

# THE TECHNICIAN

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**NEWSLETTER  
FOR COACHES**

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PA Wire/PA Photos

**MANCHESTER UNITED'S  
CRISTIANO RONALDO  
AND AC MILAN'S KAKÁ (BELOW)  
INSPIRE YOUNGSTERS.**

**THE UEFA PRESIDENT,  
MICHEL PLATINI, WITH MRS  
ELIZABETH PUSKÁS.**



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## IMPRESSUM

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Sir Alex Ferguson of Manchester United (winner of the English Premiership title for the ninth time) living up to the suggestion that managers "kick every ball".

(Photo: Getty Images)



EMPICS

# PUSKÁS POWER

## EDITORIAL

BY ANDY ROXBURGH,  
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

Four and a half months after the passing of Hungarian footballing icon Ferenc Puskás, a new football academy bearing his name was opened in Felcsút, some 40 km west of Budapest. A heartfelt message from the UEFA president, Michel Platini, another illustrious No. 10 in the annals of European football, was read out at the inauguration ceremony: "Ferenc was truly a great among greats. He was one of the most talented footballers ever and a devoted and caring man. A true legend." Special words from the president for an exceptional man who inspired a generation of young footballers during the 1950s and 1960s with his exploits for Hungary and Real Madrid. And few people need to be reminded that his four goals for Real in a 7-3 victory in the 1960 European Cup final against Eintracht Frankfurt remains

a record – a distant, tantalising target for today's elite finishers.

Charismatic characters who can inspire others to perform, or to follow the steep route to the top, are precious. Puskás is in this category, and to emphasise this ongoing power, his enduring influence, the entrance to the new academy has a top step with the footprints and signature of the great man embedded in concrete. Hopefully, the symbolism will not be lost on the young football apprentices who dream of great victories, of wonderful goals, of a hero's adulation.

Great coaches not only motivate players to perform, but often inspire others to follow in their career path. How many coaches at grassroots level would love to emulate Sir Alex Ferguson of Manchester United? Some, I'm sure, in the professional game also harbour such ambitions. But dreaming is one thing, replicating those who are successful is another. It takes talent, dedication and intelligence to reach the top of the coaching profession –

being inspired only 'lights the fire'. Ferenc Puskás had his own role models for coaching. He once said: "You can't be strong without good coaches. We had them – foremostly my father was unforgettable. Without them we would not have been successful." And in the aftermath of his playing career, the captain of the 'Magical Magyars' proved he also had the ability to coach a team when he led the unheralded Panathinaikos to the 1971 European Cup final. Very few, like Ferenc, have taken part in a European Cup final as a player and as a coach. Indeed, only five have won it in both capacities – Miguel Muñoz, Giovanni Trapattoni, Johan Cruyff, Frank Rijkaard and Carlo Ancelotti.

In addition to front-line participants, those involved in coach education also have a key role to play in influencing the future of the game. As the old saying goes: "I teach; therefore I touch the future." Inspiring the next generation of coaches to be creative, to have their own philosophy, to be curious, to be obsessed by details, and to have managerial class is a noble cause, one which will have an important influence on the game's development.

In the age of wall-to-wall TV coverage of football, the impact of star players like Cristiano Ronaldo or Kaká, can't be overemphasised. The elite, whether they are performers, coaches or educators, will never know the effect they have on those who look up to them, but they must be aware of the influence they have and their responsibility. Ferenc Puskás, with his humility, humour and genius, not only collected cups and medals, but, more significantly, he won the hearts and minds of countless fans and ambitious young footballers. Now with the opening of the football academy in his name, the power of Puskás lives on. In a football world of spiralling salaries and transfer fees, those with the aura and ability to inspire the next generation are priceless treasures.



Ferenc Puskás, in his Hungarian colours, between his Real Madrid team-mates Raymond Kopa and Alfredo Di Stefano.



