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Andre Villas Boas praises Aspire Academy during second day of ASPIRE4SPORT and Global Summit on Football Performance & Science taking place in Amsterdam

Coaching superstar Andre Villas Boas today praised the quality of coaching, single purpose of vision and achievements of the Aspire Academy during the Star Chat session during the second day of the ASPIRE4SPORT and Global Summit on Football Performance & Science taking place in Amsterdam.

Villas Boas said, "What is so good about Aspire is that there's a vision – there is a vision and a clear set-up. It's aiming for 2022 and it has a great mix of such different people yet they all reflect the same vision.

I have been to Aspire many times and I appreciate and value how so many different people and backgrounds strive to help build Qatar's football and other sports."

Villas Boas was comparing the work of the Aspire Academy to major European clubs youth development programmes. He said: "Apart from Bilbao, Ajax and Barcelona where there's a clear vision with what you want to achieve in youth football – the other top clubs don't have a vision." Villas Boas went on to point out that developing young talent and giving them the opportunity in the first team was increasingly difficult due to the pressures placed on managers.

The hour-long star chat with Villas Boas, was followed by a session with Edwin van der Sar who also praised the Aspire Academy for its work in developing young talent. The session was followed by a second coaching masterclass by Marcelo Bielsa, the former Chile and Argentina manager and concluded two days of networking and knowledge exchange by some of the world's leading football clubs and coaches.

– ENDS –

Notes to editors

About Aspire Academy:

Since opening its doors in 2004, Aspire Academy for Sports Excellence has become one of the foremost national sports academies in the world. Working as part of the Aspire Zone Foundation - an international sport destination – Aspire Academy is at the heart of a sporting revolution currently taking place in Qatar and around the region. The Academy is conceiving, promoting and implementing game-changing excellence in sports training and elite athlete development that is enabling an entire generation of talented, disciplined and committed Qatari athletes to pursue their sporting dreams. Together with the other members of the Aspire Zone Foundation (Aspire Logistics



and ASPETAR Qatar Orthopedic and Sports Medicine Hospital), Aspire Academy is developing sports champions, promoting healthy lifestyles and galvanizing the sports economy of today, and the future.

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About the events

The two-day event ASPIRE4SPORT networking session brings European and Qatari sports industry professionals together to pave the way for future partnerships. In parallel, Aspire Academy is hosting the “Global Summit” on ‘Football Performance & Science’ to share ideas and approaches and discuss how science, technology and cutting-edge coaching techniques positively influence the game.

More than 160 representatives from clubs including FC Barcelona, Manchester United, AC Milan and Juventus take part in the Global Summit, making it one of the largest gatherings of its kind anywhere in the world. Together they will review and examine the latest training methods and approaches designed to nurture championship potential and support elite performance.

This group of experts – known as the “**Aspire in the World Fellows**” community – has developed rapidly since it was established in 2014. As well as regular gatherings in Doha and events in Europe to develop their ideas, members are supported by a cutting-edge online portal enabling the spread of best practice, trends and the latest thinking. Taken together, the various elements of the community’s activity provide a powerful platform to support the broader development of football around the world.

Since it was launched, the community has continued to grow and develop, and for the first time this year the original members of the “Aspire in the World Fellows” were invited to extend invitations to affiliate clubs, meaning up to 80 football clubs are expected to attend the summit.

ASPIRE4SPORT also features a business-to-business exhibition that will create a wide range of networking opportunities for European and Qatari sport industry professionals. A large number of Qatari and Middle Eastern government organisations and companies will attend the event to meet representatives from across Europe’s leading sports business sectors including construction, sports medicine, logistics, event management, communication and technology. Last year’s ASPIRE4SPORT resulted in face-to-face talks between 148 international suppliers and 19 exhibitors resulting in 988 scheduled business meetings.