

el Periòdic News

INTERVIEW

MANEL MONTORO



Fèlix Álvarez

THE PRESIDENT OF FAF

«It's vital to increase the infrastructure if we want football to grow»

IRINA RYBALCHENKO
ESCALDES - ENGORDANY

The President of the Federation of Andorran Football (FAF) since 2019, Fèlix Álvarez, has been passionate about football since childhood and is familiar with this sport as a player, as a fan and as a trainer. We talked to Felix about the evolution of football – both men's and women's – the challenges of sports infrastructure and the economic needs of the federation.

—What is the evaluation of the Multisegur League this year?

—The evaluation of the last league was very positive. The clubs decided to increase the number of participating teams from 8 to 10, and we were afraid that this would affect the quality, but this has not happened. The truth is that the teams from the second

division played their matches without any problems.

—What is FAF today? How many clubs does the federation unite?

In terms of clubs, we have ten teams in the first division, five in the second division, and 13 in mini-football (futsal football). With a population of 80,000-85,000 we have a total of about 3,000 licenses divided between football and mini-football.

—What are the strongest teams today?

—I would say it's UE Santa Coloma, winners of the League Multisegur Assegurances and the Constitució Valira Seguretat Cup. In terms of mini-football, Ranger's and Encamp put on a great show, playing in both the Liga Viatges Pantours and Memorial Canut. These are the clubs with the best teams.

However, there are other squads that are developing quickly.

—What is the difference between professional football in Andorra and professional football in Spain, for example?

—FAF is not currently recognized on a professional scale. There are clubs from the top four with players who can be considered professionals because they can make a living from football. But that doesn't compare to the big countries.

Spanish football can really be considered more professional because players are available to the club pretty much all week long. There are already quite a few clubs here that train in the morning, outside of working hours. We have more cases like that and will have to follow that formula. We need to keep up with other clubs.

—And what do we need to keep up with other clubs?

—For two or three years we have been working intensively on professionalizing the figure of the football referee. This is a global problem: referees are not evolving at the same pace as the league and players are growing, both in football and in mini-football.

—Physical preparation is one of the aspects we are most

concerned about, and we ask ourselves... If players train four days a week, why do referees only train one day?

—We often have to deal with circumstances where two teams have to share a football pitch. So, we think it's vital to increase the infrastructure if we want this sport to grow.

—How important is football to Andorra? What are the most popular sports in Andorra at the moment?

—Football is an important sport in Andorra, but I wouldn't say it's the most important one. Traditionally Andorra is a country of winter sports such as skiing. That said, our federation has the most licenses, even more than the ski federation...

Basketball and rugby are also very popular sports in the country.

—Does FAF receive subventions from the Andorran government?

—Previously we had a subvention of about 25 thousand euros, which is a small amount in the scale of the federation. And we gave it up in favor of other federations.

Today 90% to 95% of our income is subsidized by UEFA and FIFA, which are our «sponsors» at the European level.

This year, however, we will be asking for it.

—What is the annual budget of the federation?

—At the end of June, we closed —a budget of 9 million euros. It should be noted that of the 9 million euros, there is also a part that represents the amortization of fixed assets. If we ignore this part, we are talking about 7.5 million euros of the current budget.

—When it comes to popularizing football in the country, how can we attract young players and win more fans?

—Historically, Andorran football does not have many fans and supporters because we are a country that lives off tourism and commerce and most Andorrans work on weekends. We even find it difficult to fill the pitch in qualifying matches — even if we distribute tickets for free and invite people.

—Are there any famous footballers in Andorra?

—We have two world-famous footballers living here: Carles Puyol and Javier Saviola. I was not lucky enough to meet Carles in person, but we had contact with Javier Saviola. Despite the fact that he is a famous person, he is very simple and, above all, a good person. In fact, Saviola is one of the holders of 3,000 licenses, he plays mini-football in Andorra.

—The names of Lionel Messi and Gerard Piqué have been repeatedly mentioned in the press as being related to Andorra... Can we say that Andorra may have some common football development projects with them?

—We don't have any contacts with Piqué. But we have had talks with Jaume Nogués and Francesc Destree. We, as a federation, are open to communicating with these great players. We would very much like to use their knowledge to improve teams, to find more professional players or to train Andorran footballers.

—And what about women's football, how is it developing?

—I think that on a global level, women's football surprises a lot of football fans. For many years ENFAF, an Andorran women's football school, has also participated in the senior team of the Catalan League. This was unthinkable five or six years ago.