## INTERVIEW

BY ANDY ROXBURGH,  
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR



**ROY HODGSON, THE CURRENT MANAGER OF FINLAND'S NATIONAL TEAM, HAS BEEN A PROFESSIONAL COACH FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, AND HAS SPENT THE BULK OF THAT TIME OUTSIDE HIS NATIVE ENGLAND. HE STARTED HIS COACHING CAREER IN SWEDEN WITH HALMSTAD BK, WINNING THE TITLE TWICE IN FOUR YEARS. THEN, AFTER TWO YEARS AT BRISTOL CITY FC, HE COACHED SWEDISH CLUB ÖREBRO SK TO THE SECOND DIVISION CHAMPIONSHIP. A MOVE TO MALMÖ FF RESULTED IN A PERIOD OF EXCEPTIONAL SUCCESS WITH FIVE SUCCESSIVE CHAMPIONSHIPS AND TWO CUPS BEING ACCUMULATED. AFTER WORKING FOR NEUCHÂTEL XAMAX FC IN SWITZERLAND, ROY TOOK OVER THE NATIONAL TEAM OF THAT COUNTRY AND LED THEM TO THE 1994 WORLD CUP FINALS AND EURO '96. FC INTERNAZIONALE ACQUIRED HIS SERVICES AND HE ADDED A UEFA CUP SILVER MEDAL TO HIS COLLECTION. SPELLS AT BLACKBURN ROVERS, GRASSHOPPER-CLUB ZURICH, FC KØBENHAVN (HE WON THE CHAMPIONSHIP WITH THE DANISH CLUB), UDINESE AND THE NATIONAL TEAM OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES THEN FOLLOWED, BEFORE HE WAS ENTICED TO TAKE CHARGE OF FINLAND'S NATIONAL TEAM. WITH EURO 2008 AS HIS TARGET, ROY HAS MADE AN IMMEDIATE IMPACT, AND THE FINNS HAVE HIGH HOPES OF QUALIFYING FROM A VERY DIFFICULT GROUP. NO MATTER THE OUTCOME OF THE CURRENT CAMPAIGN, ROY WILL SURELY PROVE ONCE AGAIN THAT HE IS A COACH OF IMMENSE QUALITY. HE IS ENGLISH, HE IS AN OUTSTANDING PROFESSIONAL, HE IS...**

# ROY HODGSON

### 1 • As the head coach of Finland, what are the main challenges you have faced?

There have been no major problems because the squad was composed of many tried and tested players, with a lot of experience. But, of course, in all new jobs you face some challenges. These could be summarised as the need to make a good impression on the players and the staff, the importance of convincing everyone about your coaching ideas and methods, and establishing a good working environment. These have been essential factors here but would, of course, be important anywhere. But I have to say, there have been no dramatic issues to deal with.

