

COACHING THE GLOBAL GAME

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LESSONS FROM SIR ALEX
FERGUSON

COLLECTIVISM: A RECIPE
FOR SUCCESS IN THE
MODERN GAME

CONTEST WINNER
ANNOUNCED INSIDE..



Dear Readers,

Welcome to our seventh issue of *Coaching the Global Game Magazine*. We hope that you enjoy this issue as much as you enjoyed our previous issues.

We are pleased to feature fantastic contributors once again. We would like to acknowledge them for the time they take to put together their submissions for *Coaching the Global Game Magazine*.

We hope you have been eagerly anticipating our seventh (July 2014) edition of the magazine. So please enjoy!

Coaching the Global Game Team

Twitter: @CTGGMagazine

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FOR COACHES: THE SPORTS PATH WORLD CUP TECHNICAL REPORT 2014

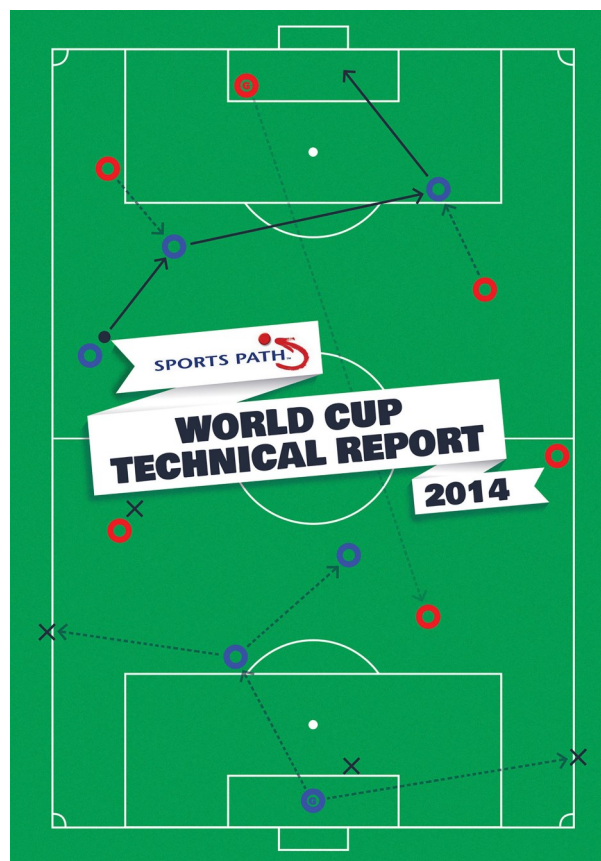
For Coaches: The Sports Path World Cup Technical Report 2014

In the weeks before the 2014 World Cup began Sports Path assembled a team of Soccer Coaches and Analysts to study key technical aspects of the tournament. Coaches who had completed the LMA School of Football Management Online Course on Evaluation (in conjunction with Prozone Sports) were invited to take part in this Project under the guidance of experienced analysts John Bilton from the UK and Dr. Peter Usher, Sport Psychology Consultant & Performance Analyst from Canada.

The Team of Analysts subsequently recruited and briefed by John and Peter included coaches from Australia, Africa, Europe and North America. They have examined every Goal, Shot, Cross and even every throw in for **EVERY** Game and for **ALL** Teams in the tournament.

These are the questions which will be answered in the Sports Path World Cup Technical Report 2014

- 1. Strikes and Strikers :** In excess of 150 goals have been scored during the World Cup
 - Which specific 'zone' on the pitch contributes the highest percentage of goal-scoring strikes?
 - What percentages of these goals result from long sequences of possession or rapid counter attacks?
 - In which third of the pitch does a goal-scoring possession originate?
 - Is there a difference in the rates of strike efficiency and strike accuracy between the 'average' and 'top' teams?
 - What are the qualities of the World Cup strikers? What makes them lethal?
- 2. Sequence of Scoring**
 - What is the probability of winning a match when a team scores the first goal?
 - What is the probability of winning a match when a team is winning at half-time?
 - What is the probability of winning a match when a team scores two goals in the first- half?



3. Passing and Possession

- Do winning teams use more forward passes than losing teams?
- Possession entries into the attacking third are essential for teams to create striking and scoring opportunities.
- What role do goalkeepers play in teams gaining attacking-third possessions?

4. Goalkeepers:

During the 2014 World Cup Goal Keeper (GK) distributions were observed and data was collected. During a match a GK may have between 15 to 35 opportunities to start an attacking move.

- What percentages of those opportunities result in a possession in the attacking-third?
- What is the most effective means for a GK to initiate an attacking-third possession?
- What GK actions lead to a loss of team possession in the defending and middle-thirds

5. Throw-Ins

provide an opportunity to start an attacking movement either towards the attacking-third or towards a striking opportunity from within the attacking-third

- Are Throw-ins important in term of gaining attacking-third possessions?
- If so, what opportunities do they provide and how can they be maximized?
- Do teams take maximum advantage of these opportunities which range from 15 to 25 in a match? If so, how do they do it? If not, what (in) actions lead to a breakdown of such opportunities?

This Report will be available by Friday July 18th. To obtain a FREE PDF Copy of this 16 Page Report please complete this short questionnaire [here](#) on how you use the web to assist coach development. By completing this short survey you will also receive a Free PDF copy of 'Soccer Coaching and the Web:

A Guide to Coach Development' when this is published in October 2014 By completing the short survey you will help us share ongoing good practice in how coaches use the web.

So we hope you take advantage of these two Free Sports Path publications if you complete the short survey [here](#).

THE MAGIC OF TWITTER

So I was sitting at home trying to think of something to blog about as it had been a while. I was at a loss for inspiration. I started looking through old tweets that I had sent, or that others had sent and I thought to myself “this is my next blog post!” I tweet more than just about anything else, and when I tweet, I try to share my knowledge and experience or a resource of someone else doing the same. I enjoy that aspect of it. When I started, I used it to find out information from a few minor/major celebrities and now I use it as much more of a professional networking tool.

But still 1 thing I like to do more than anything else is share! And that what’s bring me to writing this. In no particular order:

My Top 20 Resources From Twitter!

1. [Rondos Presentation](#) and [RONDOS](#) by @KieranSmith1 and @CoachDanWright – Kieran’s is a fantastic presentation on the rondo. For those that have no idea what one is, it’s a great read for making you understand why they are so useful and important in the modern game. And yet, if you’re a coach like me who is using them more and more, it’s still a fantastic resource to come back to and read again. There is something to be gathered, an idea to be started in the mind of the “newbie” and of the more experienced coach. Dan’s is a much shorter, compact version that is great for a coach looking for a quick reference guide to what they are and how to use them!
2. [Fullbacks presentation....](#) by @KieranSmith1 – Another magnificent resource that Kieran produced on the modern full back and how he impacts the game. Every coach needs to share this with any player that they are considering playing as a FB in the future. Great for helping them understand the position and the roles they need to fulfill in the game.
3. [Creative Defenders \(Dick Bate\)\[1\]-1](#) - You pretty much cannot go wrong with anything you find from Bate but for me, as someone that values ball playing defenders, this is a great resource for looking at the position and provoking thought in a coach as to whether they really are producing defenders that are going to be able to cope with the demands of the game offensively and defensively.
4. [FSP-eBook-Player-Profiling](#) by @FutureSoccerPro – A great ebook to share with your players about the technical qualities that players need in 2014 at the positions most used in the modern game.
5. [Defensive Midfield Players \(#4\) – Roles](#) and [Liam Bramley – The role of the Number 10](#) – by @NeilWinskill and @LiamBramley – I put these 2 together as Liam and Neil work closely together. Some of the stuff they share is a collaborative effort and so it seemed sensible to put these 2 resources together. Again, great insight into 2 positions that are becoming more and more valuable in the professional and youth

game. Neil’s is a look at the #4, the player usually tasked with disrupting and stopping the #10, the focus of Liam’s presentation.

