



International Sports Conference while other speakers, including chairman of the session Sami El Emam, (left), look on in Dubai on Sunday. Muneer Saidi / Al Khaleej

# 'Too much money in soccer, spent wrongly'

(five to 10 per cent of their budget) on youth development and the chunk of their expenses go towards salaries.

While some felt that their clubs were doing enough for developing talent, others opined that the budget allocation for the youth programme was very little and that clubs are not willing to maintain academies for youngsters below 12.

Maarten Fontein of AZ Alkmaar from The Netherlands said it is important

for youths to stay at their home academies. If a youngster is taken away from his home, the family bonds are broken and their aspirations disappear after their short stay at the clubs.

Many talented football youngsters from Africa and Asia are lured by the fast money in Europe but soon lose direction once their dreams are not fulfilled and simply disappear without a trace, the session was told. Around 1,000 youths are transferred to profes-

sional clubs and a lot more to amateur clubs in one year it was informed.

Dealing with youth transfers, Gianluca Nani of West Ham, which has one of the best academies in the world, felt that health of young players should not be jeopardised but protected by the clubs who hire them. Nani also said that scouts talenting should not be restricted to home.

Andrea Traverso, head of UEFA Licensing, spoke

Fontein elaborated how the 52-member associations of UEFA fared and the 732 affiliated clubs reported revenues of 11.5 billion euros in 2008. He touched in details how the five top leagues — England, Italy, Spain, France and Germany — increased their incomes.

He said that the clubs, on an average, spend around 63 per cent of their budget on salaries. He informed that almost half of European top divisions

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