### 2 • In your view, what is the difference between managing a top

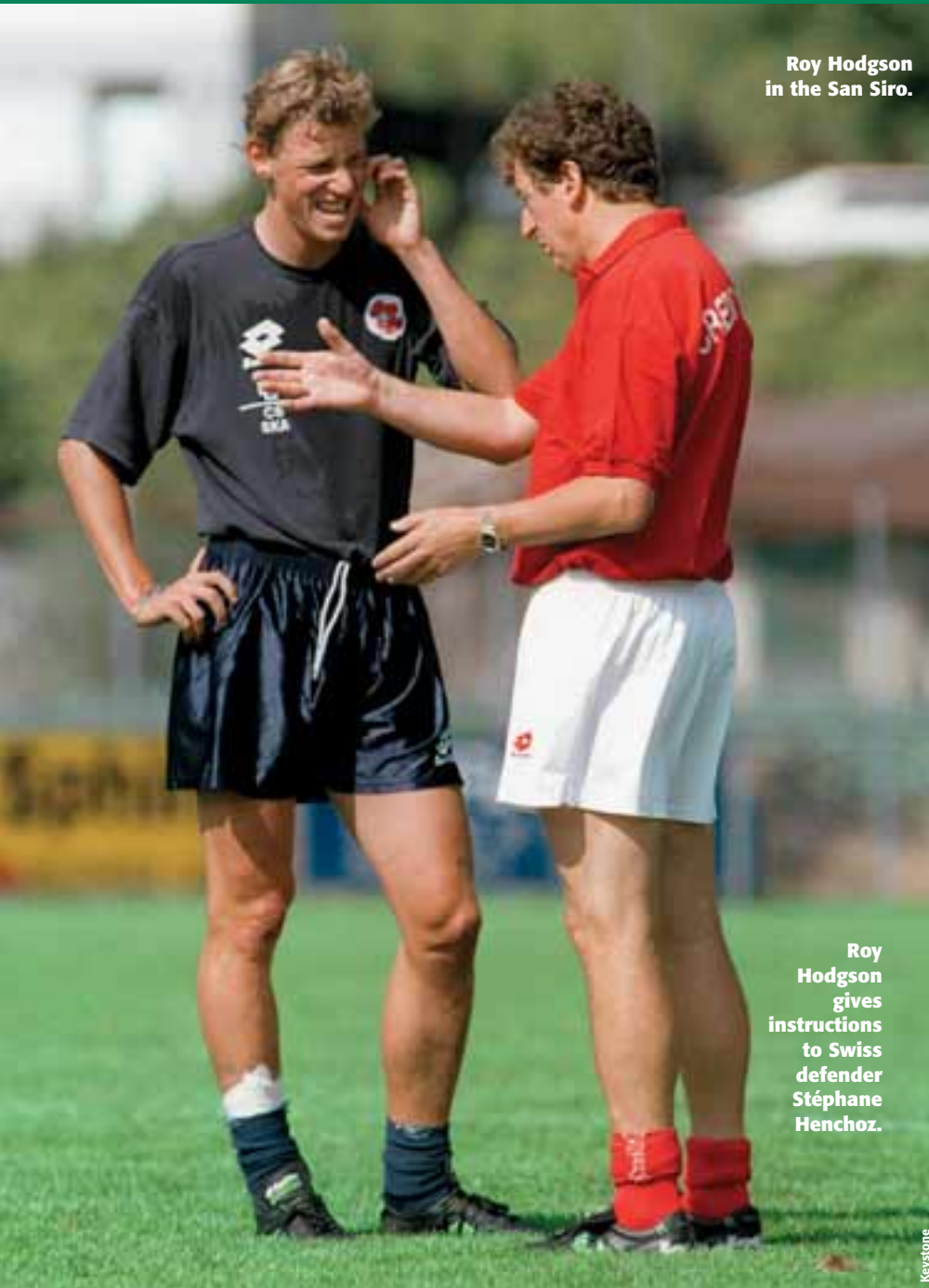
### club side and coaching a national team?

The obvious answer is time. The time spent with players and your ability to work on team play is much more limited with a national squad. There are fewer matches with the national team, but each one carries an element of prestige and pride for your country. On the other hand, you avoid the club management situations like dealing with agents, negotiating salaries, buying and selling players. Both club coaches and national managers, however, can be faced with conflict when it comes to the release of players for national team duty. The players are unfortunately stuck in the middle of this debate. Finally, the image you

project is probably even more important when it comes to national teams because you are representing a nation's football – this is very important for the national coach to remember. At club level, you can be a little more parochial. You can fight for your club's agenda and sometimes you may even anger others or create jealousy in the country. But the national coach must be aware of his responsibility for the way football is perceived in a country, and that is an important aspect of his particular role.

### 3 • How would you describe your style of management?

It is not always easy to describe oneself, but I would like to think that my style could be considered as studied,



Roy Hodgson in the San Siro.

Roy Hodgson gives instructions to Swiss defender Stéphane Henchoz.



Keystone

of working day in and day out. We want to avoid wasting any training sessions because time is precious. You try to produce an instant gelling of the group and you need to be adaptable to cope with the inevitable call-offs and enforced changes. The more club-like you can make the team, the more security you can give the players, the better. This is especially the key when you are working with a small country. Each player needs to feel part of a stable squad of maybe 20-25 players. Very few nations in the world can field two different teams of top quality. Therefore most have to blend together the small group of players who are capable of playing international football.

