



Professional Certificate in Sport Marketing and Brand Management

BLENDLED HEERENVEEN

THE PROGRAM



5 months

Blended

3 online courses (weekly dedication of 10 hours approximately).
On campus kick-off session on September 3, and three on campus classes on January 14, 21 and 28

Start September 3, 2026

End January 28, 2027

Place

Cruyff Education Hub
Heerenveen (Cunabula)
Heremaweg 22,
8444 AP Heerenveen

Language

Online courses in English
and on campus sessions
in Dutch

Qualification

Professional Certificate in
Sport Marketing and Brand
Management

Price

Amount: €2,438.02.
VAT (21%): €511.98.
Total: €2,950
(for the 2026–2027
academic year).

Payment methods

One time payment or
in two installments (on
request)

Special conditions

Discount for alumni and
members of partner
entities

Enrollment

Registration open until the
start of the program

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATE IN SPORT MARKETING AND BRAND MANAGEMENT (BLENDED)



“This program is designed for forward-thinking leaders who aim to architect high-impact fan ecosystems, build emotionally resonant brands and position sports organizations as scalable platforms for connection, innovation, and sustainable growth”.

LUKAS DORDA
Associate Academic
Director

A strategic program for athletes and sport professionals who want to shape the commercial future of sport organizations.

The Professional Certificate in Sport Marketing and Brand Management is designed for ambitious athletes and sport professionals who want to accelerate their transition into commercial, marketing and leadership roles within modern sport organizations.

Grounded in the philosophy of Johan Cruyff and built on strategic marketing principles, the program focuses on making and defending high-impact decisions at the intersection of fan engagement, brand equity value and commercial performance.

While particularly relevant for transitioning athletes, the program also brings together sport executives and functional specialists in marketing, finance and operations, creating a high-quality learning environment that reflects real-world decision dynamics in sport.

We offer a Cruyff-inspired, decision-driven sports business program that equips ambitious athletes and sports professionals to make and defend the commercial and brand decisions that shape modern sport organizations.



CREATE SPACE. DRIVE BETTER DECISIONS. BUILD WINNING BRANDS

The program follows a clear and logical learning journey based on three core pillars of marketing and brand management:

1 Diagnosis

- **Market Orientation:** Understanding what brands exist and why, how markets and fans behave, and the principles of modern brand management.
- **Market Research:** Collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data to understand markets and audiences.
- **Segmentation:** Analyzing markets, fans, brands, and sports organizations.

2 Strategy

- **Targeting:** Short- and long-term goals, market selection, and the marketing funnel.
- **Positioning:** Segmentation, brand growth and success, and brand differentiation.
- **Brand Codes:** From differentiation to distinctiveness.
- **Brand Objectives:** Funnel building and brand strategy goals.

3 Execution

- **Activating Brands:** 4Ps and brand consistency.
- **Engaging Fans:** Connecting with audiences and managing commercial outcomes.
- **Budgeting:** Zero-based budgeting (CAAP) and brand tracking (research).

This structure reflects the frameworks used by leading sport organizations and practitioners in their daily decision-making.



“Success in modern sport depends on sharp commercial and brand decisions. This program equips professionals to build stronger brand connections, create space for growth in the spirit of Johan Cruyff, and drive real business impact based upon the three elements of marketing”.

FOLKERT VAN DER HEIDE RM
Academic Director, On Campus Sessions

ADVANTAGES

- You can pursue education while you continue working, training, and competing.
- You can study from anywhere you want, and be always in direct contact with your teachers.
- You have flexible hours to progress at your own pace.
- You do some excellent networking.
- You learn from the direct experience of professionals in the sports sector.

KICK-OFF

SEPTEMBER 3, 2026

On-campus

kick-off session (3 hours)

Introduction to the academic legacy of Johan Cruyff

Breaking the ice & building connections

Introduction to the program structure, expectations and learning journey

This session sets the tone of the program and introduces the Cruyff philosophy as a way of thinking about sport, leadership and decision-making.