6. [High Defensive Block Presentation](#) and [presentation high pressure TSM and a closer look at pressing](#) – 1st by Newcastle United Foundation (where @NeilWinskill is Football Development Manager), 2nd by Total Soccer method and their founder @rogerbongaerts, 3rd by Ralf Peter – Again, I lumped these 2 together as they are all talking about the same topic. As a coach that encourages my players to press the ball as high as they can up the pitch, these are quality resources for understanding what that is, what that looks like, and how I can build sessions around it either from ideas they suggest, or ones that I create myself.
7. [The Modern Goalkeeper](#) and [Using Keepers in a Team Practice](#)- by @NCHammer1980 – Yes, that’s me! I know. Terribly arrogant and conceited of me to put in my own presentations and say that these are among the Top 20 resources from Twitter but it’s my blog and I can do what I want!!! Honestly though, having once been a keeper that stood for hours on end getting no real assistance with my game while 15 outfield players in the squad got everything they needed, I do think it’s important. Both give an insight into what it can be like for keepers and both hopefully help the “non-goalkeeper coach” understand their role in the #1s development!
8. [FSP-5-eBook-NEWONE1](#) - by @FutureSoccerPro – Great book that provides sessions from 5 of the most prominent, high-profile coaches on Twitter. Once you’ve been following the right people for a little while, their names will continually pop up time and time again. It’s a short resource compared to some others, and doesn’t have a “main idea or focus” like the other resources I’ve mentioned so far, but for 5 quality sessions that you can run, you don’t have to look any further.
9. [Beast Mode Booklet](#) - by @BeastModeSoccer – This was an ebook that Dave Copeland-Smith (Mr BeastMode) shared a little while ago. As coaches we want our players to do more. We want them to be responsible for their own development. Give them this, they have no excuses anymore!
10. [victor satei 50 session booklet](#)- by @VictorSatei – Another great ebook. This one is more random practices put together by Victor but these all have the focus on improving a players decision making. I regularly look at this for ideas. Maybe it’s how I can include more decision making in an activity I’m creating myself. Maybe it’s just pinching one of the activities straight from here. Whatever it is, this is a great resource to have.
11. [1v1gamesbooklet](#)- by @Fieldsey77 – This is my newest resource. I actually downloaded it from Lee earlier this week but it’s a beauty, especially if you work with

THE MAGIC OF TWITTER

younger players. Most coaches understand the technical and tactical importance of 1v1s at an early age. Rather than just doing the same activity over and over again. You've now got a bunch of different 1v1 games that you can play with your players. Many you'll know. Some you will have forgotten. Some may be new. It's great no matter what....

12. [CologneStudyonsmall-sidedgames](#) – Another one more for coaches of young players but it's great for understanding why SSG and 3v3, 4v4 and up games are important at young ages. Gives you all the proof you need that this is what should be done and more importantly, why it should be done this way!

13. [Dick Bate FA Presentation](#) - Another presentation from Dick Bate, this time about the Future Game. Quite simply:

(i) Read it, (ii) Do your best to understand it, (iii) Remember it, (iv) Use what you remember from it to impact your session planning so that you KNOW, your doing everything you can to prepare your players for the future game!

14. <http://coachdanwright.blogspot.com/2014/02/building-from-back.html> - by @CoachDanWright – I'm going to cheat a little because this is a link rather than a PDF or PPT. But, I did say resources from Twitter and I discovered this blogpost from Twitter so I guess I'm not cheating anyway. And like I said, it's my blog, I'll do what I want. I put together a piece for this blog on how I like my teams to play out from the back. This is Dan's version. If you follow mine, or if you follow is, or if you follow a combination of both, you'll be helping your players. I promise....

15. [2013 Sessions](#) - by @LouisLancs – As I said earlier about the book produced by Future Soccer Pro, there are some high-profile coaches on Twitter and Louis is certainly among the highest. His sessions are always top quality and are always incorporating the elements that are preparing players for the future game. He's bright and innovative and always looking for something new and fresh. Here is the booklet he produced of every 2013 session he posted on Twitter! Give some a try. You won't be disappointed.

16. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXWq34XByjc> – by @michaeljolley07 – Another link rather than a downloadable file but another resource that I found on Twitter that I have bookmarked and refer to again and again and again. Great for showing how to build from the back, all the way through the thirds while showing positionally, where players might be. It's an interpretation. You may have others ide-

as. But it's a great place to start if you want to play a 4-3-3.

17. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fjvJj9Xqjw> - by Jed Davies (@TPiMBW) – I know, I know. Another link but it's another good one. Only posted in the last month but I've already ran a session based on it's concepts and have already watched the video 3 or 4 times. Like I said earlier, I like me teams to press as high as possible, this is a great resource for understanding what that looks like, and how to coach your players to do it.

18. [Holiday Soccer Coaches Booklet](#) and [Spring 2014 Coaches Booklet](#) - by @bobbypup – More random practices. As much as I like the ebooks that concentrate on one specific area of the game, sometimes the books of random practices can be very useful too. Bobby has got some great coaches from Twitter together to share some of their favourite practices and he's managed to put together 2 great booklets because of it!

19. [defending book](#) - by @CoachingFamily – Maybe it's just me but I feel like defending is becoming a forgotten skill in football. As teams and coaches look to be more and more creative and technical, we don't see as much "good defending" any more. The defending we do see resources for and coaches coaching is all based around the new "popular" areas such as high pressing. I'm certainly guilty of it at times! Anyway, this is a book for helping your players become better defenders and that can't be a bad thing.

20. [Ricky Master Coach](#) – by @RickMasterCoach – Another book of random sessions but they very widely in age and focus. Great to refer to and see how another coach runs a session on the focus you might have. Another book that you can just pull a session from, adapt and run yourself, or that can be used to trigger your own ideas!

There you go. 20+ resources that I originally found on Twitter and either use or refer to time and time again. Click the links and download them for yourself now! Some you may have seen before. Some may be new. Hopefully all of them will be useful to you! As I've said before, these documents are resources. They all need to be treated as such. Most of us cannot just go and copy what someone else did. We must look for ideas and inspiration before adapting to suit our own personalities and more importantly, the needs of our players.

This article was written by Neil Cooper (@NCHammer1980) and you can view his personal blog at <http://nchammer1980.wordpress.com>

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COACHING LESSONS FROM SIR ALEX FERGUSON

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As his managerial journey comes to an end this weekend, it would not do Sir Alex Ferguson justice to write a blog summarizing his strengths as a coach. There are so many to mention, they would be better suited to a book. Instead, I will focus on two key areas that I feel were keys to his reign at Manchester United and domination of



English soccer for the past twenty years. I have chosen these specific skills because I believe they can be developed and are not a result of working with the best players or being exposed to the best facilities. Understanding Alex Ferguson's methods of management can give us an indication of just what it takes to be successful in professional management.

He has probably never had an easy day in all his time at Old Trafford. Dealing with superstars is just as much work as dealing with amateur players. But the more you look at his career, the more you realize it has never been about him.

Instead, it has been about the players he has led and the impact he has had on them on and off the field.

DECISION MAKING

To say that he is not afraid to make a decision is putting it mildly indeed. From the early stages of his career at Manchester United, Sir Alex knew that he had to be ruthless to survive. I will never forget his decision to start Les Sealy in goal in the 1990 FA Cup final despite only playing in one game that season. Sealy was able to deal with the aerial barrage from Crystal Palace and United won their first trophy under Ferguson. Jim Leighton, who made way, was distraught and never recovered. Alex Ferguson never apologized. He set his stall out at that moment that if there was a choice between sentiment and victory, there was only going to be one winner.

I listened to a recent radio interview with Aidy Boothroyd and he talked about how Ferguson goes about his decisions. According to Boothroyd, Sir Alex believes himself that he gets seven out of ten decisions correct and that ratio is good enough to keep him as manager of Manchester United. This allows him to trust his gut instinct because he's not worried about getting decisions wrong, which therefore saves time and gives him the mindset that he can handle one going against him.