**5 • How has the coaching job changed since you started?**

Thirty-one years of coaching is a long time, but I resist taking the view that 'distance lends enchantment'. But, unquestionably, there have been significant changes in the staffing of football clubs. Today we have everything from nutritionists to high-tech specialists. For example, when we were in South Korea recently, they had video analysis at half-time. There is no doubt that a lot has been done to give the coach more tools and to make the job easier. But, the crux of the job, i.e. standing in front of players and trying to persuade them that your ideas, your methods, your way of working are worth following, this hasn't really changed. Whatever kind of help the coach gets from the psychologist and the fitness trainer, he will still have to convince the group in front of him that he has something to offer them. When I started, there was only my assistant and myself, but today many coaches have a staff of 20 to 30 people. There has been an enormous development in terms of support, à la American sports organisations. But I still think the face-to-face communication with the players and the basic coaching haven't changed much over the years.

player-orientated, and with an emphasis on preparation and tactics. Because you take on leadership responsibilities, inevitably you have to be somewhat authoritarian. The game of football doesn't lend itself to true democracy. Certainly as I get older, I have become more aware that you can delegate certain things. For example, the players' opinion can be useful when discussing training times or deciding travel schedules, etc. Indeed, most things to do with the players' preparation can be open for discussion. When it comes down to the major issues, for example, team selection, how you are going to conduct your training sessions, what you will emphasise, and how you will deal with any conflict situation which might arise, I don't think there is any room for a democratic approach

when dealing with these matters. Players expect you to take the lead, because that is what you are paid for. But I think it is good to involve them in things which make a big difference to their life but don't compromise your position.

**4 • What do you emphasise when preparing the national team?**

Tactical preparation is crucial and I try to make sure that each player knows his role and is prepared for any challenges which he might face. That can, of course, be specific to the opposition which we will encounter. I try to make it clear to the players that the time we have together is very limited and we need to make efficient use of it. The goal is to be like a club side – to be as well organised as possible without the benefit





**HANSI MÜLLER,  
ANDY ROXBURGH AND  
ROY HODGSON AT THE 2007  
UEFA GRASSROOTS  
CONFERENCE IN HELSINKI.**



**6 • As someone who has qualified for previous European Championship and World Cup final rounds, what are the important difficulties a coach faces when preparing for such events?**

In the qualifying rounds and 'the final phase' the task is to produce a consistency of performance, so that the coach knows that his team are not going to let him down. You need to work very hard to avoid extremes – for example, last month your team was compact, this time you were all over the place. This is particularly significant when working with a national team where the result creates either euphoria or disaster, and has consequences for the players' morale and public expectations. As a coach of a national team you have to avoid extremes, either getting carried away because of a good result or becoming pessimistic after a loss. When you go into a final round you must be aware of what it will mean for the players to be fully concentrated for the duration of the event. Also, they are away together in a different, sometimes claustrophobic environment. The Italians can usually handle this better than most



After his stint with Internazionale, Roy Hodgson had another Italian experience, with Udinese.

because they are used to living in training camps for extended periods of time. Most players don't have this type of experience. Making sure that the players can keep some sort of perspective and a reasonable level of enjoyment in their lives is vital during a final round. You need to lighten their load because they will be under pressure, with all sorts of demands on them. Normally, the football and coaching side is the least of your problems, but the care of the players on a human level may require a lot of attention. The teams which consistently qualify have a wealth of experience in dealing with tournament play and this is their advantage.

**7 • As someone who has been on both sides of the fence, what would you do to improve the relationship between club and national team coaches?**

The only way to improve this issue is through communication. Both partners need to show empathy for the other's problems. All coaches agree that it's not a good idea to put the players into a bad situation. Yet, we consistently do, because each side is thinking about their own needs. Having said that, the coordinated calendar has made a big difference. Certainly within Europe it has helped, but clubs with South American or African players still have major problems. However, the one thing I would like to see is some discussion about the number of dates for official matches and for friendlies. If you are in a big qualifying group like ours, then you need to use some friendly dates for official games and this can be a disadvantage. In summing up the club versus country debate: give and take, common sense and the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes would go a long way to bringing harmony amongst the coaches.

