Ethnic minorities and coaching in elite level football in England: A call to action

A report and recommendations from the Sports People's Think Tank in association with the Fare network and the University of Loughborough

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Introduction from the Sports People's Think Tank (SPTT)

We speak with one voice

Over one hundred years since the first black professional footballer played in England and during a period in which we have seen between 25% to 30% of black professional footballers in our sport, there are only two black managers and a pitifully low number of ethnic minorities employed across coaching and management positions in English professional football.

It appears that football has lost successive generations of potential coaches and managers simply because they are black or from other ethnic minority backgrounds. The numbers do not add up, so many players from our communities who have achieved so much on the field of play - distinguished careers as senior players in some of the biggest clubs in this country, many with international caps, some who played at major tournaments - yet so few that have been given opportunities to achieve as coaches.

Talk to these individuals about the realities they faced, the number of jobs they applied for, the number of interviews they had, and the feeling emerges that they have been the victims of a systematic denial of talent and ambition.

These complaints are not new and our purpose in publishing this report is not to add to them. Our focus is to present research which dispels any doubt that there is a unique and disproportionate under-representation in English football management which in turn requires unique solutions.

The conclusions from this data set presented by Dr. Bradbury highlight a range of issues to be addressed. These include the possibility of racial stereotyping, the prevalence of 'insider' networks recruiting coaches on the basis of 'who you know, not what you know', and the failure of the coaching qualification system to incorporate ethnic minorities.

Whatever the reasons you choose to give credence to, an urgent, honest and thorough debate is required before English football can heal itself and redress the imbalance. We hope these debates can be productive.

It relates back to performance

Football management is often characterised as a 'results-led business' or more starkly as 'the business of winning'. For the SPTT the aim is not solely to achieve equal representation and ensure social justice - although that would be reason enough to publish this report - but we know that greater diversity off the pitch will enhance performance on the pitch.

Our rationale is simple: there is so much diversity among the playing squads at English clubs that to extend it to coaching staff will inform and improve coaching methods. This in turn will help the development of players and their on-field performance.

Business consultants refer to the performance gains that can be made through management insight. In elite level football a few percentage points of performance gain means matches won, which can mean promotion, medals, prize money, sponsorship, financial stability and glory.

These 'business case' arguments for greater diversity in football management are quantifiable and compelling.

One might also add at this point that the idea of discarding highly experienced and qualified individuals on the basis of their ethnicity is simply a waste of a rare commodity in English football.

We all have a role to play in positive change

Although the issue of ethnic under-representation is regularly aired in public discussions, action has not matched the level of debate. English football is globally recognised with enormous social and financial capital at its fingertips, but the governing bodies have so far failed to bring about any meaningful change to increase coaching diversity.

This is not to ignore the good intentions, plans and initiatives launched by the football authorities over the past few years and, in particular, the work of the Professional Footballers Association who have championed and opened up access to coaching qualifications for minority coaches.

Some of the action plans may be having an impact but the time has surely come for English football to find creative solutions that will finally redress the imbalance that is set out in the pages of this report.

We all have a role to play in creating equality and improving performance: the owners and leaders of clubs, the Football Association, the Premier League, the Football League, the Professional Footballers Association, the League Managers Association, the media and football supporters across the country.

We simply cannot leave this issue to take care of itself, change will not come through natural evolution as some administrators have suggested; it has not in the hundred years since Arthur Wharton was showcasing his goalkeeping skills, it will not in the future.

Our contribution to these solutions are the recommendations we make below. These ideas are not the only way forward but they relate directly to many of the issues identified in this report and cannot be ignored.

As a group of players we speak with one voice on behalf of many current and former players - white, black and Asian - who join us in wanting to see positive change in football. Will the industry match our passion and vision for the future? Can it be brave enough to offer the leadership we need?

Jason Roberts
On behalf of the Sports People's Think Tank

Recommendations for action from the SPTT

1 – Statement of intent

We believe that English football should set itself an overall target of at least 20% of coaches in professional football to be from BME backgrounds by 2020. The graduated approach to be taken in reaching this target will help correct procedural imbalances in training, recruitment and support.

2 – Profiling BME candidates for jobs

English football should give serious consideration to the implementation of a positive action scheme drawing on the one used by the National Football League in the United States for all coaching and managerial appointments in the Premier League and Football League.

3 – External reporting

All clubs in the Premier League and Football League and the Football Association (and its affiliates), to report back each season on progress made towards the 20% target to an independent body. The appointed organisation to define the terms of progress to be achieved, to collect and review statistics and issue an annual report on coaching diversity.