How important is decision making at a club like Manchester United? You have to pick your squad, you have to pick your starting line-up, you have to pick the system of play, you have to make your substitutions, and most importantly in the game of football, you have to be ready to change all of the above in a split second. It wasn't that Sir Alex Ferguson made the right decisions all the time; it was the fact that he made it quickly and was prepared for the outcome.

David Beckham looked upon him as a second father but when Ferguson saw a drop in his game or commitment level, he was out the door. Same with Roy Keane, Paul Ince, Andrei Kanchelskis, Mark Hughes and many more. This ability to make tough decisions had such a positive effect on the environment at United because they knew that if they put a tough decision into the manager's hands, it would more than likely not turn out the way they would like. His reluctance to let teams grow old together also factored into his management style and he assembled at least five different teams during his time at Old Trafford.

COACHING LESSONS FROM SIR ALEX FERGUSON

COMMUNICATION

It is one thing to have the vision, the knowledge, and the ability to make decisions, but if you can't get players and staff on board, you will soon be out of a job. Ferguson communicated his hunger and desire to his whole team, and not many times was a Manchester United team outworked by the opposition. He also had different methods of dealing with different players. For the likes of Steve Bruce, Paul Ince, and Peter Schmeichel, the famous 'hair dryer' was used to drive home a point but at the other end of the locker room, Eric Cantona was given the arm around the shoulder. Years later, Cristiano Ronaldo was given similar treatment by having a couple of weeks off over Christmas break to recharge his batteries simply because Ferguson felt he always underperformed at that time of the season. He knew exactly how each player worked and how to get the best out of them.

A lot of people have two misconceptions about coaching. The first is that they think players do whatever you tell them to do. The second is that you can simply motivate players by yelling and screaming at them. Both could not be further from the truth. It is not easy to motivate millionaires. Money and fame don't usually mix well with hunger and motivation. For today's players, their agent is just a phone call away and can engineer a transfer within 30 minutes. Sir Alex Ferguson has had to manage egos better than anyone has ever done and you always felt the players respected that. He made pointing to the Exit Door one of the greatest methods of motivation at United and this allowed players to be constantly aware of what the standards are and who they are representing.

Although his managerial record and legacy will never be bettered, I hope the majority of coaches believe that Sir Alex's methods of management can actually be replicated with their team. If we all think he is a one-off, we will have missed the point of his managerial journey completely. It might sound ridiculous but any coach can be like Sir Alex Ferguson. You just have to do about ten simple things: Be the first one to the ground every day at 7am, after your day at the office go and scout youth players or the opposition, know your players inside out, be willing to make tough decisions time and time again, change your training techniques along with the times, manage expectations, deal with success the same way you deal with failure, and show no signs of fatigue or pressure. Add to this a desire and enthusiasm that is so fierce, it still

rubs off on players who have left your company twenty years ago and you have half a chance.

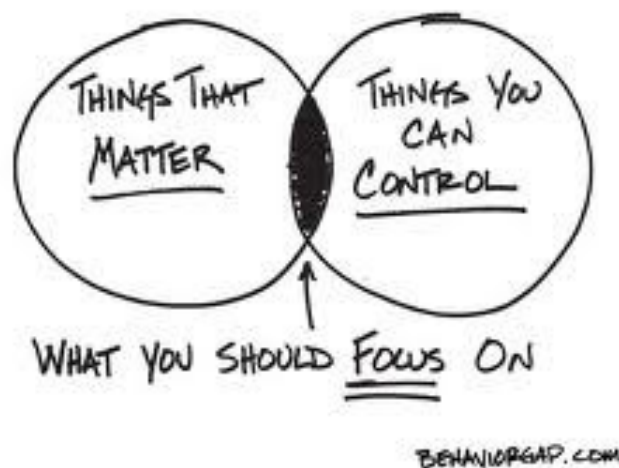
Ferguson once said about coaching, "Don't do it part time. You have to live your life and that of your players." He couldn't have put it any better. It was always about improving the team and getting that edge over the rest of the competition. He had the vision, saw where he wanted to go, and committed himself along with his lifestyle to get there. Above all, that is what I will take from Sir Alex Ferguson. Although it is so much easier said than done.



This article was written by Gary Curneen (@GaryCurneen) and you can view his website at www.garycurneen.com

ROLE MODEL?

Much has been made in recent times of players, coaches and parents being role models. I recently came by this [VIDEO](#) while I was in the UK doing my Youth Modules. I think the video summarizes the situation quite well and even though they are not using coaches as the Role Models in the video, parallels can be drawn between the two.



At the end of the day coaches are Role Models like it or not. The actions we take before, during and after soccer or even outside of soccer has a large impact (reach) on those we work with. Sometimes it is not the easiest thing to do, 'looking the mirror,' to see if your actions have been appropriate or not. One thing most coaches have in common is passion for the game, and more often than not pas-

sion takes over! Passion is amazing to have, when channeled into a positive use. Let your players feed off your passion for the game, help them build, harness, grow their own unique passion for the game, BUT do not let it override what you are trying to achieve as a coach. Without a doubt, many will be thinking of exceptions to the rule and of course there will always be exceptions to the rule, however, when you look at the matter objectively, and you take a deep breath, remain calm, we are role models in everything we do. Some may have hundreds of young impressionable boys and girls that look up to their coaches and model/pattern their behaviour after us SO think to yourself the next time, are the actions, words, tone/demeanor you are about to use okay if your players behaved in the exact same way?

Coaches are leaders and they are also role models! Here are a few characteristics of role models/leaders/coaches I dug up:

Model positive choice-making, Think aloud, Apologize and admit mistakes, Follow through, Show respect, Be well rounded, Demonstrate confidence in you, Leads by example, Respect over fear, Assertiveness, Integrity, Vision, Honesty, Ability to Delegate, Sense of Humour, Confidence, Commitment, Positive Attitude, Creativity, Intuition, Ability to Inspire Others, Proactive rather than Reactive, Flexible/



Adaptable, A Good communicator, Respectful, Quiet confidence, Enthusiastic, Open-Minded, Resourceful, Rewarding, Well-Educated, Open to change, Interested in Feedback, Evaluative, Organized, Consistent, Initiative, Be decisive, Focus, Passion, Clarity, Care, Compassion, Engagement, Humility, Empowering, Collaborative, Fearlessness, Patience, Fairness, Approachable, Presentable.

A phrase I say a great deal to the players I work with is "There are things you can control and there are things you cannot control...focus on the things you CAN control."

Websites that helped generate information in this post:

- <http://menudoeurovision.blogspot.ca/2012/08/what-makes-good-role-model-7.html>
- <http://www.forbes.com/sites/tanyaprive/2012/12/19/top-10-qualities-that-make-a-great-leader/>
- http://leadership.uoregon.edu/resources/exercises_tips/skills/leadership_characteristics
- <http://www.cnn.com/2011/LIVING/08/03/good.leader.traits.cb/>

This article was written by Rahim Mohamed (@RahimZMohamed)

COLLECTIVISM: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IN THE MODERN GAME

COLLECTIVISM: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IN THE MODERN GAME

Winning a World Cup single-handily may have been possible before, yet can it happen in the modern game?

In the aftermath of the semi-final's we have been faced with the inevitable argument and debate regarding Maradona and Messi. Many believe that without a World Cup Messi can not be regarded in the pantheon of greats. He is now one game away from this feat, however while Maradona achieved success in 1986 almost single-handily, this kind of success, according to this blog, simply *isn't* possible anymore. To succeed requires more than one individual, it requires a team collective.

This World Cup has been fixated on the 'individual'. Lionel Messi, James Rodriguez and Neymar have dominated the adverts and media pages. And while they have all performed well, the key to their sides achievements in this tournament has been the ever growing importance of the collective, that special trait of team cohesion and togetherness.

In sides like Costa Rica, Chile, Colombia and even USA and Greece we saw a level of togetherness and cohesion which bonded the side and gave them extra energy and belief. They were organised, tactically intelligent and committed to the strategy and each other. This is what modern football has become.