Two years ago, we created four women's teams. Until now, it seemed unreal! Today, girls come to us because they want to play football. The fact that the Barça women's team is performing very well helps us in terms of visibility for women's football and attracting followers. ●

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FAILURE IN THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Government rejects the CBD Bill for having a «weak basis»

The proposal was defeated with 10 votes in favor and 17 against, and the opposition regrets the loss of opportunity

ARNAU OJEDA GARCIA
ANDORRA LA VELLA

In the session of the General Council held last Monday afternoon, one of the points of the day was the examination and vote on the taking into consideration the Bill on CBD products authorized for sale and consumption. The proposal, promoted by the parliamentary group of Andorra Endavant, was not approved, leaving a final result of 10 votes in favor and 17 against.

In a first speech, the Minister of Environment, Agriculture and Livestock, Guillem Casal, emphasized that the proposal presented was too generic to regulate a sector that requires specific regulation, underlining the added difficulty of regulating products that are not produced in the country and highlighting the need for the collaboration of different ministries to carry out the control of these products. In this regard, he added that a dialogue has probably not been held with the primary sector to draft the proposal, stating that farmers alone cannot promote the creation of this new crop. «The trivialization of the use of CBD can constitute an indirect promotion of cannabis and minimize the risk of its effects», he concluded.

For his part, the Head of Government, Xavier Espot, also intervened in the debate weighing that the proposal has been made «quick and current» and does not consider it suitable to be admitted to the procedure. In addition, he maintained that the presented project has a «weak basis» and does not «deserve the honor» to be approved, emphasizing



One of the figures most critical of the regulation of CBD products was the Minister of the Environment, Guillem Casal.

AE states that the proposal would promote economic diversification by creating new opportunities

zing that it is about solving general problems, not particular judicial situations.

On the other hand, the councilor general and deputy of the

parliamentary group of Andorra Endavant, Noemí Amador, defended the proposal promoted by her group stating that «we do not want to legalize the drug». According to Amador, it wants to be generic and is for the benefit of those suffering from serious illnesses, for the benefit of public health and in the logic of convergence with neighboring countries. In addition, the general counsel emphasized that the therapeutic use of CBD is safe and effective, and that the pro-

posal would guarantee the safety of consumers and promote economic diversification by creating new business opportunities. The social democratic parliamentary group, through Judith Casal, emphasized that «CBD does not have psychotropic effects nor is it proven to be addictive», adding that this is a missed opportunity. Finally, from Concòrdia it was indicated that «we must listen to experts and collect opinions to make fair legislation». ●

CONSELL GENERAL / SERGI PÉREZ

NATIONAL DISABILITY COUNCIL

The future Accessibility Act, main topic at the CONADIS meeting

The aim of the text is to adapt the regulations, from the year 1995, to the current context of the Principality

GOVERN D'ANDORRA



The National Disability Council held in the Government's administrative building.

EL PERIÒDIC
ESCALDES-ENGORDANY

The National Disability Council (CONADIS) held a meeting chaired by the head of government, Xavier Espot, last Monday. One of the points discussed during the meeting was the future Accessibility Act, which is currently being worked on by the Executive. The aim of the text is to introduce changes in the regulations in force since 1995, in order to adapt them to the current context, also taking into account the evolution of the concept of accessibility in recent years.

Espot advanced that, in parallel, work is also being done on the modification of the Law

guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities. In addition, he informed that the drafting of the new CONAVA regulations incorporating the new assessment system for capacities will soon begin. In this sense, the representative emphasized that from the Executive «we continue to work to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities with awareness-raising actions so that people with disabilities are fully included in society, guaranteeing their full freedom of rights».

On the other hand, the Executive addressed a few words of thanks to all the associations, entities and institutions. «I en-

courage you to continue working to eradicate discrimination in all areas, promote equal opportunities, treatment and

Government is working on the modification of the Law guaranteeing the rights of people with disabilities



Xavier Espot

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT

«We continue to work to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities»

«I encourage you to continue working to eradicate discrimination in all areas and promote equal opportunities»

respect and to move towards a more inclusive and supportive society», as well as promoting personal, social and work autonomy, promote inclusion and participation in everyday life, and encourage the empowerment of the person and their family.

So, the aim of the meeting, which took place in the Government's administrative building, is to share and submit proposals to improve benefits and services for people with disabilities, as well as strengthen the coordination of actions related to this area.

The meeting was also attended by the Minister of Social Affairs and Civil Service, Trini Marín, and the Minister of Health, Helena Mas. Also in attendance were the Secretaries of State Ester Cervós, Cristina Pérez and Josep Anton Bardina, and the representatives of the different associations of people with disabilities and service providers. ●