**8 • In your opinion, what are the significant trends in top-level European football, from both a tactical and managerial perspective?**

From a managerial perspective, the trend is for a coach to be judged more

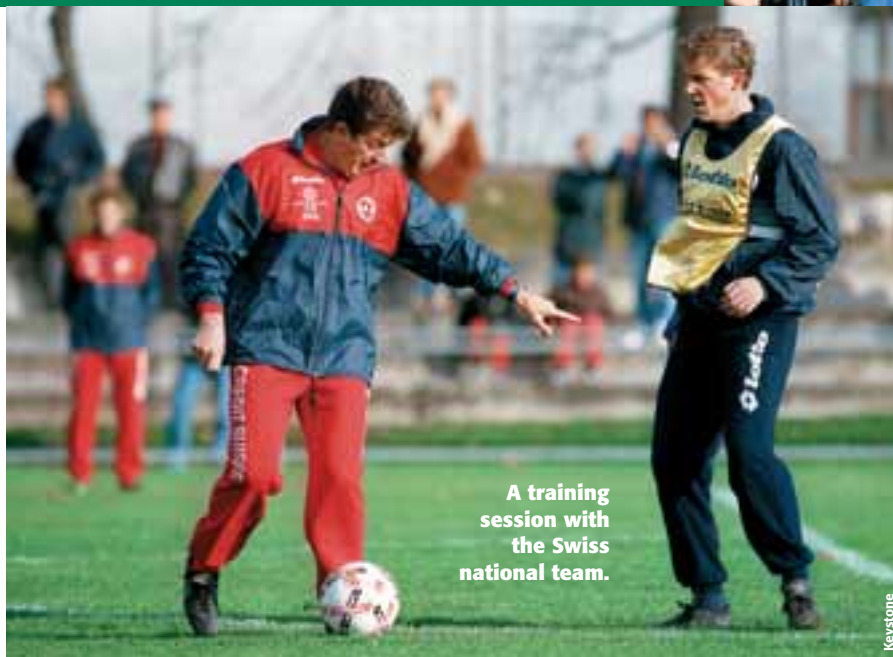
quickly and more harshly than in the past. Because of that, there is little scope for a coach to develop his philosophy or his management style because he might not get the results quickly enough to give him the time. What it has meant, at the highest level, is that the ability to spend money and buy the right players, and to get them to fit in, has become more important than it was in the past when more time was given to the manager to develop the players at his disposal. Today he is being judged more on the quality of his buys than on the standard of work being carried out on a day-to-day basis. From a tactical viewpoint, we could talk about a lot of things but I'll content myself with three. Number one is the importance of the counter-attack and the ability to profit from the turnovers. Secondly, the improvement of athleticism and pace throughout the team. There is no doubt the game is faster and the selection of players reflects this. And thirdly, there is less high-intensity pressing from the front and in advanced areas. This is partly because concern over the interpretation of the offside law has led teams to play deeper. Sides are still compact, but this is mainly in their own half of the pitch.

**9 • Having worked in a number of different football environments (e.g. England, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, etc.), what are the biggest challenges you have faced in adapting to each new culture and approach to the game?**

I must say that I have been lucky and I haven't encountered too many problems on my travels. The language has got to be a key factor. If you can master the language, this is of enormous benefit. This, of course, helps you to communicate, but it also sends out a message to the country that you are not there just to profit from them, but to take part and to contribute. In addition, I think it is very important to be open-minded. The worst mistake you can make is suggest that you have all the answers and your way is the only way. It's necessary to keep an open mind and not to dismiss things that are

**THE HEAD COACH  
OF FINLAND.**

**ROY HODGSON  
AT HIS FIRST TRAINING  
SESSION WITH  
GRASSHOPPERS ZURICH  
IN 1999.**



**A training session with the Swiss national team.**

part of the culture of that country. In a new environment, you often have to work even harder on new relationships – this includes the media, the public, the directors. The playing side of it is often the easiest part because football is a universal language and the players will quickly recognise if the coach is any good. The players will forgive problems in communication skills and manner if they think you know your stuff.