Team cohesion key to success

Arrigo Sacchi's achievement at Milan came from playing a system and style where, as Sacchi explained, *"players are connected to one another, which moves together as if was a single player"*. He stated that, *"Today few teams know how to do this. Few teams work as a unit. They are all made up of little groups. There is no great connection, nor a good distribution of players around the pitch."*

Sacchi was being listened to, his ideas were being taken on by modern coaches. This blog wrote an article before the 2013 Champions League final between Bayern and Dortmund that the ideas of teamwork, cohesion and above all selflessness had risen in the game. Both these sides were testament to this, playing their high energy

gegenpressing style. In players like Robben and Ribery we saw hard defensive work from them both. They played for the team, sacrificed themselves for it. And they succeeded because of this mentality.

Bill Cartwright, a basketball player who played for the Chicago Bulls under Phil Jackson and with Michael Jordan, a player who won three NBA championships wrote: *"Most teams have guys who want to win but aren't willing to do what it takes. What it takes is to give yourself over to the team and play your part. That may not always make you happy, but you've got to do it. Because when you do, that's when you win."*

Jupp Heynckes succeeded by bringing together this squad of talented players and bonding them together. Bayern had reached three Champions League finals in four years. An astounding record. They possessed some great players but were overcome by a stronger Inter 'team' in 2010 and a more together and focused Chelsea side in 2012. It was almost like their individual brilliance in players like Robben, Ribery and Gomez was not enough. To go from second to first they needed to be a better team, they needed to sacrifice themselves for the team. In the 2012/13 season looked unified; they had achieved 'togetherness'.

After the 4-0 defeat of Barcelona in the 2nd leg of the semi-final Jupp Heynckes stated that Bayern's teamwork was key to their success. *"The team were outstanding in executing the tactical plan. That was top-class in terms of physical effort and fighting spirit. It's fantastic teamwork."* Heynckes achieved the treble that season.

It is clear that the top modern coaches realized that, in order to succeed, they needed to take individuals and create a team. A year later and Atletico Madrid were minutes away from the league and Champions League double, an incredible achievement based on the resources Simeone had. And yet the key was his ability to mould a group into a team. Mourinho, Guardiola, Ancelotti and Ferguson had all proved their teambuilding talents in the 21st century and thus had succeeded at the top level. This attribute, of team building, is now perhaps the most important asset of a top coach.

Spain's dominance of world football, both at club and national level came from a togetherness, the cohesion required to succeed. The team played as one, they

COLLECTIVISM: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IN THE MODERN GAME

moved together, thought the same and worked for each other both in and out of possession. It was as perfect a 'team' as you could get and no surprise was the amount of trophies they collected. Spanish football between 2008-2012 had proven the value of teamwork, sacrifice and belief in one's philosophy.

In this World Cup Holland's progression to the semi-final came from a compact defensive setup which sought to stifle the opposition and break on the counter. It worked marvelously against the disjointed, disorganized and ultimately weak Spain as well as being difficult for Chile to break down. Van Gaal had somewhat neglected the 'Dutch principles' of the game, as in expansive, attacking football, in order to win. A strong, defensive and compact team in his opinion was the best route to success. Costa Rica were evidence of this also.

What this World Cup has shown is that sides who are deemed 'weaker' can over exceed expectations due to their cohesion and togetherness. However, those two sides reaching the final have done so because they have proven to be not only a strong, organised team, but that they possess the talent of great individuals also.

Blending individual brilliance with team togetherness

When we talk about a strong team, working together, when we use words like cohesion, unity and organization, it does not mean that the individual player cannot express or shine. The idea of having a 'go to guy' is not uncommon, in fact to be a world-class winning side you often need genuine world class ability. The key message is that a successful winning side however cannot be just about *one* player. A reliance on one player often makes a team too one dimensional, predictable and ultimately easier to play against and defeat.

When we look at Argentina do we see a great team or do we see a great individual in Lionel Messi? During Barcelona's dominant period what was important was how the team's success came *from the supporting cast*. It was not always just been about Lionel Messi.

While many believe that you can only have 'one' real star in a side, the modern

game is proving that to succeed you need to have more. It is important, almost essential, to have supporting players in the side who can offer the team more dynamism and variability. Barcelona achieved Champions League success in 2009 and 2011 because they had attacking trio's of Henry, Eto'o and Messi and Villa, Pedro and Messi, allied with Xavi, Iniesta and Busquets behind. Three attacking individuals who worked in harmony together, three midfielders who dominated games with supreme technical skill and excellent game intelligence. It was not about one player, it was about a team. When this attacking balance started to waver the team dropped off.

Messi can be said to be the Michael Jordan of football. For three years he was the near perfect team player who offered those moments of individual brilliance. A player, like Jordan, who could come up with something special when required. Yet like Jordan, the players around Messi became over-reliant on him. His talents were so brilliant that it appeared that his team mates were placing too much hope on him and reducing their own effectiveness. As Messi soared to great individual heights it was clear that this was having a negative effect on the quality of Barcelona as a team.

Is this what has happened with Argentina? Has too much reliance been put on Messi's shoulders? It appears he is having to drop deep to be the playmaker, as well as be in positions to score goals. He is having to do too much to help his side win games.

However Argentina have surprised this blog with their impressive defensive record, not conceding a goal in the knockout rounds, something reminiscent of Spain from 2008-2012. This defensive strength means only one goal is needed to progress and win. All that is required is that one special moment from Messi, or even a set-piece (of which we have seen many key goals being scored in this tournament).

Sabella's side may not have entertained the fans with open, attacking football, but that is the very reason they have reached the final. Sabella has found a great balance and defensive shape which works for his side and has shut out Switzerland, Belgium and Holland. He has appreciated Messi's talent yet has not sought to destabilise the balance of the side by shaping the team completely around his star. In fact while others would play Messi higher up the pitch, Sabella has used his play-

COLLECTIVISM: A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS IN THE MODERN GAME

making talents to good effect.

Argentina have been organized, disciplined, intelligent tactically and benefitted from the genius of the world's best player. Looking at this and you see a side built for World Cup glory.

Complete collectivism

And then we consider Germany. The semi-final performance against Brasil was every bit as superb as Brasil was shocking. It was incredible to see a side in the semi-final of the World Cup play such open, suicidal football. It was arguably the worst performance from a top side I've ever watched. One could say they choked, that the pressure got to them, but ultimately they got their tactics and strategy shockingly wrong and were punished for it.

Germany on the other-hand were organized, disciplined and simply ruthless in attack. Those same components which took Bayern to the top of European football were on show in this game. The change of tactics and strategy by Loew after the Al-geria game gave Germany the balance and confidence they required to take the steps forward to the final. They dominated the France game although they were content to settle for the 1-0. Against Brasil they smelled blood and punished them dearly.

The key however to this side, the contrasting element which looks to stand Germany above Argentina, is that while Messi is the world's best, there is only one of him. Look at Germany and there is world class talent running through the *whole* side; Neuer, Hummels, Lahm, Kroos, Ozil and Muller are all world class talents. All can provide goals and moments of brilliance.

Add the impact that Khedira had in the Brasil game and you see a fit and hungry player whose athleticism could seriously affect Argentina's defense. So too could Andre Schurrle, who has provided key moments when coming off the bench. He offers a new dimension to their attacking play, allied with his speed and finishing talent.

What you see a group of players who not only play together (and who have grown

as the tournament has progressed) but who possess the individual talents required to win trophies, the key element which has been evidenced by the success of Bayern and Dortmund these past few years.

This tournament has been set out to be one for the individuals and the media and perhaps fans would love Messi to shine and lift the trophy. The comparisons with Maradona will be rife, yet the game will be decided by the better team. And in reality the German's should be too strong.

German football has been building these past several years, we have all witnessed it and marveled at the players coming through and we have just been waiting for them to turn good performances into trophies. This tournament (after changing the system) they now look 'complete'. They are the perfect model of the modern and are moving towards building for the future game. They epitomize the modern game's need for collectivism.