ONLINE COURSES (IN ENGLISH)

SEPTEMBER 8 - OCTOBER 11, 2026

COURSE 1 Fan Engagement

Introduction to Fan Engagement

Key Concepts of Fan Engagement

Understanding the Fan

Fan Engagement Strategy

Best Practices in Fan Engagement

Current & Future Trends in Fan Engagement

OCTOBER 6 - DECEMBER 13, 2026

COURSE 2 Sport Marketing

Introduction to Sport Marketing

Sport Markets

Sport Consumers & Stakeholders

Research in Sport Marketing

Sport Services

Sport Marketing Opportunities

Marketing Strategy: Objectives & Segmentation

Marketing Strategy: Positioning & Value Proposition

Marketing Mix in Sport Organizations

Communication Plan

Marketing Plan

NOVEMBER 17 - DECEMBER 20, 2026

COURSE 3 Branding in Football

Transformation of the Sports Sector

- The strategic importance of branding
 - Typology of sports brands
 - Transformation, digitalization and internationalization
 - The role of the sports brand
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Brand Strategy

- Phases of brand creation
 - Brand analysis and diagnosis
 - Brand definition
 - Brand creation and activation
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Brand Management & Control

- Brand management tools
 - KPIs and measurement systems
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ON CAMPUS APPLIED SESSIONS (IN DUTCH)

The focus of these sessions is on hands-on application, discussion and decision-making, rather than on revisiting theoretical content.

We will translate academic frameworks into real-life strategic choices within the Dutch sports context.

JANUARY 14, 2027

On campus

Fan Engagement

JANUARY 15 OR JANUARY 21, 2027

On campus

Sport Marketing

JANUARY 16 OR JANUARY 28, 2027

On campus

Brand Management

MAXIMUM FLEXIBILITY

The online courses are designed to offer maximum flexibility while maintaining academic quality and engagement.

- Access content anytime during the week
- Recommended dedication: 8–10 hours per week
- Learning resources include notes, podcasts, videos, articles and case studies
- Continuous tutor guidance with clear instructions on activities and deadlines

The program also includes live webinars led by professors and invited industry experts. Attendance is recommended, but all sessions are recorded and made available for later viewing.



MASTERING STRATEGY THROUGH REAL-WORLD SPORTS CASE STUDIES

The on campus sessions are built around contrasting real-life cases, illustrating different levels of brand maturity, business models and market scope.

FOOTBALL CASES

- **PSV Eindhoven & Brainport Eindhoven**
Brand strategy, international positioning and stakeholder alignment
- **sc Heerenveen & WOLKOM**
Community-driven branding, authenticity and long-term brand building
- **FC Groningen & Hero Club - third jersey**
Brand activation, fan monetization and the balance between revenue and brand equity
- **FC Barcelona & Spotify**
Global brand partnerships, cultural relevance and strategic risk

BEYOND FOOTBALL

Selected cases from speed skating and Olympic sports are used to contrast club-based brands with athlete-centric models, highlighting differences in:

- Fan engagement
- Sponsorship dependency
- Brand control and governance



TRANSFORMING SPORT THEORY INTO REAL-LIFE PRACTICE

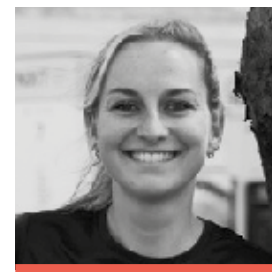
After completing the program, participants will be able to:

- Diagnose brand and market situations in sport organizations
- Make explicit and coherent strategic choices
- Understand the consequences of those choices in execution, governance and financial performance
- Translate theory into real-life decision-making within sport organizations

The program acts as a strategic bridge between theory and practice, firmly grounded in the reality of sport organizations in the Netherlands.

WHO SHOULD JOIN & WHAT YOU WILL ACHIEVE

- Professionals in (sports) marketing, branding and/or commercial roles who want to give their career a boost.
- Managers and staff of sports clubs, federations, and competitions who want to develop a better understanding or a strategic approach to sports marketing and brand management.
- Consultants and employees in the business and entertainment sectors who wish to deepen their expertise or specialize in sports marketing and branding.
- (Elite) athletes and former athletes aspiring to take on a management role within the sports industry.
- Anyone with a passion for sport who wants to gain a structured and practical understanding of sports marketing and brand management.



“The Cruyff Education approach gave me the knowledge and tools to understand sports marketing, helping me grow as an athlete and a young professional in the sports sector. I trust this same approach will inspire the students I hope to meet in this new program”.

MELISSA WIJFJE
Former long-track speed skater
Cruyff Education Hub
Coordinator | Partnerships



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More information about the program

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www.johancruyffinstitute.com

Johan Cruyff Institute is a member of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM), the European Association for Sport Management (EASM), the Catalan Sports Cluster (INDESCAT) and the initiative for higher education institutions, supported by the United Nations (PRME).

PRME Principles for Responsible
Management Education



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