4 – Qualifications for BME managerial candidates

The Football Association to set clear targets for the attainment of high level coaching (and coach education) qualifications for ethnic minority coaches to redress the under- representation in those taking the courses.

5 – Addressing wider under- representation of ethnic minorities

Less than 1% of all senior governance and senior administration positions at governing bodies and professional clubs in England are held by staff from BME backgrounds. This situation needs urgent action through a full diversity plan for ethnic minority representation in administrative roles, at Board, Committee and Advisory Group level. The diversity expert body to monitor progress.

6 – Tackling 'closed networks' and offering support mechanisms

A mentoring and networking plan to be developed by English football to identify and support coaches from ethnic minority backgrounds. The scheme to include industry candidate events to enable decision makers to meet qualified applicants and schemes to offer experience to qualified applicants.
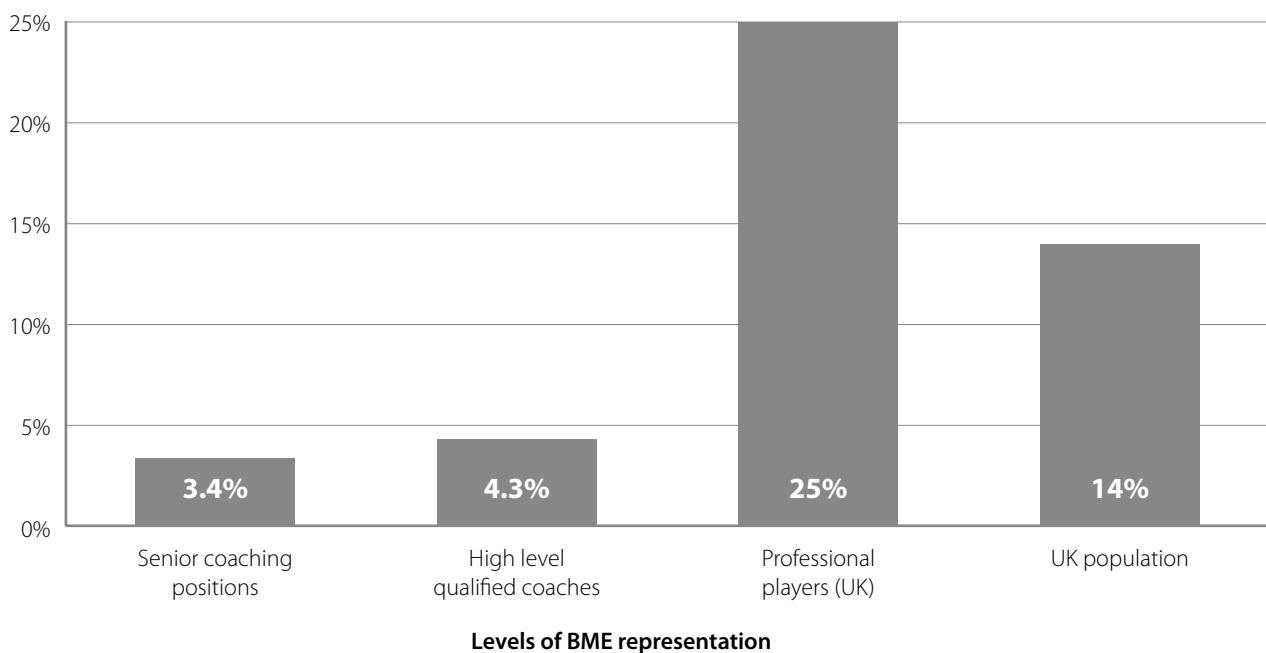
Headline findings

1 – At 92 professional clubs, 19 out of 552 senior coaching positions are held by coaches from BME backgrounds. A total of 3.4% of the coaches employed

Senior coaching positions	Numbers	Percentage
Overall figures	**19 out of 552**	**3.4% BME**
First team managers	2 out of 92	2.2% BME
First team assistant managers	3 out of 92	3.3% BME
First team coach	4 out of 92	4.3% BME
Development squad head coach (18-21)	5 out of 92	5.4% BME
Youth squad head coach (16-18)	2 out of 92	2.2% BME
Academy Director (5-16)	3 out of 92	3.3% BME

2 – At the end of 2012, a total of 401 BME coaches had achieved the FA UEFA B award, 57 had achieved the FA UEFA A award, and 13 had achieved the FA UEFA Pro-license.