Germany are built for the modern game and all that it requires; a great defensive block out of possession, world class players in several positions, a ruthlessness on the counter attack where any number of players can score and the ability to control games both in and out of possession. And above all they have the mindset of a winner, of that there is no doubt. They have not celebrated their progress with surprise or over the top exuberance, they are here to do a job and that is to win the World Cup, thus they know it is 1st or nothing. This ruthlessness, this kind of focus will see them through to the end.

The past few tournaments they have fell short and questions have been asked of their mentality, now seems the time for them to push through that barrier and lift the trophy. One can only imagine what this will mean for the coming years if they were to win, a period of dominance and brilliance which perhaps could even surpass Spain of recent years.

This article was written by Matt Whitehouse (@The_W_Address), you can view his website at <http://whitehouseaddress.blogspot.com>

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THE NEED TO GROUP PLAYERS, OR NOT

The Need to Group Players, or Not



In most clubs the system works much the same. A child shows up to the club wanting to tryout, the player is put up against others of his/her same age and then judged to decide what level the player should be placed with. Often times the club has more than one level, so they may be asked to join the B team for example, this means that for this season the player will train and play with a group of players that are too good for the C team but not at the level of the A team. Most times this also means that this player will never have the chance to play alongside players of either squad. So is this the ideal scenario? Should we be grouping players

based on their level and then secluding them from the interaction of other children considered either 'too good' or 'not good enough'. It's a question that most times remains unanswered, reason being, not many understand the answer.

Society in general has created this system. The need to be 'elite' or the best. Starting from as young as 7 and 8 years of age we feel it's necessary to group players according to their level. It's an approach that is flawed in a system that often fails to achieve the outcome it desires. The desired outcome to create a group of the best players who will eventually go on to win titles and

perhaps one day play football at a higher level. Unfortunately, it's not that simple, and if it were, I'd be considered someone who knows what he's talking about. The point being, we've all been wrong on too many occasions and reality is that we will continue to be wrong. Why? Because at the young ages, there is no one out there that can predict whether or not a player is going to make it. And when I say 'make it', I mean play at an elite level, such as that of a professional or semi-professional environment.

So what's the point? The point is that players, especially up until the age of 12, should have the opportunity to constantly interact and play with each other. In fact, if adults didn't exist, and the world was made up of just children, we'd probably realize that children don't actually mind playing alongside other children of different ability levels and age. If we look back to a time prior to the takeover of organized youth football, children would learn to play on the street. Often times in these 'street soccer' games, players would be up against other players of different ages and level of ability, and everyone would just play. Now, with youth football, under the guidance of the adult realm, we deem it necessary to group and label young children in order to feed the hunger of our elitist attitudes. But is this right? Is this what's needed to develop the talent of the future? Or are we making decisions too quickly and playing the guessing game at too early an age?

Actually, I think grouping players even at a young age is fine, but what's missing is the balance. The balance between how often we group players and how often we allow them to interact with players outside of their selected group. There are benefits to both, and here's why.

When grouping players by level of ability, we:

- Allow players to play and train alongside players of similar ability, which should allow them to be challenged at an appropriate level. A level that is not too low or high for the player, but challenging enough to keep them engaged.
- Allow practices to be set to a certain level. Meaning that training can be set to have the group of players work on similar objectives as they are at a level that allows them to train in collaboration.
- Set the bar for competition. When players are competing at a level suitable to their needs, they will be able to experience a healthy balance between winning and losing, success and failure.
- See players shape their identity. Players like to be part of a team, they can identify themselves with players who share a similar passion or drive and they form friendships and create healthy relationships and a sense of belonging.

THE NEED TO GROUP PLAYERS, OR NOT

When we eliminate groupings and allow players to interact and mix, we:

- Allow players to interact and cooperate with players of different ages and different levels of ability.
- Allow players who are technically weaker to observe, interact, and learn from those who are at a higher level technically.
- Teach the players who are advanced to work alongside others who may not be at the same level. Here players discover traits such as patience, teamwork, cooperation and respect.
- Challenge certain players to be leaders. We allow the older players to develop the leadership skills needed to work with players who are younger and may need guidance.
- Push players outside of their comfort zone. This type of situation allows players to play alongside others they are not familiar with, putting a major focus on the development of their social skills.
- Stretch certain players to try and compete at a level that is out of their reach, allowing them to deal with a bit of frustration and seeing how they handle certain scenarios.



All in all there are benefits to both situations mentioned above. Unfortunately, it is rare to see a club ever mix their players for training or games. I believe the long term benefits of balancing both situations are countless and the approach can have great impact on not only the players technical ability, but also on their persona and total development as a human being. It is too often that we see players struggle with the game because they lack certain traits and skills that are outside of the technical box. Traits such as leadership, the ability to deal with adversity, teamwork skills, patience, respect for others and more. These personal qualities are just as important as the ones needed to physically play the game. We have to remain set on building the whole player because the game is not just about going onto the field and kicking a ball, but so much more than that.

This article was written by Victor Satei (@VictorSatei), you can view his website by visiting www.sateionsoccer.com

GRASSROOTS SOCCER: COACHING LESS...NOT EASY, BUT REWARDING

I recently wrote an article in September about being "[not so loud](#)" when coaching. Last night we started our Fall U8-U12 Wizard Academy.

Our session had 56 players, 5 coaches and 5 stations. I will not get into the stations and organization as I've done that before. I enjoy doing stations for a number of reasons. The most important being that it keeps the kids in smaller group and busier. LOTS OF SOCCER. But my other side alternative is coaching development.

Even if a coach is experienced, I give them the plan for the station and coaching points. And my initial message to them is to give the kids their problem to solve and let them solve it. Fight the urge to coach too much. I know how difficult it is to not over-coach. As a person who has faith in humanity, I have to believe.

that people who over coach do so in hopes of helping the kids. In the middle of being a quieter coach with various programs, I was WAY over-coaching my 1999 boys (I could never figure out why I felt I had to). We all fall off the wagon sometimes, I guess. Overall, I know I started making the transition to less coaching roughly 12 years ago. There are many times that I slip, many times, but I work to let the kids play. I write it in my plans to remind me.

Reflecting back, I could remember the transition and what I was feeling:

1. If the kids succeed with little coaching, they may not need me.
2. If parents don't hear me coach they may think I am not interested.
3. They will not learn if I didn't talk.
4. They came here looking for information from me.
5. With no instruction, it's not a real session.
6. I am qualified, so I can talk as much as I want.

Looking back now, I have answers to all of those feelings.

1. If we develop players who can be creative solve problems, we are doing a good job and developing smart players.
2. Very few parents are listening to you. And the ones who do are just as happy hearing you praise your players, who are their children.
3. Just setting the stage for development and enjoyment presents a better learning environment.
4. They came to play soccer :)
5. With the proper setup, progressions and ability to express themselves, the session is very real.
6. My experience and qualifications oblige me to trust my knowing that the players can and will learn more by having the right situations presented to them in the right environment.

It wasn't that easy. Letting go was difficult, uncomfortable and unsettling. Over-coaching is not consistent with my personality, but over-coaching was the order of the day and images presented to us of good coaches all had them over-bearing, all knowing, wise and crusty people.

Don't misinterpret what I am saying. Coaching less doesn't mean offering less. It's about letting kids play, picking your coaching moments and making them meaningful. Each situation requires a different level of interaction and different [teaching method](#). When I am teaching a new technique, I step in a lot more than when I am coaching in a Small Sided Game.

Back to our session.

- Coach Anthony, Coach Eric and Coach Brian had small sided games with simple conditions.
- Coach Steve has a 1v1 station, 5 lanes, everybody playing.
- I had a keep-away station.

My hope was to not have a station but a coach was detained (not by the cops, just derailed in his plans that night). I've worked with all of these coaches before so I knew we had a decent bunch. Three of them were in a Learn to Train Course that I delivered last year. We reviewed plans and exchanged the usual pleasantries, but all the plans had written down "Let them play" and/or "do not over coach" and/or "applaud creativity".

