



 | HUMANISE SOLUTIONS

Humanise Solutions Aston Villa Football Club Case study season 2023/24.

Player education and cognitive development programme

Humanise Solutions worked with Aston Villa Football Club to create a leading cognitive development, behavioural and personal development programme to support the acceleration of performance both in and out of football.

Alongside Aston Villa’s fantastic education and welfare team, Humanise Solutions designed 2 programmes focusing on the needs and developmental areas for two separate age groups within the Academy. The focus of dual programmes was to accelerate the required learning for the two different trajectories of the U18’s and 21’s who will be facing a variance of challenges in the coming 10 months.

The U18’s alongside the education and welfare teams decided that the uniquely built Humanise Solutions entrepreneurialism programme for athletes would set up the foundations of their programme for the forthcoming season. With the U18’s age group being at a sequence in their careers which offers free learning alongside academia, and the season of self-discovery, we felt this the opportune moment of delivering a programme that was both enlightening and informative without the necessary direct decision making of their future careers within the football club.

The U21's faced a very different trajectory for the forthcoming season of which decisions on their potential futures within the football club would be determined and therefore the players alongside the education and welfare teams decided a personal development programme focusing on personal accountability, communication and personal progress would offer a fantastic opportunity for self-awareness and decision making at the time of absolute need.

■ Groundbreaking Approach

Both of our bespoke programmes were delivered under a groundbreaking first. Humanise Solutions have designed a bespoke programme for elite athletes' personal development and well-being. This framework offers sports groups and clubs the opportunity to design something specific to their athlete and coaches needs whilst supporting the athletes and coaches when they are active and when the time to transition out of sport becomes a reality. Both are delivered with a long-term impact that diminishes the impact of change, their mental health and personal success. The programme holds assured status with City and Guilds meaning the players are taking part in bespoke programmes with tangible outcome applicable and beneficial beyond the years of playing football as a full-time profession.

Our skill-based tagging for each of our individual programmes means players have the opportunity of exploring life beyond football, personal maturity and accountability during their careers and understanding the transformation and transition of skills learned during this. Against the wider world and the opportunities, it offers as part of your personal journey to success whilst establishing a dependency on decision making due to the cognitive development of each individual often missed due to the lack of social exposure and life challenges usually navigated during their growth period as a young adult.

■ What We Did

Working closely with Aston Villa's head of education and welfare, we examined the current delivery models for players to continue the work already being facilitated within their academic learning. Discussions were held as a collective including academic, well-being and Directors of Football to focus their minds on supporting the individual athletes in achieving their own personal successes, cognitive development and maturity acceleration as part of the club's commitment to giving the individual athletes the very best opportunity whilst under the guidance of the football club.

Humanise Solutions development of both programmes incorporates a dual method of delivery. Whilst facilitating workshops with each group, Aston Villa also had their own learning management environment via the Humanise Solutions Academy app which facilitated twelve online modules covering the various topics chosen during our discovery and build process. Whilst facilitating live coaching during our workshops, one of our key performance indicators was to increase the personal accountability of each learner towards understanding the necessity of need for participation and completion towards driving personal decision making and alleviating the level of dependency often associated with being an athlete.

Our technology and programme had purposely been designed for learning on the desktop tablet or mobile phone, meeting an elite athlete and learners' current demands and supporting the conscious learning process we introduced. By offering the opportunity to choose how and when they learn, the players actively became more independent in their learning experience, increasing the long-term impact of change and reflecting the day-to-day challenges they face either whilst at the club or out on loan under another club's watch.



■ Evaluating Effectiveness

The programme already in existence for a previous two seasons, has been a significant investment for Aston Villa football club, both financially and personally, so the importance of monitoring its success was vital. Robust monitoring systems had to be used to provide real time feedback and continued reporting for an initiative-taking data led evaluation.

Humanise Solutions developed an evaluation approach that included live feedback during and after each e-learning module and interactive workshop experiences.

Furthermore, the technology offers participation data that gave Aston Villa live insights such as when learners logged in or how far into specific content elements they were. As part of our E,D&I strategy and quality assurance, we also ask all participants to complete assessments and feedback materials to ensure a true transparency in quality of delivery that meets the learners and our assured status expectation.

■ Initiative-taking Change

Throughout the programme, we obtained feedback allowing the Humanise Solutions team to restructure and enhance the necessary delivery methods. The positive disruptive nature of our learning activity challenged the players to think about their daily tasks and problems alongside how best to approach them with a fresh set of eyes and a new rigour towards asking pertinent questions for effective answers. This method offers both professional and personal acceleration within a sector that historically had not always encouraged progressive dialogue through a personal development focus. The statistics of success within the professional sports environment do not need to be repeated nor do the individuals have to be reminded of the mammoth task that they all face in holding a sustained career within professional sport so our focus as always remains on a positive celebration of achievement as individuals and how through specific cognitive design, we can support them in achieving their own merited success both in sport and outside of sport pending their own personal pathways in their life.