Core coaching qualifications	Levels of BME representation
FA Level 1 award	8.5% BME
FA Level 2 award	9.5% BME
FA UEFA B award	4.2% BME
FA UEFA A award	4.8% BME
FA UEFA Pro-License	6.4% BME

3 – Football vs Society: Levels of BME representation

Levels of BME representation

4 – BME coaches in senior coaching positions: names and positions		
Position	**Name**	**Club**
First team manager	Chris Powell	Huddersfield Town
	Keith Curle	Carlisle United
First team assistant manager	Dino Maarmia	Stevenage Borough
	Terry Connor	Ipswich Town
	Alex Dyer	Huddersfield Town
First team head coach	Dennis Lawrence	Everton
	Curtis Fleming	Bolton Wanderers
	Hakan Hayrettin	Luton Town
	Warren Hackett	Dagenham and Redbridge
Development squad head coach	Patrick Viera	Manchester City
	Jason Euell	Charlton Athletic
	Ugo Ehiogu	Tottenham Hotspur
	Jon De Souza	Brentford
	Darren Moore	West Bromwich Albion
Youth squad head coach	Paul Furlong	Queens Park Rangers
	Chris Allen	Oxford United
Academy Director	Osie Abingee	Brentford
	Sevvy Aslam	Port Vale
	Chris Ramsey	Queens Park Rangers

Other BME coaches involved in professional clubs include Michael Emenalo at Chelsea and Les Ferdinand at Queens Park Rangers who are both in senior football operations roles.

5 – Key explanations for the under-representation of BME coaches include

- Limited access to and negative experiences of high level coach education courses
- Over-reliance of professional clubs on 'networks based' methods of coach recruitment
- Conscious and unconscious racial bias and stereotypes in the coaching workplace
- Consequent lack of BME coaching role models

Ethnic minorities and coaching in elite level football in England

Dr. Steven Bradbury, University of Loughborough

1. The wider context

1.1 BME groups in England

Over the past 60 years the UK has steadily become one of the most ethnically and culturally diverse countries in Europe. By 2014, around 14% of the 63 million strong population of the UK is drawn from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds, the majority of which is resident in England. The overwhelming majority of the BME population is made-up of second and third generation Black-Caribbean, Black-African, South Asian and Mixed-Ethnicity groups.

Whilst over time BME groups have become more strongly integrated into the everyday social and cultural fabric of UK society, efforts to achieve full racial equality remain limited and partial. Whilst some BME groups have achieved significant success in key areas of social and public life, the 'BME experience' in other cases has been marked by patterns of racial discrimination and socio-economic and cultural marginalisation. The mixed experiences of BME groups have also been 'played out' in sports in the UK, including, in professional football in England.

1.2 BME groups in professional football in England

Since the late 1970s professional football in England has become increasingly characterized by the ethnic and cultural diversity of its players. In the first instance, these players were drawn mainly from first and second generation Black Caribbean and Black African populations and included players such as Cyrille Regis, Laurie Cunningham, Brendon Batson and Viv Anderson. Since the early 1990s, 'home grown' BME players have accounted for around 25% of all players across the four professional leagues in England and in national team's squads at senior and youth level. Further, by 2014, an estimated 30% of players at professional club youth academies and development squads are from BME, mainly, Black and Mixed-Ethnicity backgrounds. The increasing diversity of players in English professional football has also been informed by the tendency of elite level clubs to have broadened recruitment to incorporate new global markets. For example, during the 2013/14 season the English Premier League featured players from fifty different nationalities drawn from six different continents: around 60% of all players at clubs at this level. An estimated 25% of these 'foreign' imports are from BME backgrounds.

Despite the longstanding involvement of (some) BME groups as professional players, there has been only a minimal throughput of BME players into coaching and management positions at professional clubs. At the present time in September 2014 only two professional club managers is from a BME background: Chris Powell at Huddersfield Town and Keith Curle at Carlisle United. Similarly, few BME coaches are presently employed within the wider coaching infrastructures at professional clubs. Presently, only 19 out of 552 senior coaching positions at all 92 professional clubs in England is held by coaches from BME backgrounds: 3.4% of all positions of this kind (see section 2.4 below).

BME groups also remain significantly under-represented in leadership positions across the professional game in England. Less than 1% of all senior governance and senior administration positions at the FA, the Premier League, the Football League or at professional clubs are held by staff from BME backgrounds. Taken together, these findings highlight the limited transition of BME players into coaching and leadership positions in English professional football and the overwhelmingly White landscape of the senior decision making tiers of the sport.