I can't tell you how happy I was while listening to them. They stayed consistent with what I wanted the evening to look like, and they heaped praise on the players. The kids were all allowed to play. I wanted the evening to be more diagnostic than anything else because it was our first night. By letting the kids play we were able to get a good feeling for the level they were at.

It helped the other coaches a lot that they had enough experience to be confident with the players. I offered them the opportunity to let me know if there was a conditioned game or technical station that they wanted to try out.

With LTPD, there seems to be the occasional person who is harsh towards loud, controlling coaches. My opinion is education, diplomacy and good examples are the way to go. Judging someone's coaching methods is neither productive nor appropriate.

I am hoping we will keep the evenings looking consistent in organization and delivery, but varying in content.

This article was written by Frank DeChellis (@CoachFrank66) and you can view his website at <http://www.coachingsoccer.ca>



Soccer **coaching resources** for the professional and grassroots game



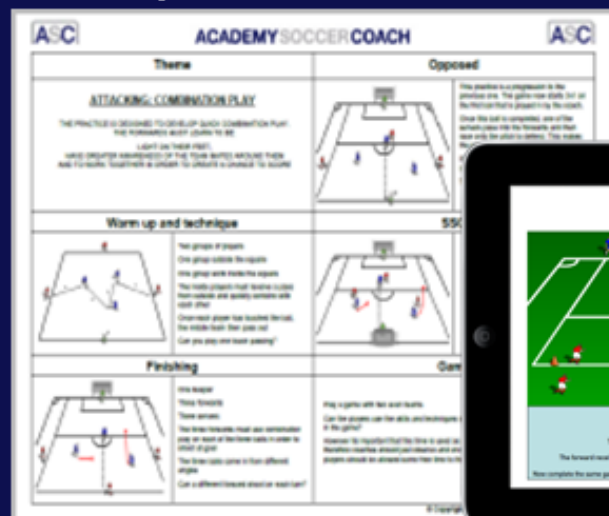
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WHAT ARE THEY THINKING?

Footballers can have a bad game for a number of reasons – injury, tactical confusion...just an off day! Bad games happen to everybody and the mental side of football can be a primary reason as to why a player can have a beast of a performance. Distraction, over-emotion, a sudden loss of confidence...I could go on! Stress tends to be a major contributor to poor games...and it is a mindset area that coaches need to be aware of. This is a short guide to helping players deal with the stress of competitive football.



Psychological research tells us this – whether a player feels stressed about an upcoming game depends on the interaction between:

- . The personal resources for coping a player has (think ‘personality’)
- . The appraisal the player makes about the game (“I can play well” to “I don’t think I’m going to play well”)
- . The coping responses of the player (think ‘self-talk’ and ‘imagery’)

So that’s the research – but you don’t need to know the long words and you don’t need to go rifling through academic journals to understand this process and to have a few ideas to help your players.

Look at the above and take some time to think about your players. Which ones do you think have incredible natural ability to cope with the stressors of big game?

Which ones do you think need help? Of the ones who need help, how do you think they appraise the game? What do they say to themselves? Can they learn from their team mates, the ones who appraise the game in a helpful way?

Now don’t for one minute think that this doesn’t affect every single one of your players. It does – big time! Every player on your team, your squad, your roster has a mental response to an upcoming game. And their internal drives their external....how they think going into a game influences how they will subsequently perform.

You the 21st century coach need to be the absolute nuts at helping players manage their responses (for anyone outside of the UK ‘absolute nuts’ means ‘to be very good at!’)

The exciting thing is that there are so many ways to help players appraise the game in a helpful way. I talk a lot about these in both of my books (Soccer Tough and Soccer Brain). But here’s a few ideas:

Create a Script

I came up with the idea of a script about a decade ago when working in non league soccer in England. I asked players to focus exclusively on the things they can control by getting them to pick 3 things that they wanted to achieve during the game other than getting a positive result. These things had to be related to the responsibilities within their role.

Try this with your players – there’s loads more detail about creating match scripts for your players in Soccer Tough and Soccer Brain.

Basic Psych Skills

Taking a deep breath is a clichéd remark to a person who is feeling the heat – clichéd because it works! For players who are highly anxious going into a game ask them to take some deep breaths. Ask your players to attach some internal pictures to the breaths...ask them what their best performance looks like or ask them to think about their training mentality (where they are more likely to play and compete loose, free and confidently).

WHAT ARE THEY THINKING?

Basic psychological skills are, as the name suggests, pretty basic. But they can be quite powerful! And you can help players implement these.

Self Talk

Self talk is another powerful psych skill that you can use to help a player deal with an upcoming game that makes them feel stressed.

“I’m not going to play well...the striker is so quick and so strong” needs to be re-framed into an inner dialogue that helps rather than hinders.

A crucial coaching technique in your toolbox involves asking the kind of questions that help player re-appraise.

“Ok, this striker is quick and strong – let’s accept that but let’s look at some solutions. Imagine you play an amazing game against this player – tell me what this looks like? What will you be thinking and doing?”

A question like this opens up a catalogue of inner pictures that helps a player problem solve. As a coach you need to listen in close – listen for the clues that the player will give you.

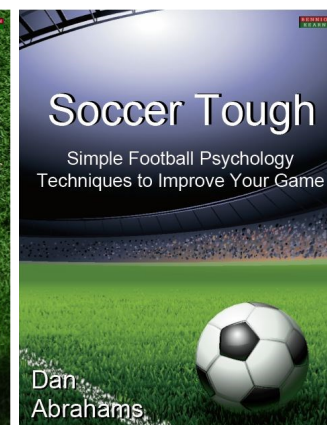
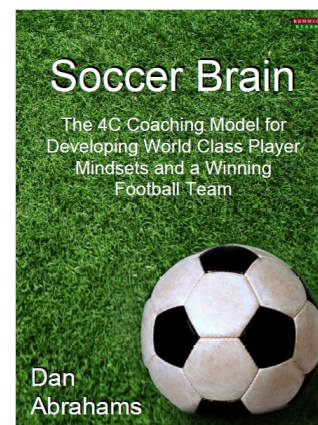
“I’ll be constantly on my toes and tight to him at the right times...I’ll be one step ahead at all times”

“On my toes” and “step ahead” might be clues here – help the player talk to himself about staying on his toes and playing head up. Help the player envision himself do this and set his personal objectives (his match script) revolving around these outcomes.

The 21st century coach is a great football psychologist. She’s a coach of mindset and has a passion for sport psychology. She helps players settle their nerves by helping them re-appraise the stress they inevitably feel going into a big game.



This article was written by Dan Abrahams (@DanAbrahams77) and you can view his website at www.danabrahams.com . Dan is a sport psychologist, Lead Psychologist for England Golf and working globally in football/soccer. He has written 2 soccer specific books: ‘Soccer Tough’ and ‘Soccer Brain’



CAN WE PLAY A GAME?

This week I've coached a group of U7 and U8, they are very capable bunch with 3 or 4 training with professional football clubs. These players have a decent understanding and boundless enthusiasm for the game.



ing and boundless enthusiasm for the game.

These sessions took place during the Easter holidays so were designed to be fun but also to improve the players as individuals, the increased contact time was ideal to work on specific elements of their game.

This made me think;

- . What type of sessions do these players need?
- . What coaching style do I need to adopt to get the best outcomes?

The sessions

Firstly I asked the players..."*What would you like to do today?*" The answer (rather predictably) was "*Matches*" and "*Shooting!*". So my challenge was to deliver engaging sessions which would develop them but perhaps disguise them as matches or competitive situations with shooting!

In conclusion, after lengthy discussion we decided;

- Semi or fully opposed (Competition)
- Game related - Directional, goals/scoring
- Fun!

Coaching Style

What became really apparent to me was that my role wasn't to **tell** them what I know, just to remind them what they had already learnt and give them tons of op-

portunities to put it in to practice. I felt like the information was already in their heads, but at times I'd have to try and pull it out.

