



**The Pro League Business School offers a ten day program (in English) about the business of running a football club.**

Simon Bammens, Colin Coosemans, Wouter Corstjens, Simon Mignolet, Mats Rits and Noah Stassin successfully followed the course in 2024.

The dynamic between football club executives and players, who aspire an executive position within a club, proved fruitful. The Pro League Business School offers a platform for gaining knowledge, to bring that knowledge into practice, to share best practices and for plain old networking.

# Pro League Business School

Third edition kicks off on  
18 - 19 November 2024

**Open for players**



## Invitation for players to participate

After two successful editions, the Pro League Business School kicks off again at the University of Antwerp for the third edition on 18 - 19 November 2024.

**The programme consists of 5 modules:**

- Module 1: 18 - 19 November 2024: Management of a club
- Module 2: 20 - 21 January 2025: The club in context
- Module 3: 17 and 18 February 2025: Players and transfers
- Module 4: 17 and 18 March 2025: Licensing, financial fair play, compliance and tax
- Module 5: 28 and 29 April 2025: Women's football, sustainability, fan engagement and community service



[robby.houben@uantwerpen.be](mailto:robby.houben@uantwerpen.be)



[uantwerpen.be/proleague](https://uantwerpen.be/proleague)

## Interview with Simon Mignolet

**“IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO COMBINE WITH YOUR ACTIVE CAREER, THIS COURSE IS CERTAINLY WORTH CONSIDERING”**

Robby: **Simon, what is your experience with the Pro League Business School?**

Simon: “I participated to the Pro League Business School in 2024, because I was very interested in the subject matter: all things non-sports about professional football from a club perspective. I was nicely surprised by the various lectures and I learned a lot. The lectures were always interesting. Each lecture I picked up something useful. Also interesting was the possibility to network with people working in the same domain.”

Robby: **Is it useful for a player to follow the Pro League Business School?**

Simon: “Yes it is. Beforehand, you have a certain idea about the management of a pro football club, but only after following the lectures you really learn what it is all about, and you come across matters you never considered before.

It is interesting to learn about what is at stake when you run a football club, the many things you need to take into account. The lectures offer insight into these things, some of which you may have never considered before. The lectures also provide fresh insight into matters that may have crossed your mind already. Again, the lectures are very interesting to take part in and follow.”



### **Robby Houben**

Professor at the  
University of Antwerp  
and programme  
coordinator of the Pro  
League Business School

For a more  
comprehensive overview,  
you can consult the full  
program of the last  
edition here:



## Interview with Simon Mignolet

Robby: **Is the Pro League Business School sufficiently flexible to take into account the busy training and playing schedules of players?**

Simon: "This is why this course is so interesting for active players. As players we made a plea for flexibility, so that we can follow the course remotely and not necessarily have to be present in person. The Pro League Business School offers the option to watch the lectures afterwards, and to watch them actively; because, it is not only about watching; you also have the possibility to reach out to the lecturers to ask questions and get feedback. This way you make sure you have a great learning experience and really learn something. I watched the course when I had spare time. As a player, it is important to bear in mind that there are many free moments, but the training and playing schedules are not flexible. So, when you have the ability to plan for yourself when you follow the course and when you do the assignments, that is a great plus. It allows you to really put an effort into it, and to go in depth, so that you really learn something. This is how I did it. And afterwards I sought contact with the lecturer when I had questions or wanted feedback; if you do it this way, you actually learn even more."

Robby: **Do you have a final message for the players of 1A and 1B who read this interview and consider participating to the Pro League Business School?**

Simon: "As a member of United Athletes, under certain conditions, you are entitled to a refund of half of the fee; that is in itself already a nice incentive. And, as I said, if you are looking for something to combine with your active playing career, this course is certainly worth considering. Myself, I don't know yet what I will do after my active career, but an education such as the Pro League Business School broadens your ideas and knowledge, allowing you to have a better view on what to do after your playing career. The things you learn here are even useful during your active career, to understand better how your club functions and what is going on. They may even affect certain decisions you make during your career; things you will decide in a different way because you have greater insight.