**10 • During your long, varied and successful coaching career, what has given you the greatest satisfaction?**

There have been three key moments for me. The first championship at Halmstad BK in Sweden – to avoid relegation in the first season and then to win the title the next was very special. The fairytale nature of this first success is an indelible memory, albeit a long time ago. The five successive Swedish championship titles and the two cup triumphs with Malmö FF added up to a major success, because it doesn't matter which league you are in, it's difficult to win it year after year. And then the two qualifications with Switzerland for the World Cup and the European Championship would have to rank the highest among my achievements. Apart from the results, you also get a lot of satisfaction from being recognised by your peers, and being accepted into the elite football family. You can't

always be winning trophies and medals, but you can be acknowledged by your colleagues as a good coach, and this brings its own contentment.

**11 • Can UEFA's top competitions be improved in any way?**

I'm not sure that there is room for much improvement. Looking from the outside, I must say that things are going remarkably well. I'm sure minor modifications are being considered all the time. But, for me, the major and decisive move was made when the UEFA Champions League was introduced in the early 1990s. There was a danger back then of American-style competitions, with their franchise system, being imposed on the European game. The idea that teams can never be relegated and just play on year after year, no matter what the results, was never part of our football philosophy. The UEFA Champions League, fortunately, eliminated the threat. Today, any subtle changes are made by UEFA in close collaboration with the major clubs, and that's good for the game.

**12 • What are the key qualities which a coach requires to be a success?**

Briefly, I would say a successful coach needs leadership skills, a talent for reading the game, a gift for communication, a capacity for detailed preparation, a

likable personality, a strong character, a sense of perspective, and humility. Books could be written on each of these aspects of management – some already have. And when we talk about these qualities, I remember reading a quote from the American John Wooden, who said: "Talent is God-given; be humble. Fame is man-given; be thankful. And conceit is self-given; be careful."

**13 • What is your best quality?**

Two qualities which I prize most in other coaches are energy and enthusiasm, and fortunately I think I have both. If you are going to be a top coach, you need to have those core qualities. Of course, there are many other attributes which we could discuss, but without energy and enthusiasm a coach will struggle, and I hope nobody will ever accuse me of lacking either.

**14 • How do you see the future of international football?**

It is certainly a battle to protect international football. I hope that the glamour of a few clubs will not have a negative impact on the national teams, or indeed on all the football being played around the world. It's very important that the leagues are healthy in the medium or small-size countries, as well as in the major markets. Here in Finland, the first league needs to be thriving – any involvement clubs have in the UEFA Champions League, no matter which country they are from, must be considered as the 'icing on the cake'. International football, in particular, needs to be protected because it combines passion for football and a pride in your country. It would be suicidal to take away the interest and excitement which the European Championship and the World Cup generate. These competitions surely complement the glamour of the UEFA Champions League and don't detract from it. We need to show the necessary perspective, clubs and national associations, and be aware of each other's needs. The only way we will have a problem is if some people become too greedy and want everything for themselves.





**UEFA VICE-PRESIDENT  
GEOFFREY THOMPSON ALSO TOOK PART  
IN THE MERIDIAN CONFERENCE.**

# THE BARCELONA EXPERIENCE

**PITCH NO. 4 AT FC BARCELONA'S MAGNIFICENT NEW TRAINING COMPLEX AT ST JOAN DESPÍ. THREE COACHES, EYES SHADED FROM THE SUN BY CAPS, ARE WORKING WITH AN UNDER-18 SQUAD. BETWEEN THEM, IÑAKI SÁEZ, GINÉS MELÉNDEZ AND JUAN SANTISTEBAN HAVE WON POTS OF MEDALS WITH SPAIN'S AGE-LIMIT TEAMS AND CAN MEASURE THEIR COACHING EXPERIENCE IN SCORES OF YEARS. YET, EVEN FOR THEM, THIS IS SOMETHING NEW. THEIR SQUAD MEMBERS HAIL FROM THE CZECH REPUBLIC, GERMANY, HUNGARY, ISRAEL, THE NETHERLANDS, NORTHERN IRELAND, POLAND, PORTUGAL, RUSSIA, SERBIA AND SPAIN.**

Before going any further, it has to be explained that the cameo corresponds to the new-format Meridian Cup and Conference, where coach educators and technical directors and coaches from over 100 African and European associations watched two matches between under-18 teams from both continents, watched the boys training, watched the FC Barcelona first team train at the Camp Nou, took part in discussion groups, and listened to the presentations which contributed to the conference element. In terms of sheer

numbers and diversity, it went into the logbook as the biggest event that Andy Roxburgh's football development division had ever staged. But, as Iñaki, Ginés and Juan would be the first to testify, this wasn't an event. It was an experience.