Also it was really clear that **peer learning** would be huge, because there was so much knowledge in the group the players actually learnt a great deal from each other. (see second video)

I found question and answer really worked with this group. The boys had so much energy that they were very eager to tell me what they knew! So the skill for me was not to tell them what I knew or what I liked but to get ***them*** to explain and describe what they already knew and how we could build on those foundations.

At times I had to lead the players down a series of question to get the session where I wanted it to be...we couldn't just play matches for 4 days straight. The trick was to ask the right question.

A Sample Session

The session was based on rotation, the aim was to improve the players understanding of 'How do we find space and get in 'bubbles' to receive the ball?' in coaching terms this could be classed as 'individual transition', 'support' or 'movement' but basically I wanted to explain the principle of finding space, showing and swapping.

I wanted to finish the session with a 6v6 game with a free zone across the pitch. The idea being that the boys would recognize when to rotate in and out of the free zone to pick up possession from the defenders. Having worked with the players before I knew they would like match play but how did I go about explaining rotation? A quite advanced topic to a group of U7 and U8.

With older players this could be explained in various ways, you could talk about angles and distances or creating overloads but I wanted to focus on the rotation of players as in mini-soccer (6v6/7v7) if you can create this it is very difficult to counter.

Now these boys were very able, they would be considered above average for their age. The advantages of this group are;

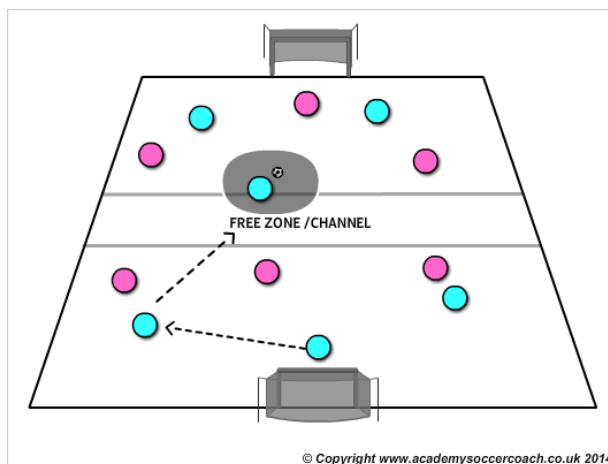
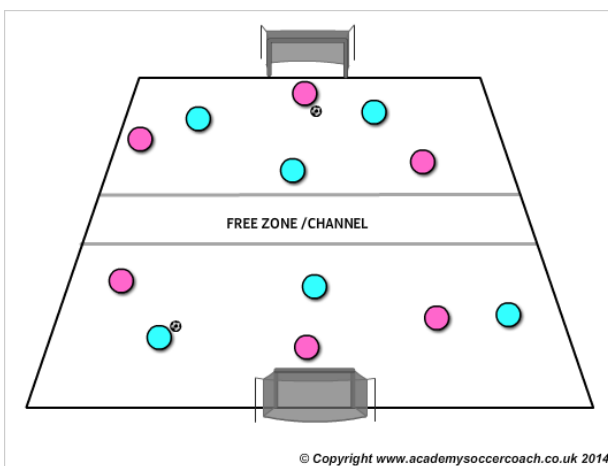
- They have (for their age) excellent basic techniques and skills
- A decent understanding of how to play the game and tactics to score a goal
- Are used to be asked to try 'new' or 'difficult' things

CAN WE PLAY A GAME?

The disadvantages can be;

- They have limited attention span
- They want to 'play' rather than traditional 'stop - stand still' type sessions
- In possession they concentrate on the ball and lack a clear picture
- Some have excellent ability 1v1 which means they don't always 'need or use' their team mates (awareness)

Part 1: Unopposed - the 'boring' session



To start with I set the area up as above, 2 halves separated with a 3 meter 'Freezone'. Initially I asked the boys to split in to 2 teams with 3 in each half. Each team would have a ball and pass and move from half to half, completely unopposed. After 1 minute I challenged the boys "Can you now try and receive in this central channel? Try and recognize when to 'arrive'". ([VIDEO](#))

It was exactly what I'd asked for, but lacked realism and I knew they weren't enjoying it.

Part 2: Question and Answer

I sat the boys down and asked "What did you think of that?" Here is their response.

[CLICK TO SEE VIDEO](#)

You might have to listen to this a few times to hear all the responses; the players told me

what they didn't like about the session and how it could be improved (made fun).

- Make it competitive
- Allow tackling
- No tackling in the channel

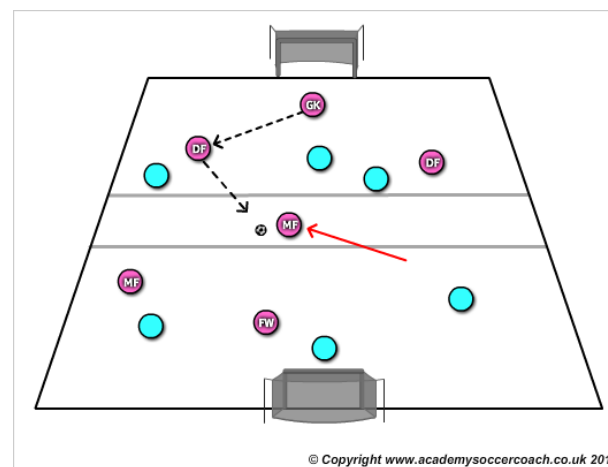
More importantly listen to the knowledge in the group, especially on the reason why we should keep the 'channel'.

- Keep the channel so we can "pop in to get the ball"
- When we swap "We have to communicate"
- When we swap "if someone goes into that one, someone has to go into that one"
- "Keep a 3v3"

Part 3: Their session

Their session, was actually my session but I didn't tell them that! As you heard on the video, keep the 3v3 and the channel, try and "pop up" in the middle to receive the ball.

Empowering the group and altering the conditions completely changed the session...all through asking the right question.



These boys all train with The Elite Training Centre (ETC) who are doing some great work across the south, check out their website [here](#). Also special thanks to Jensen my camera man (Under 10).

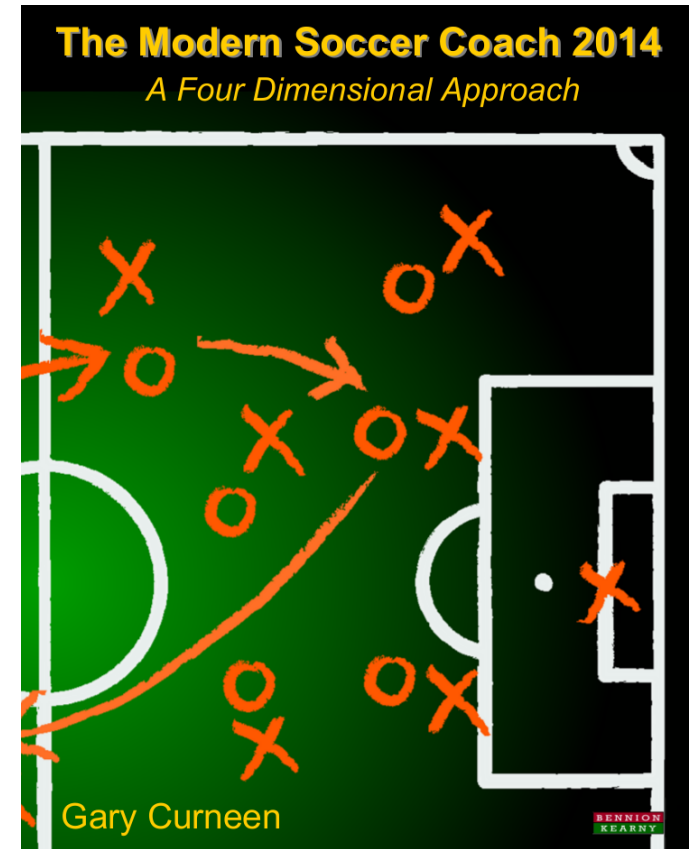
This article was written by Coach Dan Wright (@CoachDanWright) and you can view his website [here](http://coachdanwright.blogspot.com) <http://coachdanwright.blogspot.com>