2. BME representation in coach education and coach employment

2.1 The coach education context

The FA has primary responsibility for the education and development of football coaches in the professional game in England. In order to enable this process, the FA Learning department has developed a comprehensive coach education pathway which is divided into three principal strands (core, youth and specialist) which feature a clear vertical pathway to progression. High level coaching awards such as the FA UEFA B, FA UEFA A and FA UEFA Pro-license are designed to enable coaches to develop the technical expertise to coach elite level professional players.

Attending high level coach education courses can also enable opportunities for information sharing and help to raise the profile and broaden the contact base of coaches. To this end, these courses can increase the knowledge, accreditation and networks of coaches and help them to make the successful transition from playing to coaching in the professional game.

Historically, the FA has operated a broadly generalist policy to engagement in high level coach education courses. Whilst this approach to coach education has been perceived to be open to all it has to some significant extent been premised on the capacity of aspiring coaches to fulfil a series of formal and informal criteria. This is especially the case in relation to access to FA UEFA B and FA UEFA A awards. These criteria include having; foundational coaching qualifications, professional playing experience and sufficient funds to cover the costs of courses. They also include; being identified, selected and supported by professional clubs or national associations as suitable candidates and having access to work with elite level players to fulfil the practical 'on the job' requirements requisite for the completion of these awards. Access to the FA UEFA Pro-License is markedly more difficult in terms of meeting stringently applied entry criteria, incurring significant time and financial costs, and the high demand for and limited availability of courses of this kind.

2.2 Levels of BME representation: coaching qualifications

In order to monitor the demographic diversity of coaches at the various levels of the coach education pathway in England, the FA has recently developed a self-report mechanism for collecting information on the ethnic, gender and (dis)ability backgrounds of participants. Thus far data has been collected arbitrarily rather than as a compulsory measure and is considered as partial rather than robust. Nonetheless, drawing on and recalculating data provided by the FA Learning department, the FA Football Inclusion Plan, and the Black and Asian Coaches Association, the figures featured in Table 1 below provide an 'informed estimation' of the percentage of BME coaches achieving core coaching qualifications up to and including 2012.

Table 1: BME groups and coaching qualifications: overall	
Core coaching qualifications	**Levels of BME representation**
FA Level 1 award	8.5% BME
FA Level 2 award	9.5% BME
FA UEFA B award	4.2% BME
FA UEFA A award	4.8% BME
FA UEFA Pro-License	6.4% BME

The figures featured in Table 1 indicate the generally low levels of representation of BME coaches completing core coaching qualifications at each level of the coach education pathway. These figures compare unfavourably with levels of representation of BME professional players in England (25-40%) and the BME population of the UK more broadly (14%). The figures also indicate a general drop-off rate of qualified BME coaches across the

transition from lower to higher level awards such as the FA UEFA B and FA UEFA A awards and the FA UEFA Pro-license.

A little more promisingly, the figures do indicate a small up-turn in the percentage of BME qualified coaches across higher level awards. However, these findings need to be treated with some methodological caution in comparing percentage rates between very different sample sizes of participants. For example, between almost 10,000 UEFA B award holders, 1,200 FA UEFA A award holders and 205 FA UEFA Pro-License holders. To this end, it is perhaps more helpful to state that by the end of 2012, a total of 401 BME coaches had achieved the FA UEFA B award, 57 had achieved the FA UEFA A award, and 13 had achieved the FA UEFA Pro-license.

2.3 The coach employment context

Almost all of the 92 professional clubs in England operate four identifiable categories of teams in accordance with nationally agreed player development and competitions criteria. These include; professional club first team squads, development squads (18-21 years), youth scholarship squads (16-18 years) and youth academy squads (5-16 years). Accordingly, the coaching infrastructure at clubs is designed to match-up to these age-specific categories of players and teams. To this end, almost all professional clubs employ a minimum of six senior coaching staff in broadly replicable positions to oversee football operations. These senior coaching positions include; first team manager, first team assistant manager, first team head coach, development squad head coach (18-21 years), youth development head coach (16-18 years) and youth academy director (5-16 years). The work of these senior coaching staff is also supported by a range of other full-time, part-time and sessional coaching staff. The numbers of coaching support staff at clubs is dependent on club size, league status and financial resources.

