

CASE STUDY: RUGBY LEAGUE

ACADEMY ANALYSIS AND REPORTING SOLUTION

Supporting the Rugby Football League (RFL) to better track the pathway of players from Academy through to national level.

WHO:
RFL PERFORMANCE & COACHING TEAM

The RFL is the governing body for Rugby League football in Britain and Ireland. Based at Red Hall in Leeds, it administers the England national rugby league team, the Challenge Cup, Super League (SL) and the Championship.

The RFL Chief Executive recently revealed his strategy for an England World Cup win in 2017. A key part of this overall strategy is ensuring a pipeline of high quality players is produced through the Super League Academy system.

CHALLENGES:
DIFFICULT TO TRACK PLAYERS

A number of challenges faced the Director of Performance & Coaching and the National Player Development Manager:

- Inability to accurately track the progress of junior players through the talent system
- Unable to measure the productivity and ROI of Super League Academies
- Lots of data held in excel spreadsheets that were unreliable. Difficulty in turning the data into quality information and real insight.

The task was to produce a player management and tracking system that could report on the productivity of the 16 Academy systems, both historically (2009-2014) and going forward.

The outputs in terms of player productivity, combined with added value, need to be calculated to assess each Academy's contribution to the player supply.

A solution was required that could be used to reward Academies on the production of professional players based on objective measures that would eliminate guesswork and controversy.

It was vital that the solution would enable the RFL to be able to accurately report from the Super League Academy and England Talent systems on the production of players.

This had to provide evidence-based assessments of the ROI for both the Super League and RFL. Crucially, it must also provide the accurate information upon which reward investment would be distributed.

Utilising spreadsheets, the RFL previously had limited analysis capability and visibility in this area. Spreadsheets had a number of inherent limitations, including:

- Inability to easily handle and combine multiple data sources
- Lack of dashboard visualisation of KPIs with detailed drill-down capability,
- Lack of interactivity and the difficulty of sharing between interested parties.

As a player moves through the system from initial registration in an Academy through to full England debut, it should be possible to calculate how Academies have influenced the development of the individual.

Inevitably, not all players entering the talent pathway will go on to make the sport their primary career. Academies also need to be measured on the retention rates of their players through their continued involvement in semi-professional and even non-professional Community leagues.

Therefore, player journey for each individual needs to be measured with a points-based system. The ability to generate "player chronologies" for each individual within the talent system is fundamental.

Above all, the new solution would become the central mechanism for the RFL to assess player progress.

SOLUTIONS AND OUTCOMES:
QLIKVIEW REPORTING AND ANALYSIS DASHBOARD

QlickiT has developed and helped deploy a QlikView-based solution to solve the above challenges faced by the RFL.

The functionality and flexibility of the solution has enabled a more rigorous and reliable approach to measuring Academy productivity and administering the resulting rewards.

TALENT SYSTEM PLAYER CHRONOLOGIES

for every
individual



It is fair to say that the new solution has met all of the above. Key characteristics include:

- An accurate Dashboard reporting & analysis system for the RFL and clubs
- A tool with which to analyse trends and interrogate relevant data
- Analysis and reports against both Academy system and England Talent Pathway KPIs
- Remote access by Super League clubs
- Ability to link/integrate with existing Super League management information systems such as Sports Office.
- The staff within Performance & Coaching function are fully competent in the use of the solution due to its ease of use and highly intuitive nature

One further unexpected benefit has resulted from QlikView's inherent ability to identify data inaccuracies. To gain the confidence of the Super League clubs and RFL senior management it was vital that the outputs of the system could be trusted.

Thus, the RFL was able to go back to source systems and correct the data discrepancies unearthed by QlikView to ensure the downstream results were reliable and trustworthy.

ENABLER:

QLIKVIEW ANALYTICS

The QlikView Analytics Discovery solution bridges the gap between traditional Business Intelligence solutions and inadequate spreadsheet applications.

Its in-memory associative search technology allows users to explore data freely rather than being confined to a predefined path of questions. QlikView's self-service analysis can be deployed in weeks or even days.

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