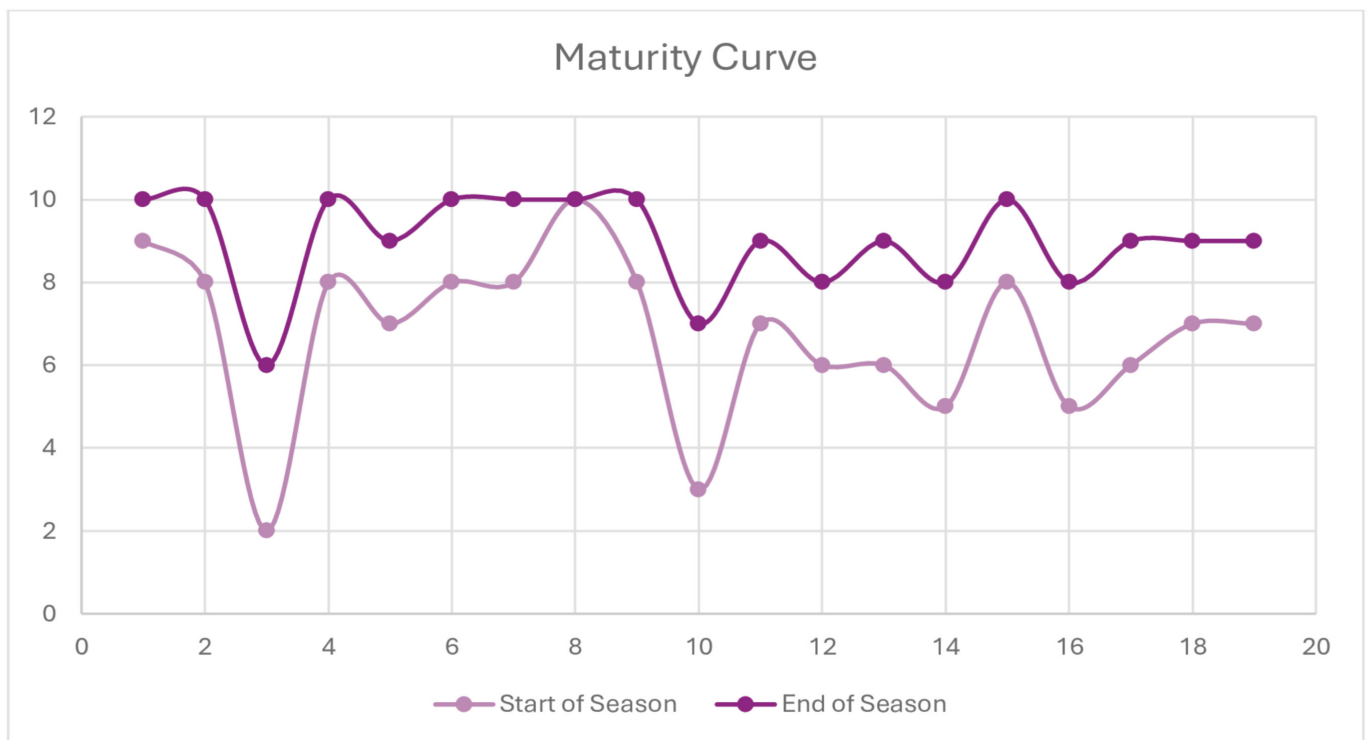
Humanise Solutions have been leading within the people development space across public sector and elite sport for the past 12 years and through personal experiences, academic writing, research and strategic delivery globally, our unique approach offers embedded industry-leading business and people coaching methods to enhance the learning curve, deepen key learning point objectives and establish the most effective way for each learner to improve and support themselves for their own success.

Wrapped with our incorporated e-learning pathways, we expose the learners to scenarios reflective of their daily challenges and potential social challenges that they may not have ordinarily been approached by due to being a product of their current environment. This combination embeds tangible learning tasks, questions and assessments throughout the process to support their own growth trajectory.

■ Outcomes

Working closely with the head of education and well-being, the learners have received a digital badge of assurance to use on their CVS, LinkedIn and elsewhere reflecting the current modern-day skill-based accreditations required when seeking employment. Upon completion of our programme each player will also have access to a national job portal which is linked to the skill tags achieved upon completion of our programme and shows the roles available against the skills that they have progressed and developed during their time with us. This offers this industry and others a true benchmark of standard for personal development with personalisation for a maximum impact and learning driven by the learners, helped by Humanise Solutions.

Player Maturity Curve Improvement



Feedback

Humanise Solutions received 100% when participants were asked if their training aims were clearly defined.

100% when asked after this training do you feel comfortable handling the assigned tasks and topics discussed.

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Elite Athlete Personal
Development



“ This programme has helped me realise the different types of mindsets I could have and how it affects not only myself but other people and therefore how this has an impact on decisions in my career.”

This programme made me think more about communication with different people and how and when it could be potentially helpful for me in the future for example how me being a good person may affect how people at football view me and therefore have an impact irrespective of my personal performance.”

This workshop has helped me understand the importance of opening up about myself and speaking in front of teammates. It’s helped me speak about how i feel and what I can do to help myself moving forward.”

Scott understands being a player, the psychology of coaches and how we can help ourselves to become better players, people and the opportunities to improve. This is completely different to anything else we have done.“



Scott has first-hand experience of what it takes to be “successful” in both elite sport and the business world, but more importantly, has been able to take a step back and acknowledge what is important when trying to be at your best. Our academy players relate to Scott’s experiences and knowledge. Scott’s approach is completely refreshing to work with, from debating philosophies to designing individual development programmes. This has had a real impact on our academy and beyond.

This is now a huge part of our player, person and wellbeing strategy as a club. Our collective choice of empowering the players to become part of the decision-making process was fantastic. It established an emotional connection to the “WHY” for our programme and ensured they locked in from the beginning which allowed Scott to accelerate the learnings being presented to a place we have not experienced previously. The sessions were interactive and engaging which tested them personally and as a group”.

Helen Roberts – Head of Wellbeing, Aston Villa Football Club.

**To Understand how Humanise Solutions can support
your organisation, please get in touch:**

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