Responsibility for the recruitment of coaching staff also follows broadly similar patterns at all professional clubs. Broadly speaking, the selection and appointment of first team managers is primarily undertaken by club owners and directors at clubs. Recruitment of other first team coaching staff is also undertaken by club owners and directors in consultation with appointed first team mangers. Recruitment of senior coaching positions below this level is generally undertaken by the first team management team and sanctioned by club owners, directors and other senior decision makers at clubs. The recruitment of additional coaching support staff is then undertaken by the relevant heads of specific football operations departments, such as the development squad head coach or the youth academy director.

Whilst in recent years there has developed a growing push towards establishing qualifications based frameworks for coach employment in professional football, the extent to which this has been implemented beyond some youth academy settings remains a moot point. To this end, the professional football industry remains heavily reliant on networks rather than qualifications based methods of coach recruitment. This is especially the case in relation to senior coaching appointments. Further, these networks based methods of recruitment have tended to result in the appointment of 'known' coaches from within the dominant social and cultural networks of the football industry. In many cases, these new coaching and management recruits have fewer coaching qualifications and less relevant experience than other applicants, including those from more ethnically diverse backgrounds. To this end, it might be argued that coach recruitment at professional clubs continues to be largely premised on 'who you know, not what you know'.

2.4 Levels of BME representation: coach employment

Despite increasing concerns as to the lack of BME managers and coaches in the professional game in England, there has thus far been a lack of any robust data collection examining the levels of BME representation across the wider coaching infrastructures of professional clubs. The figures featured in Table 2 below represent the first significant effort to remedy the lack of data collection in this respect. These figures have been compiled through conducting extensive analysis of official professional club websites and other relevant documentary

evidence, as well as through ongoing contact with BME coaches and other key stakeholders in the professional game. To this end, Table 2 below outlines the overall numbers and percentages of BME coaches presently holding senior coaching positions at 92 professional clubs in September 2014.

Table 2: BME coaches in senior coaching positions: numbers and percentages		
Senior coaching positions	**Numbers**	**Percentage**
Overall figures	19 out of 552	3.4% BME
First team managers	2 out of 92	2.2% BME
First team assistant managers	3 out of 92	3.3% BME
First team coach	4 out of 92	4.3% BME
Development squad head coach (18-21)	5 out of 92	5.4% BME
Youth squad head coach (16-18)	2 out of 92	2.2% BME
Academy Director (5-16)	3 out of 92	3.3% BME

The figures featured in Table 2 indicate that a total of 19 out of 552 senior coaching positions at professional clubs in England were held by coaches from BME backgrounds in September 2014: a total of 3.4% of all coaches in positions of this kind.

The findings featured in Table 3 offer a more detailed account of the names of BME coaches in senior coaching positions and the professional clubs at which they are presently situated.

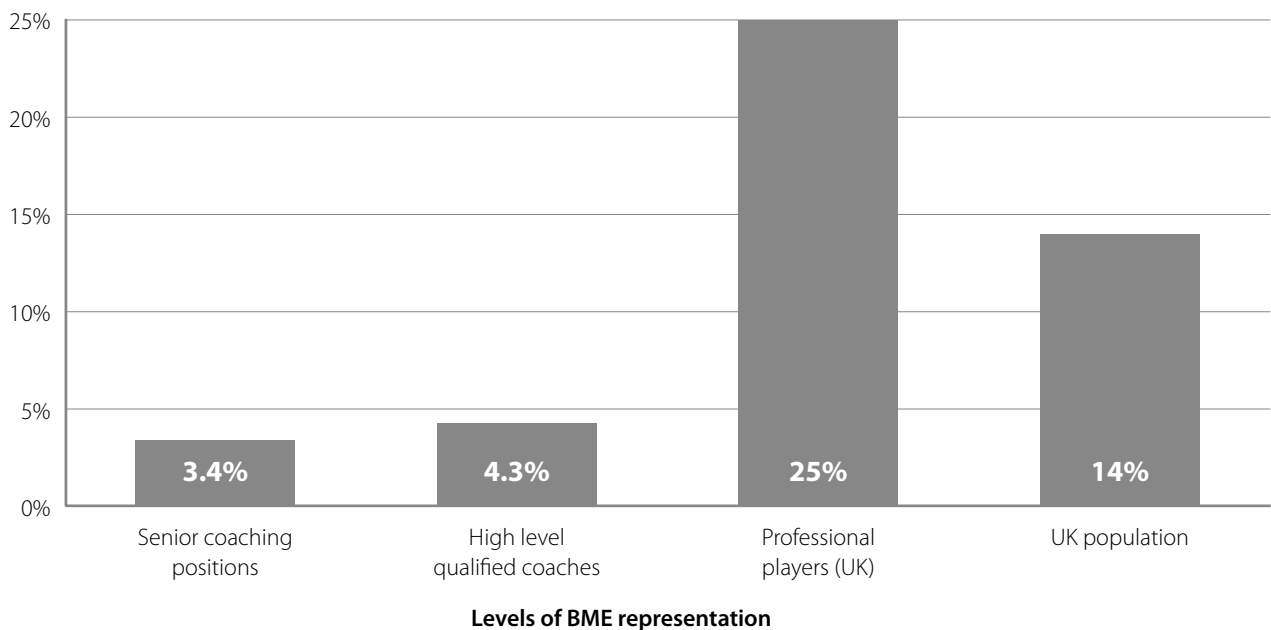| Table 3: BME coaches in senior coaching positions: names and positions		
Position	**Name**	**Club**
First team manager	Chris Powell	Huddersfield Town
	Keith Curle	Carlisle United
First team assistant manager	Dino Maarmia	Stevenage Borough
	Terry Connor	Ipswich Town
	Alex Dyer	Huddersfield Town
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	Jon De Souza	Brentford
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Youth squad head coach	Paul Furlong	Queens Park Rangers
	Chris Allen	Oxford United
Academy Director	Osie Abingee	Brentford
	Sevvy Aslam	Port Vale
	Chris Ramsey	Queens Park Rangers

