

SJPF celebrates first Portuguese graduates

Thursday 04 March 2010

In a special ceremony several Portuguese players received their diploma's. They graduated from the New Opportunities Program, organized by the players' association SJPF and the Portuguese government.

SJPF president Joaquim Evangelista and FIFPro secretary general Theo van Seggelen handed over the diploma's, as did both secretaries of state Laurentino Dias (Sport) and Valter Lemos (Employment).



Thanks to a partnership between the government and SJPF, Portuguese players have the opportunity to complete a basic secondary school education. This program is called *Programa Novas Oportunidades* (New Opportunities Program).

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A big number of players in Portugal never finished their education, as they had chosen for a career as a professional footballer. They dropped out because it was too hard for them to combine their study with their sportive career.

The New Opportunities Program gives players a new chance to finish their education and receive a diploma. It allows the sportsmen to study while also playing as a professional footballer. And, in the end, it creates better prospects for life after football.

More than 4.000 players showed interest in this project, currently 417 men from the professional leagues are participating in this project. Among them are 107 footballers from the Liga, the nation's top division.

SJPF is very concerned with players' education. Together with the government the players' union is studying the possible creation of an online academy, just like their Dutch counterpart VVCS has successfully done in The Netherlands.