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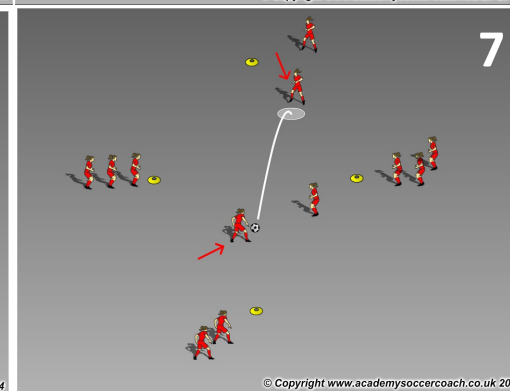
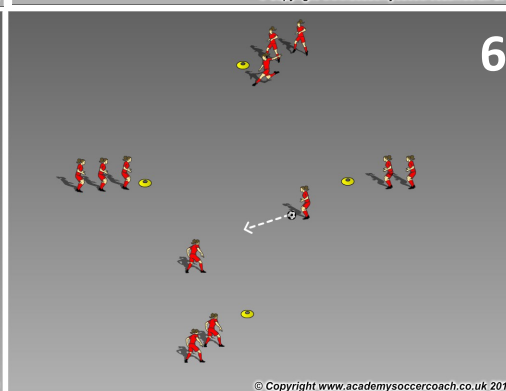
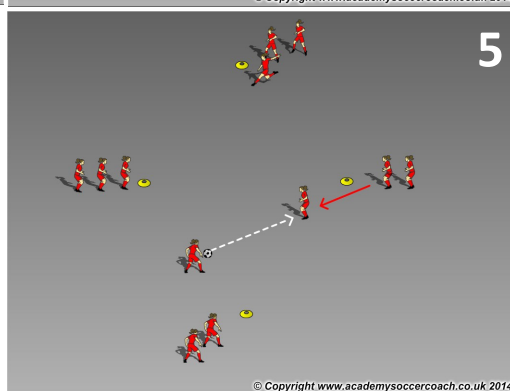
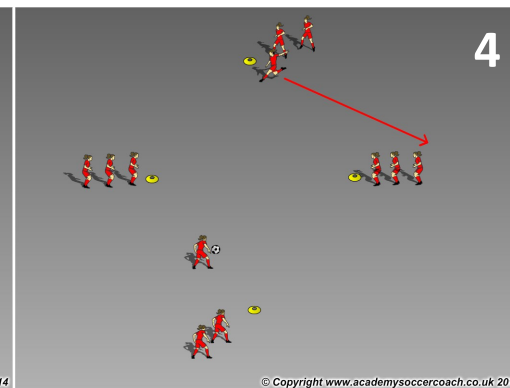
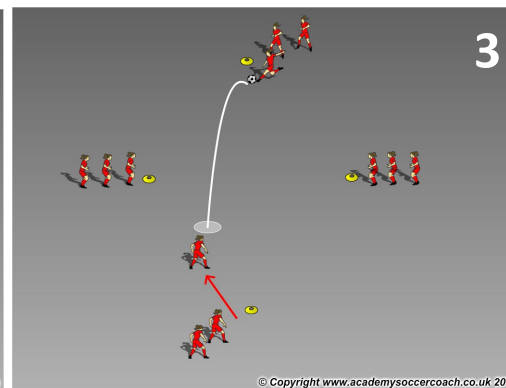
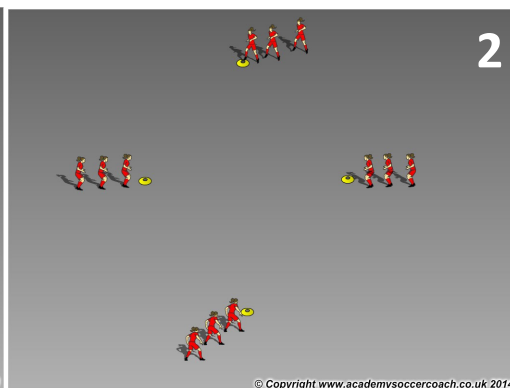
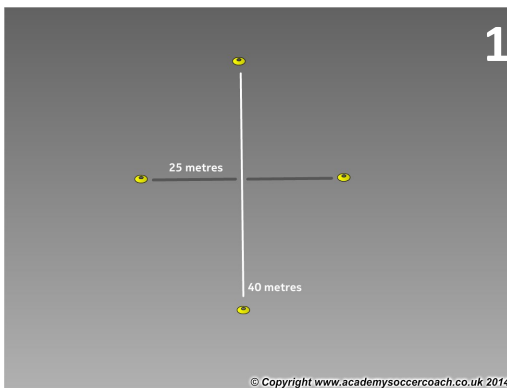
Coach: Keith Scarlett

Age Group: U14+

Session: Technical Tactical

Duration: 90 Minutes

Keith Scarlett is currently an Assistant Women's Coach with Perth Glory FC in Australia. He holds a USSF "A;" AFC "B;" as well as an NSCAA Advanced National, Youth National and Goalkeeper Level I license. Scarlett spent two years as an Assistant Men's Coach for Throttur FC in Iceland and has over 10 years of collegiate coaching experience in the US, as well as 17 years of experience in the club and HS ranks. Having earned two Bachelor of Science degrees (Sports Medicine and Sports Management) and a Master of Science in Sports Psychology, he is currently pursuing his PhD. You can access his personal blog, AN AMERICAN COACH DOWN UNDER at <http://keithscarlett.blogspot.com/> Follow him on Twitter @keithscarlett



Technical Training: (Pics 1-7)

Players split into even groups. Each group has 4 cones set up in a diamond. The top and bottom cones are 40 meters apart while the side cones are 25 meters apart. 2-3 players at each cone.

The players starting at the top cone begins with a ball and plays a lofted ball to the player at the furthest cone away from them (Bottom cone).

After passing the player sprints to the back of the line to their left. The player receiving the ball one touches the ball to the player to their right.

This player then one touches the ball back and to the middle as a lay-off.

The player who received the initial pass steps forward and chips the ball to the first

line and the pattern continues in the other direction.

All players rotate to the right. The emphasis is on playing accurate long balls with both their left and right feet. **(7 Mins)**

Next—Play a driven ball either on the ground or below waist height rather than a lofted ball. The players must concentrate on getting over the ball and striking the ball with a locked ankle with their laces **(6 Mins)**

AN AMERICAN COACH DOWN UNDER

1

Shadow Training / Dry Runs (8 Mins)

Focus on defensive positioning. The players are put into their positions and walked through to show what shape the team should take in different defending situations.

An emphasis is put on communication since that is what most teams struggle most to do during game situations. The players are also encouraged to come up with their own solutions to problems. The coaches should expect the players to make decisions at game speed - even if the decision is sometimes wrong, at least the player is staying involved and with the pace of play. The players play for a few minutes while allowing the coaches to tell the players where they should move to and stop the play to show how some people are in the right position and sometimes in the wrong position and how to correct it.

Scrimmage (15 Mins) (Pic 1)

To work on opening up the runs and allowing more space to work on playing the final ball. The field is 80 meters long and full width with teams playing 8v8+2 (Neutrals).

By opening up the grid, the player's runs create more space for the final ball to be played into or even for a 25 meter shot. Maintaining the width of the grid promotes making sideline runs and getting crosses played into runners making near, slot and back-post runs.

2

Scrimmage (20 Mins)

After the walk through gives the players a solid basis of defensive understanding, the two teams play a 20 minute scrimmage to work on making the decisions for themselves and learning to rely on each other to come up with the solutions. It is important for them to realize that not everything is right/wrong or black/white. There is a gray area to everything, so as long as the player does something and makes some decisions, it usually works out.

Crossing Activity (Pic 2)

Next the team does a crossing activity to one goal. Servers stand out on the flanks and alternate sides. 3 players run in making near, slot and far post runs. The activity ends once the players score 10 goals

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Best Wishes for a Prosperous 2014!

- CTGG Team