The findings featured in Table 3 indicate that BME coaches presently holding senior coaching positions at professional clubs are drawn from a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, including; Black Caribbean, Black

African, Mixed Ethnicity, South Asian, North African and Turkish Cypriot. Further, whilst this cohort of BME senior coaches is drawn from mainly British backgrounds, it also includes coaches drawn from French, Irish and Tunisian national heritage.

Further analysis indicates that these 19 BME coaches presently hold senior coaching positions at 17 different clubs across the professional league structure in England. Only Queens Park Rangers, Brentford and Huddersfield Town presently feature more than one BME coach in senior coaching positions of this kind. Further, whilst around three-fifths of BME senior coaches are situated at clubs in London and the South East of England, the remainder hold senior coaching positions at clubs in the Midlands or the North of England.

Figure 1 below indicates some general comparisons between the percentage of BME coaches in senior coaching positions at professional clubs, BME coaches with high level (FA UEFA B, FA UEFA A and FA UEFA Pro-license) coaching awards, UK born BME professional players and the BME population of the UK more broadly.

Figure 1: Levels of BME representation in football and society

Levels of BME representation

The findings featured in Figure 1 indicate the much lower levels of representation of BME coaches in senior coaching positions (3.4%) compared to the levels of 'home grown' BME professional players (25%) and the UK BME population more broadly (14%). Levels of BME representation in senior coaching positions also compare unfavourably with the levels of BME coaches achieving high level coaching awards (4.3%). This is especially the case with respect to BME coaches achieving the FA UEFA Pro-License (6.4%). On this latter score, only two of the 13 BME coaches who have completed the FA UEFA Pro-License presently hold a senior coaching position in professional football in England.

Beyond the list of BME senior coaches provided above, the authors of this report are aware of a number of other BME coaches presently working at professional clubs. Whilst in some cases, this includes BME coaches in senior football operations positions such as Michael Emenalo and Les Ferdinand at Chelsea and Queens Park Rangers respectively, in most cases BME coaches here are mainly working with younger players at development, youth, and academy squad level. Whilst many of these latter BME coaches have formerly played the game at a professional level such as Eddie Newton, Earl Barrett, Ledley King, and Michael Johnson, other, less high profile, BME coaches have been recruited to clubs from outside of the professional game as a result of their involvement in the recently established COACH programme. The authors are also aware of a number of highly qualified and experienced BME coaches who are not presently in employment in the professional game such as Chris Hughton and Paul Ince.

It is not the intention of this report (at this time, at least) to calculate the overall numbers and percentage of BME coaches presently working within the various tiers of professional club coaching infrastructures. Rather, the intention here is to simply highlight the developing critical mass of highly qualified BME coaches presently working 'beneath the radar' at clubs and who might realistically have strong ambitions towards upward career mobility in the future. The realisation of these ambitions (and the ambitions of other BME aspiring coaches) is likely to depend to some extent on their successful negotiation of a series of key institutional barriers which have thus far limited the scope and pace of transition from playing to coaching for many BME coaches. It is to an analysis of the relationship between these ongoing racialised barriers to progression and the presently low levels of BME representation as coaches at professional game to which this report now turns.

