Information System of the Slovak Football

The Slovak Football Association (SFZ) was established in 1938 and with its more than 420,000 members it represents **the biggest organization in Slovakia.** Within its structures, it gives an opportunity for a regular sports activity mostly to the youth and children. Approximately 5,000 football matches, supervised directly or indirectly by the SFZ, are taking place all over the country during the weekend.

Idea

The Information System of the Slovak Football (ISSF) has been developed by TEMPEST company. Its goal is to unify and simplify main as well as supporting activities of the organization aiming in the data centralization, computerization and the certification of processes and improvement of the football management and control. The project includes also the analysis of processes, delivery of infrastructure and ISSF operation settings.

Advantages

- automation of main and supporting activities of the organization
- high data availability, integrity and transparency
- improvement of efficiency, transparency and the certification of processes
- more economical and better controlled managerial methods of the organization
- increased transparency and the implementation of controlling at all levels of football organization within the SFZ including regional and district football associations and clubs
- introduction of personal responsibility for every decision
- improvement of the information services for professionals

Initial Situation

The SFZ organizational structure is composed by 4 regional and 38 district football associations where the SFZ was supposed to coordinate all football activities. However, the SFZ was missing a tool for controlling and managing of all its activities from the top to the bottom. Each association had its own rules, bodies and procedures. There was no coordination and consistency, a lot of data was missing, other was duplicated, plenty of time was wasted with paper work and traveling to the regions in order to arrange basic processes like registration or transfers of players.

The SFZ was also lacking a unique database of clubs, players and other members of the Slovak football family. The processes in the organization were time consuming and based mostly on the principle of filling out, signing and sending the paper forms.

Goal

Simply said, our intention is to optimize processes and implement a modern and user-friendly system for all elements of the Slovak football including all basic processes (registrations, transfers, applications and committee agenda) and financial requirements within one centralized application. By the implementation of the system, SFZ has achieved transparency and has simplified the control over its whole organization with a clear personal responsibility for each decision.

Project Overview

The current system allows independent publishing of one set of data across several platforms such as mobile and TV applications on the website, the verification of SFZ membership and other services. The ISSF also enables public access to the information through a public web portal (www.futbalnet.sk), as well as a high-quality verified and fast scoring system. The ISSF also includes preparation for the integration into the information system of the National Sport Centre for the export of data from the ISSF.

The information system provides following services in the full extend:

- central registry of persons including players, coaches, delegates, referees and other officials active in the Slovak football
- processes oriented in management, direction and evaluation of competitions, creation of electronic match records, online scoring system, etc.
- informatization of processes (electronic transfers, electronic issue of the registration cards, etc.)
- administration of finances (monthly collecting of invoices for more than 1,900 subjects)
- printing and distribution of registration cards
- public portal, i.e. web application (www.futbalnet.sk) which provides basic information about results, competitions, players, clubs, coaches, etc.

Central Database (Registry)

The registry contains records of all entities involved in the Slovak football. It is the fundamental goal of the information system to replace the outdated paper records by the electronic system. Currently, it is an integral part of daily administrative work of each SFZ staff member. All types of records in the registry can be searched and viewed in different ways and forms. Basic entities in the central database include:

- persons (unambiguous identification of the sportsman, transparency and possible drawing of consequences)
- players (records, links to played matches, match statistics, transfers between clubs, coaching or managerial activities)
- coaches
- referees
- delegates, referee observers (they participate greatly on the organization and evaluation of matches)

Figure 1: Member record

Figure 3: Registration card (specimen)

Figure 2: Electronic match sheet

Processes Oriented on the Direction and Evaluation of Matches

The life-cycle of the competition consists of several complex steps and covers all administrative processes for the direction of the competition. Competitions last 1 season (autumn and spring part). The winner of the particular competition qualifies for the higher level competition, the team at the lowest position in the league is eliminated and relegated to the lower-level competition. The football season consists of several basic phases:

- creation of the basic season frame
- enrollment of teams
- confirmation of enrolled teams
- creation or updating of season line-ups
- generation of the match schedule
- match statistics

ADMINISTRATOR

Creation of the season and the 1st season of the competition

COMPETITION ADMINISTRATOR

Competition configuration

COMPETITION ADMINISTRATOR

Creation of match times of competition / lists of terms for required configurations

Deadline for teams enrollment

Enrollment and placement of teams into competitions

COMPETITION ADMINISTRATOR

Creation of a new season of the competition

If the competition is finished

Match sheet finalization

COMPETITION ADMINISTRATOR

Change of match time in the competition

Delegation of persons (referees, match delegates, referee observers)

