

### SITUATION

Founded in 1967, AZ is well established as one of the Netherlands' premier football teams with a proud history of success in the Eredivisie and on the European stage. Despite enjoying a great 2008-09 season under the supervision of Louis van Gaal, subsequent changes in management and the bankruptcy of their main backer, DSB Bank meant a very uncertain future for the club.

### THE CHALLENGE

AZ knew that in order to achieve success with a newly restrained budget, they would have to become smarter and leaner to remain at the top. In 2010, they commissioned TopSportsLab to implement cutting-edge performance and asset management systems in order to establish a sustainable short and long term success strategy.

### THE VISION

- Achieve peak performance and maximum profitability from existing players and other assets
- Create a sustainable long-term success plan which can operate regardless of the coach in charge
- Develop a structured injury prevention programme
- Improve professionalism and increase integration with the youth programme
- Become the most attractive transfer club for players in the Netherlands
- To achieve operational excellence across all club functions.

### PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Subsequent to a successful 6-month trial period, TopSportsLab is confirmed as long-term strategic partner. Monthly meetings are arranged between technical and medical teams to improve collaboration. Performance analysis and injury prevention strategy receives interdepartmental buy-in.

#### Performance Analysis & Injury Prevention

- A baseline analysis of AZ athletes was established through professional screening. This is followed by periodic assessments to measure on-going physical performance including a series of motor abilities. This applies to the whole squad including youth division
- Individual medical risk profiles are developed for each player allowing the creation of custom injury prevention programmes
- Continuous player monitoring programmes are introduced which tracks HR and GPS data. TSL's proprietary Overuse Indicator function proactively identifies players at risk of injury so they can be prevented before they happen
- The data is further supplemented and programmes improved through the use of daily player fatigue questionnaires administered through mobile devices.

#### Continuous Innovation & Development

TopSportsLab, in conjunction with the University of Leuven monitor all technological and scientific breakthroughs ensuring AZ are the first to benefit from all new innovations and processes that are proven successful. Furthermore the club / TopSportsLab has sponsored a number of scientific research projects.

### ACHIEVEMENTS 2012-15



#### Football

- 3 x top 4 finishes in Eredivisie
- 3 seasons in Europa League incl. 1 quarter final
- Winner 2012/13 KNVB national cup

#### Financial

- 2011/12: Value of AZ players increased by 25%<sup>1</sup> compared to an average of 16% across top NL clubs
- AZ consistently managed with a first team of 22-25 players as opposed to the average of 32 in the Eredivisie – a saving of more than €3M / season
- Budget: when AZ made it to the quarter finals for the Euro League 2013/14, it had the lowest budget of the 8 finalists, half of FC Basel, the no 7.
- Excellent record of premium transfers e.g. Schaars, Wernbloom, Moisaner, Maher, Altidore, Martens, Sigthorssen, Pellè, Lens, Elm, Dembélé, Hoedt.

#### Sports Science

- AZ now openly recognised as the fittest team in the Netherlands
- Every season 4-6 youth team players debut in first team after being confirmed as physically ready for the increased workload
- Implementation of TopSportsLab injury prevention strategy has led to a substantial decrease in general injuries and in particular, a 60% decrease in muscular injuries.

#### Other significant notes

- AZ works with sports legend and baseball manager Billy Beane. His statistics based decision-making at Oakland Athletics was the inspiration for the movie "Moneyball".
- AZ have now recruited a full time TopSportsLab performance analyst
- Despite 4 changes in head coach, the programmes implemented by TopSportsLab have remained in place and have shown performance improvements year-on-year
- Former AZ coaches during this period have begun the process of introducing TopSportsLab technology and processes at their new club including FC Nürnberg and FC Twente
- In 2013, Willem II promoted to Eredivisie with 5 AZ players on loan. Willem II also uses TopSportsLab
- In 2014, AZ's technical director is recruited by PSV to "install top sports culture".

<sup>1</sup>Source: [www.transfermarkt.co.uk](http://www.transfermarkt.co.uk)