3. Explanations for the low levels of BME coaches in professional football

The explanations for the low levels of BME coaches in professional football provided in this report are drawn from existing and forthcoming research undertaken by Dr Steven Bradbury at Loughborough University on behalf of the Fare network. This research has been undertaken between 2011 and 2014 and has involved conducting extensive one-to-one and focus group interviews with large numbers of BME coaches and key stakeholders at all levels of the professional game in England (as well as in France and the Netherlands). The explanations featured in this report focus on four inter-related areas and outline the key constraining factors which have informed the ongoing patterns of under-representation of BME coaches in English professional football. They four inter-related themes are:

- Access to and experiences of high level coach education courses

- Over-reliance on networks based methods of coach recruitment

- Experiences of racism and stereotypes

- Lack of BME coach role models and continued under-representation

3.1 Limited access to and negative experiences of high level coach education courses

Many BME coaches have commented positively on the support they have received to attend high level coach education courses and on the inclusive and welcoming environment at courses of this kind. However, in other cases, a number of BME coaches have provided less positive accounts in relation to accessing and experiencing the high level coach education environment.

Key constraining factors

- Some BME coaches presently not in employment at clubs have reported on the negative impact of being positioned outside of 'insider' football networks. This was felt to have limited opportunities for identification, selection, mentoring and financial support to access and complete high level coach education courses

- Some BME coaches presently in employment at clubs have reported being marginalised within culturally narrow club coaching environments. These coaches have reported being overlooked for identification and selection to attend high level coach education courses by senior coaching staff at clubs. These staff were felt to have focused support instead towards 'preferred choices' of White coaches and to have consequently limited the pace of career advancement of some BME coaches.

- Some BME coaches have reported on the perceived favouritism shown towards high profile White ex-players at high level coach education courses on the part of FA coach educators. This differential treatment was felt to have accorded less value to and engendered additional pressures for BME coaches in building confidence, proving competence and gaining acceptance within the high level coach education environment.

- Some BME coaches have recounted experiences of intentional and unintentional racism within the high level coach education environment. This has included explicit racist name calling and more subtle and nuanced forms of racial 'banter' and a lack of recognition of or willingness to address racisms of this kind by FA coach educators. These practices of inequitable treatment were felt to have heightened the sense of cultural isolation of some BME coaches and to have lessened aspirations towards progressing further engagement with coach education courses

- Largely as a result of the inequalities of opportunities and experiences referred to above, a number of BME coaches have reported playing 'catch-up' in achieving high level coaching qualifications requisite for coaching employment. This was felt to have positioned BME coaches at a competitive disadvantage in competing against some better qualified White counterparts in the football coaching marketplace

3.2 Over reliance on networks based methods of coach recruitment

Whilst in recent years there has been a growing push towards establishing a qualification based framework for coach recruitment in professional clubs, this has this far largely tended to focus on the recruitment of coaches at youth academy level. This has led to a gradual opening up of opportunities for, often, newly qualified, coaches to access coaching positions and to show commitment, establish competence and increase their professional visibility, including some BME coaches. However, it remains the case that professional clubs continue to rely heavily on networks based methods of coach recruitment, especially in the adult professional game where coach recruitment is largely premised on processes of personal recommendation, patronage and sponsored mobility. BME coaches have reported that networks based methods of coach recruitment have had a strongly negative effect in limiting opportunities for BME coaches and maintaining the ethnically narrow make-up of the coaching workforce at professional clubs.

Key constraining factors

■ A number of BME coaches have suggested that the extent to which clubs have operated qualifications based frameworks for elite level coach recruitment remains limited. This was felt to have limited opportunities for a significant number of highly qualified and relevantly experienced BME coaches from being considered for coaching posts at clubs. This was felt to be evidenced in the appointment at clubs of 'preferred choice' White candidates with fewer qualifications and experience

■ Some BME coaches have reported on the ongoing 'catch 22' situation of lacking sufficient experience of coaching elite level players to be considered for posts at professional clubs whilst simultaneously being denied opportunities to gain experience at clubs of this kind. This was felt to have further lessened the chances of BME coaches to gain a foothold in the coaching infrastructures at professional clubs.