Deadline for the teams enrollment into the competition

Competition closure / closure of the required part of competitions

Records from the match reports

Creation of match schedule for the required configuration (competition part)

If the required part of competition is finished

Match sheet finalization

Figure 4: Match course scheme

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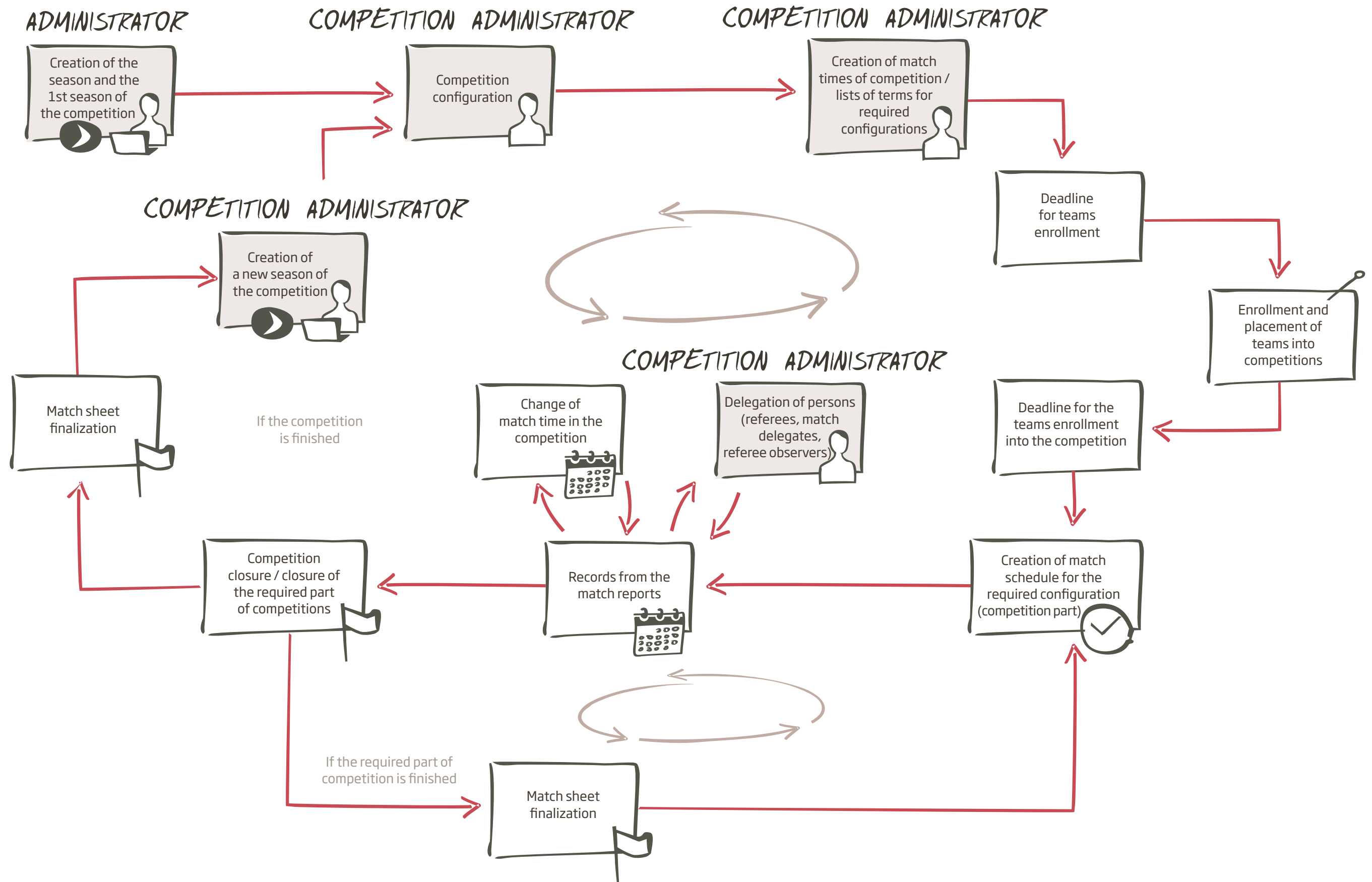IT makes sense

Match Report

Keeping records of the match-related events starts with the putting of all basic match data into the form, i.e. from match date and players' lists through recording of all events during the match and completing the match sheet in the end.

