

What are the main qualities a coach requires to stay at the top level?

You wouldn't go very far if you didn't have a good knowledge of the game. You need to be able to impart that knowledge, so you need to be a good communicator; to be able to talk football. If you don't have that knowledge, people will catch you out – they'll say you don't know what you're talking about. You need to be a good organiser, of course. Handling players is also particularly important, especially today when you deal with millionaires – you must be willing to stand up to them, even the stars. I use the senior players when it comes to discipline, I may speak to them privately beforehand, but publicly they are in the same boat as all the others.

The longer you're in the game the more respect you get, because people recognise what you've done in order to stay in the game. Most important is your enthusiasm, because players can pick that up from you. To have vitality and energy is vital if, like me, you work on the pitch every day. The day I don't go onto the pitch is the day I retire, because that's my love. You must have passion and be able to bounce back from a defeat within 24 hours.

You've got to inspire to players. If you go in on a Monday morning and you're dead, then they are dead. The players must believe that we can get things right again, even after a painful defeat.

The coach today must be a good judge of a player, because nothing beats signing a new man and knowing that the players are impressed with the new acquisition. Your reputation can depend on your judgement of a player, on your ability in the transfer market.

How have you handled the millionaire star players?

Because of what players earn today, you cannot frighten them, but you must be willing to stand up to them. You've got to surround yourself with good players, but they must also be good people. You have to "sell" the club to players by offering a great football environment; plus, of course, the opportunity to win things - to be with a great club. One of the secrets of Manchester United is that they are still hungry to win things, even though they've got the money. If you haven't got that hunger in you or you've lost it, you won't make it in this game.

You must have a good rapport with players. It's like me and Alan Shearer – I involve him, tell him what I'm going to do, even when it includes criticism of him. I tell him to learn from me because one day he may be in my position.

How has football changed in your time in management?

Money has changed the game. Millionaire players are the norm and that has had an influence on the job of the coach. The game has changed fitness wise, particularly the increase in tempo and player speed - players are covering enormous distances today because of modern training methods. Technique is way above the levels of twenty years ago – the one and two touch play of today is amazing. I ask myself; "How can the game be better?" The laws have improved. Passive offside has helped the game, even though the assistant referees sometimes get it wrong; while the pass-back rule has had a big influence on speeding up the game – this has also forced the goalkeeper to be a better player. I also like the system with extra footballs around the pitch because there is less time lost. The added-on time at the end of games has been very good, because often you have

a few minutes extra to win the match or to save the game, and the supporters get more value for their money.

The game has changed tactically with greater variations and flexibility. Tactical substitutes have become essential. In my case, I became a better coach by going abroad – I learned through necessity to be very decisive; if you're not decisive, you'll fail.

What aspects of the game today disturb you most?

Agents have become a bit of a nightmare. In the future, they will be your "scouts" and tell you who is available, because they have every player tied up. Even youngsters have their agents and we have to deal with them. The money which they demand, even for young players, is unbelievable. The agent will make, on one deal, three times the amount the traditional club scout earns in a year. We'll have to live with this situation because I cannot see it changing.

I don't like violence on the pitch. Those melees you see involving large numbers of players are totally unacceptable – I hate that. Players earn a lot of money and that means they have a responsibility to the game. They must show some discipline on the pitch. If a player is out for three or four weeks due to a suspension, he shouldn't get paid.

Hooliganism nearly killed the game in England; football was on the edge of a collapse. Things have improved, but such behaviour cannot be accepted. During my time as England manager, I had a five year period when my national team players didn't play in UEFA club competitions, because hooliganism had got our clubs banned from Europe. We have cleaned things up a lot, but we must always be on guard against those who would damage the game.

I think we are giving young people too much, too early: Today, youngsters of 18 years are arriving at the ground in their BMWs. Some of these young players don't know the outside world – they've never had to look for a job. I just want them to appreciate what they have, to give their best to the club at training and on match days. They must be self disciplined, self motivated; they get a lot from us, but they must offer something in return.

When you make a substitution (except when replacing an injured player), what is your basic thinking at that moment?

The use of substitutions can be crucial, to win the match or to save the match. Sometimes you've got to be clever, like a boxer. You say, "I've this game won"; and then put on an additional defender or midfield player for the last few minutes. I don't do this very often, but sometimes it's necessary. Football is very romantic, and I remember trying to hold on to the lead at Leeds United by putting on another defensive player. What happened? We actually scored a third goal and won the match convincingly. The main thing is that you have to be bold, to have courage.

I learned how to make tactical substitutions to win a match, especially during my years in Holland, Portugal and Spain. The main thing is to pose the other coach a problem, to read the game, and to make decisions which create an advantage.

How have you adapted to the different cultures you have experienced during your time on the continent?

You must adapt to the culture of the new country – they won't change for you. I loved working abroad and enjoyed adapting to each new

environment. One thing: I never bought an English player for any of my clubs abroad. I used the club's coaches and asked them to help me with the local mentality, the local environment.

What have been the highlights of your career?

Taking Ipswich from a "Cinderella" club to the top-level in Europe was fantastic. Yes, I had 14 years to do it. I had no money, but I had time. We developed young players and made some shrewd buys. I couldn't afford to make a mistake when buying a player. It was also important to develop our own style and to utilise the talents we had available. We won the UEFA Cup, the FA Cup and only failed to win the English League on the final day of the season. In our country (England), sometimes the public thinks we are the only people who can play football at a high level, which is nonsense when you think of the players who are produced in Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania etc. etc. This mentality sometimes puts teams under pressure because of high, sometimes unrealistic, expectations. We ignored all of this at Ipswich, and even with our limited resources, we had the mentality and the team play to overcome all the obstacles and to reach the top, domestically and in Europe.

My biggest disappointment was not getting to the final of the World Cup in 1990. We lost on penalties to Germany, in spite of being the better team during the extra time. However, on a brighter note, a major highlight for me was being in charge at Barcelona, one of the greatest clubs in the world. Few people thought I could succeed, but I did. One night when I was at Ipswich we beat Barça 3 – 0, and then, years later, there I was as their head coach. With Barcelona, I won the UEFA Cup Winners Cup, the Spanish Cup, and finished 2nd to Real Madrid in the league, not bad for one season in charge.

What would you consider the main attribute which has made you such a successful coach?

I'm in love with the game. Whatever the obstacles are, whatever the set backs, I always want to go back to the game, to be part of it, to continue. I'm hooked on football, and my enthusiasm stems from that. I like being on the pitch with players and I get excited every time kick-off approaches. Even when the opposition scores after 21 seconds (and I ask myself, "Did I train them all week for this?"), I still bounce back, because I want to be part of it: buying players, improving players, seeing young players become stars. The key word is love – I just adore football.