player means weighing **performance today**, **potential tomorrow**, and the **environment shaping development over time** – not just one game. Too often this is left to gut feeling rather than shared criteria.

Four connected areas improve decision quality:

Area	Focus
Define Talent	A shared view of talent, potential, and future demands
Understand the Player	Interpret performance/potential through a holistic lens
Design the Process	A longitudinal process with multiple evidence sources
Create a Healthy System	An environment where potential can safely emerge

3. What Is Talent Identification?

"Talent identification is about recognizing players with the potential to develop into successful professional or international footballers – not simply selecting those who perform best today."

- **A process, not a moment** – longitudinal, organized across ages and environments.
- **Potential over performance** – the player is still becoming.
- **Inseparable from development** – identification without a pathway is meaningless.

Talent is shaped by **nature and nurture** together – innate qualities and environment, coaching, and opportunity. Neither works alone.

4. What Is Football & Football Talent?

Start with the game, not the player. Football is a team sport where every team tries to **win** by scoring more than the opponent, through **attacking** and **defending**, linked by **transition**. Actions (passing, dribbling, pressing, tackling...) are judged by position, moment, direction, and speed against the individual task in that moment – an objective, universal reference point.

The Football Action Cycle (one loop, ~75% invisible):

1. **Communicate & perceive** – scan, read, sense pressure and timing.
2. **Decide** – what to do, and how.
3. **Execute** – technique: position, moment, direction, speed together.
4. **Adapt** – read what happened, decide better next time.

Football fitness = more actions, maintaining *good* actions, and maintaining *many* actions across a full match.

"A player whose actions consistently serve team functions and tasks – producing better football actions, more often, under real pressure. And whose current football ability shows the potential to develop into an elite player of the future."

NOTE: Conceptual influences include Raymond Verheijen / Football Coach Evolution & KNVB football methodology. Talent ID application & visualization: Mirelle van Rijbroek.

5. The Holistic Player Profile & the Future Player

"If we only assess what is immediately visible, we systematically miss the most important signals."

Five interconnected areas, read together, not in isolation: **Technical · Tactical · Physical & biological · Social & emotional · Cognitive & mental**

Because the game is changing, talent ID must look forward: **Future Game → Future Player → Football Talent (today's youth player) → Modern Coach & Environment**. The future game demands faster decision-making, positional flexibility, physical intensity/repeatability, collective intelligence, and learning agility.

6. Building Your Football Reference Framework

"There is no universal definition of talent. Every organization must build its own."

Connect talent to your **football DNA** (mission, vision, philosophy, culture), then build a **reference framework**: game analysis, style of play, key qualities, position profiles, ages & stages. Build it in four steps: **Benchmark → Examine → Identify → Organize/translate** (current game → future game → our identity).

Example key qualities: game understanding & decision-making · technical precision & adaptability · dynamic physical potential · growth & winning mindset · exceptional learning ability · personality & character. These are generic; **position profiles and traits** make them specific to a role and moment.

The five-step logic, broad to specific: **Universal (Holistic Profile) → Future-focused (Evolution of the game) → Context-specific (Your identity) → Translational (Key qualities) → Role-specific (Traits & position profiles)**.

Key Takeaways

- Visibility follows from awareness, understanding, and quality – it's the outcome, not the starting point.
- Talent ID is a longitudinal process, inseparable from development.
- Start with the game: football's functions and actions give an objective reference point.
- The Football Action Cycle shows most of what makes a player good is invisible.
- The Holistic Player Profile exists because narrow, visible-only assessment misses key signals.
- There's no universal definition of talent – build your own reference framework from your football DNA.

Next Steps & Resources

- **Take the FIFA Talent Identification Foundation Course** – free and open to all, on the FIFA Training Centre.
- **Webinar 2 (15 Oct):** Seeing Talent More Clearly, with Richard Allen.
- **Webinar 3 (19 Nov):** Identifying Female Talent, with Maria Khan.
- **FIFA Talent ID Guide** – a clear, adaptable framework for clubs, MAs, and other organizations to design, implement, and evaluate a talent ID system at any size, budget, or geography.
- A recording of this webinar and this guide will be published on the FIFA Training Centre.

FIFA Talent ID Education: give every talent a chance.