Informatization of Other Processes

The most important processes in the information system are computerized:

- fully electronic process of the player's basic registration
- process of players' transfers and lease – transfers of players between clubs
- fully electronic process of transfer approval by players and club managers
- process of the creation and the application of decision making taken by unions' bodies – especially by the disciplinary committee – and the penalties resulting from these decisions and their automatic application during the ongoing competition (season)
- process of the creation and the distribution of player, coach and referee cards

The Transfer of a Player

The transfer of a player is a process within the Information System of Slovak Football (ISSF) providing a quick and transparent acts of a player's transfer, repeated transfer, lease and the termination of a player's lease. All information concerning the entire transfer process and its current state is, at the same time, also available in the Public database of the Slovak Football Association.

1. *Club A* must fill in the ISSF electronic form containing an application for a player's transfer.
2. The player to whom the transfer applies will receive notification containing a confirmation request. The player may approve or reject the transfer.
3. *Club B* will subsequently receive notification of the transfer request. After filling in all necessary information in ISSF, the Club may, too, approve or reject the transfer.
4. Upon *Club B*'s approval, the respective registry office will receive notification containing a transfer confirmation request. Subject to all conditions being fulfilled, the respective registry office employee in charge will definitively approve or reject the transfer.
5. Upon approval by the respective registry office, the system will generate a fee to be paid by *Club A* applying for the transfer.

Transfers and Lease of Players

Players do not spend their entire active career in one single club – they can be transferred between clubs (a permanent transfer) or sent on a lease (a temporary transfer). The whole process consists of several steps which are done by different parties; each step presents a generated task which has to be solved within the required time.

The form of generating tasks per users is used in all realized processes. Our solution has brought transparency into the company (e.g. on imposing and the payment of fees), personal liability (e.g. on permitting transfers and lease of players). Transparency has also been brought into the economics of the Slovak football because the monthly invoicing has been adopted. On a monthly basis all fees which belong to associations and clubs are generated into monthly collective invoices which are sent to respective legal entities in digital form. Invoices are then automatically transferred into the accounting system where they wait for the payment. After the payment, the invoice is marked in our information system in the same way.

Creation and Distribution of Registration Cards

The system also allows for processing of applications, printing and distribution of registration cards.

Public Database – Generated Public Portal

The Public Registry (FutbalNET) is a separate application which provides the public with basic information about players, clubs, coaches, etc. What is also available is information about match results, competitions and league tables. The FutbalNET is updated online, directly from the ISSF and available to public at www.futbalnet.sk.

Use of Service

The ISSF system is used by the SFZ organization and 44 regional or district associations which manage the Slovak football. It contains 3 management levels (Central SFZ level, Regional SFZ level and District SFZ level) and a number of registries of persons which are geographically distributed all over Slovakia.

The ISSF system is currently used by clubs (more than 1,900), registrars, economists, persons, players (more than 380,000), coaches, delegates, referee observers, referees and managers who are active in the Slovak football. The ISSF system also has a public portal for the needs of publishing information and communication with the public.

The ISSF design was at the same time built on cloud technologies which have brought, apart from the reduction of operation costs, also increase in SLA parameters during the operation of the whole system.

Conclusions

As far as the technological and functional aspects are concerned, our solution has met the requirements of the contracting entity and presents a basis for further expansion. It is universal and usable for similar associations. It is scalable and meets high quality demands based on the development and delivery of the information system.

From the perspective of the main goals accomplishment and satisfaction of requirements which were placed on the functionality, technology, plan and extent by the contracting entity, the project has been generally evaluated as a successful one. Positive feedback, smooth roll-out, extent of functional changes and operational processes as well as the interest shown by other organizations in such a project were significant attributes in the assessment of this objective; its achievement also confirms that the chosen methodology for the project management was an appropriate one.

The ISSF system has also been positively concerned by FIFA representatives who praised especially the complexity of the system, its short realization and start-up time or achieved results. The project was also awarded by ITAPA in Process Improvement category. Today, ISSF is an inspiration for other sports associations, too.

„The ISSF project has moved the everyday administrative work and presentation of the Slovak football into the modern present time. It has solved long-term unsolved areas in the processing of basic and economic paperwork and provided new options for marketing and business. The applied platform brings simplification of work not only to hundreds of clubs, but also to associations and broad expert public," commented Mr. Ján Letko, SFZ informatics manager.

„The project of Information System of the Slovak Football will contribute not only to the automation of the organisation processes but also to the improvement of their efficiency, transparency and increase in speed. Thanks to the quality cooperation of the teams on both sides, the benefit of the ISSF can be seen already today, despite the complexity and exactingness of the project. We are glad to be able to participate in the development of the Slovak football by means of information technologies," Mr. Peter Pongrác, Key Account Manager of TEMPEST, comments on the success of TEMPEST.

SFZ
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FUTBALOVÝ ZVÄZ

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