■ The lack of appointment of BME players as team captains and limited opportunities to formally exhibit key qualities of leadership and authority. This was felt to position BME players as marginal to commonly practiced 'captain to coach' pathways and to limit opportunities for contact and relationship building with key power brokers at clubs such as senior administrators, directors and club owners

■ The tendency for coach recruitment to be premised on personal preference, patronage and sponsored mobility. This was felt to favour 'known' White coaches from within dominant social and cultural 'insider' networks in professional football and to gravitate against the employment of BME coaches who remain outside of the consciousness of key power brokers at clubs. This was felt to be evidenced in the frequency with which large numbers of White coaches move between coaching positions at different clubs whilst opportunities for BME coaches remain numerically limited.

■ The inherent unconscious racial bias of the sports media in consistently framing discussions around elite level coaching appointments in ethnically narrow terms. In particular, the tendency of sports journalists to continue to focus on the assumed merits and suitability of high profile White players to become good coaches, whist similarly talented BME players remain notably absent from these powerful media narratives

3.3 Experiences of racism and stereotypes

A number of BME coaches have reported that they have not experienced any forms of racism or stereotyping at professional clubs at which they had previously worked or were presently working as coaches. This was especially the case for BME coaches situated at clubs in urban, multi-ethnic, locales and within youth academy environments. For other BME coaches, issues of racism and stereotyping were considered to be a much more common-place feature of the coach employment environment at clubs

Key constraining factors

■ Some BME coaches have reported the continued incidence of subtle, nuanced and codified racisms and discrimination in the professional coaching workplace. This has included; the use of inappropriate language to describe different cultural groups, continual questioning of BME coaches competence in ways which were not applied to similarly qualified White coaches and unfairly denying opportunities for promotion within club infrastructures.

■ Some BME coaches have also referenced the tendencies of key power brokers at clubs including club owners, directors and senior coaching staff to continue to hold a series of physical and cultural stereotypes about BME players and coaches. These include;

   ■ Misplaced cultural perceptions with regard to the aspirations, attitudes, behaviours and intellectual capacities of BME coaches to successfully coach in the professional game

   ■ Questioning the suitability, authority and competence of BME coaches to successfully coach and manage teams made up of predominantly White players

   ■ Negatively conceptualising BME coaches in terms of their perceived ethnic and cultural traits rather than in terms of their qualifications, experience and abilities as coaches

   ■ Negatively conceptualising the appointment of BME coaches with 'uncertainty' and 'risk' and recruiting White coaches with whom they had more familiarity and social comfort

3.4 Lack of BME role models and continued under-representation

On the whole, BME coaches have reported strong motivations, drive and commitment to develop as coaches, to stay within the game and to pursue paid career paths in coaching at professional clubs. However, a number of BME coaches have drawn explicit linkages between the historical lack of BME coach role models, the experiences of discrimination referred to above and the negative outcomes for the continued under-representation of BME coaches in the professional game. The relationship between these events, practices and outcomes has been articulated by BME coaches in the following ways:

Key constraining factors

■ The lack of BME coach role models and experiences of discrimination in professional football in England have acted as a key disincentivising factor in limiting the aspirations, ambitions and motivations of BME former players to undertake coach education qualifications and pursue coaching careers

■ The lack of BME coach role models and experiences of discrimination in professional football in England have led some BME former players and coaches to actively pursue coaching careers in other countries in Europe or in new more equitable football markets in North America and the Caribbean

■ The lack of BME coach role models and experiences of discrimination in professional football in England have led some former BME players and coaches to drop out from the coaching market-place and pursue business and employment interests outside of football, especially in the sports media.

3.5 Some final comments: under-representation and institutional discrimination

The explanations above can be understood to represent a composite account of the varying experiences of BME coaches who have made significant efforts to make the transition from playing to coaching in the professional game. To this end, it is highly unlikely that any one BME coach has experienced all or none of the above practices of unequal treatment. What is much more likely is that many BME coaches have experienced at least some of the above incidences of exclusion across different football settings and at different stages of their professional coaching careers. To this end, it is the contention of this report that the processes of conscious and unconscious racial bias referred to above constitute a form of institutional discrimination which has had clear negative impacts for BME coaches. In particular, in limiting the potential for equality of opportunities and outcomes and maintaining the under-representation of BME coaches in the professional football environment. Measures to address this ongoing racialised imbalance must remain cognisant of the relationship between institutional discrimination and under-representation and should seek to challenge and disrupt the structures which underpin this unequal state of affairs.

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The **Sports People's Think Tank** comprises of current and former athletes offering thought leadership on topical issues from the unique position within the sports industry.

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The **Fare network** is an international campaigning and expert group active in over 40 countries on issues of anti- discrimination and social inclusion in football. Find out more at **www.farenet.org.**