Meanwhile, I followed the courses A and B to become a coach, and I followed the Pro League Business School. Together, they have really broadened my knowledge and horizon, which is not only useful for me for when I stop playing football, but also during my active career. The Pro League Business School offers greater insight and a broader view compared to what you can see and do from the pitch only."

## Testimonial



**Wouter Corstjens,**  
former player,  
currently CEO of  
Patro Eisden  
Maasmechelen

"My participation to the Pro League Business School as an active player was very informative and provided me with many insights into the total functioning of a football club. The program gave me a head start in my new job as CEO of Patro Eisden Maasmechelen and I advise every player who is interested in taking up a role in the non sports management of a club to follow this program."

# Testimonial



**Alexander Vantyghem,**  
*CEO Cercle Brugge,  
Belgian Pro League*

"The Pro League business school showed us valuable insights in all aspects of the football sector and created interested links with other key companies in the entertainment sector. On top of that, there was extensive opportunity to grow the participants' networks."

Discover the first module of the 2024-2025 programme here:



## Players are welcome

Active and former football players are welcome to participate.

Players can attend in person, or watch recordings, at their own pace, taking into account their personal schedules. Players who follow the sessions remotely will get a personalized learning trajectory, with exercises and separate feedback sessions with professors.

## Certificate

Successful participation entitles to a certificate of completion. The support of the Belgian Pro League and the participation of all Belgian pro clubs ensures the added value of the program and the certificate.

## How to enroll/apply?

Contact the programme coordinator Robby Houben through e-mail or text: [robby.houben@uantwerpen.be](mailto:robby.houben@uantwerpen.be)  
+32 473 12 27 79

# Speakers

Confirmed speakers include:

- **Kieran Maguire**, professor University of Liverpool, auteur the Price of Football, podcast host the Price of Football
- **Amanda Docherty**, former head of communications Arsenal FC and the English FA, programme Director UEFA Strategic Communications Compact Course
- **Stefan Szymanski**, professor Stephen J. Galetti Professor of Sport Management, University of Michigan, author 'Soccernomics'
- **Chris Anderson**, professor London School of Economics, partner Anderson SallyFootball Intelligence, former football club CEO, advisor to multi-clubnetworks
- **Mikkel Draebye**, professor Bocconi School of management, regular UEFA speaker
- **Wilken Engelbracht**, Managing Director Commercial & Finance FC St Pauli
- **Christophe Hamal**, CEO Baloise Belgium
- **Bernd Reichart**, CEO at A22 Sports - advisor and promoter of the European Super League
- **Keld Bordinggaard**, Head of Coaching Bayer Leverkusen
- **Vincent Mannaert**, former CEO Club Brugge
- **Thibault Dochy**, Chief legal & HR officer RSC Anderlecht
- **Klaas Reynaert**, CFO RSC Anderlecht
- **Colin Coosemans**, player RSC Anderlecht
- **Dirk Decorte**, professor University of Antwerp
- **Jo Van Grunderbeeck**, coördinator Topsport Meisjes Voetbal Vlaanderen
- **Alberto Colombo**, European Leagues
- **Roy Vermeer**, FIPRO
- **Roberto Branco Martins**, European Football Agents Association
- **Dennis Gudasic**, Union of European Clubs
- **Pieter Nieuwenhuis**, Hypercube business innovation
- **Tomas Van Den Spiegel**, CEO Flanders Classics, president ULEB, board and Exco member FIBA Europe, director RSC Anderlecht
- **Michele Colucci**, member FIFA Dispute Resolution Chamber and the FIFPRO Dispute Committee, regular FIFA speaker
- **Stijn Francis**, football agent Stirr Associates
- **Tine Matton**, CEO Stirr Associates
- **Daan Buylaert**, lawyer Atfield
- **Mona Vera**, lawyer Atfield
- **Simon Chadwick**, professor, seasoned advisor on geopolitics in football
- **Mohammed Hamdi**, International Business Development Director Feyenoord Rotterdam
- **Pierre Locht**, CEO Standard
- **Maheta Molango**, Chief Executive of the Professional Footballers' Association