It could be argued that the three coaches' debut at the helm of a European team was a one-off diversion from the mainstream of coaching. But it raised a series of interesting questions. Are coaches prepared for the

moment when they might arrive at a club where the dressing-room is multinational? This was by no means a rhetorical question when, down the road at the Camp Nou, Frank Rijkaard was coaching a squad of ten different nationalities and in a day and age when cosmopolitan dressing-rooms are not exclusively encountered in the premier divisions of European football.

Looking at the other side of the coin, the same thesis can be applied to the players. It was a first and fantastic experience of life in a multinational dressing-room, their first matches in a team that united different footballing cultures, and, in many cases, their first real contact with news-hungry media. For instance, FC Barcelona's Bojan Krkić, joint top-scorer at last year's European Under-17 finals and widely fancied to reach the top, was asked to do so many interviews and photo calls that the club, anxious to keep his talented feet on the ground, became concerned about the amount of exposure he was receiving. It is no exaggeration to say that the young players arrived in Barcelona expecting a football experience but went home realising that they had walked into a life experience and one which could mark



Kalusha Bwalya (Zambia) analyses the art of goal-scoring with Andy Roxburgh.



**THE THEORY SESSIONS  
AND THE DISCUSSIONS WERE  
OF GREAT INTEREST.**



**The second match between the European and African teams was well attended.**

Photos: Sergi Briet

**1 + 10 = A Team**

The blend of team talk and individual dialogue in the European dressing-room reflected one of the interesting themes broached during the Meridian Conference. The universally accepted aim is to develop today's youth talents into tomorrow's heroes. But how best to go about it? How much emphasis should be placed on the development of the individual? How can individual development best be reconciled with team ethics? And how much attention should be paid to team-building in an environment where the coach's status is all too often dictated by results?

It's a subject that can be attacked from several angles. Andy Roxburgh, reviewing the multiple elements which can turn today's talent into tomorrow's heroes, mentioned a number of quotes that reveal how much importance is placed by top coaches on the mental aspects of player development.

"Talent is not enough – you need desire and intelligence." – **Arsène Wenger**

"The focus of youth development in the future will be tactical training and personality development." – **Louis van Gaal**

"Clubs are focusing too much on spirit and will to win and are neglecting the technical education of players. They don't teach them to think any more." – **Morten Olsen**

"I very much believe in self-motivation because that is what it takes to reach your goals." – **Frank Rijkaard**

What's more, one of the points to emerge forcibly from the discussion sessions in Barcelona was the need to achieve a balance, in the formative years, between football and a career. This opinion is not only motivated by the high drop-out levels among aspiring professionals but also by the view that "an educated player has a better chance of being successful".

their development as a footballer – and as a person.

Iñaki, Ginés and Juan soon discovered that a multilingual dressing-room acts as an excellent censor. Messages have to be delivered in simple and concise fashion. Training routines need to be demonstrated rather than explained in detail. Instructions and corrections have to be delivered with gestures as well as words.

The challenge facing the Spanish trio was clear: to prepare, starting on Monday, a European team to play Africa on the Tuesday and Thursday, with each squad member guaranteed a starting place in at least one of the two line-ups. In the other dressing-room, Ghana's Frederick Osam-Duodu and Egypt's Shawkī Gharīb Baioumi took on the same task but with added difficulties derived from visa problems and the fact that their 'feeder' tournament – the African Under-17 Championship – is played once every two years, whereas the European nursery provides an annual crop. The results (6-1 and 4-0 to Europe) passed harsh judgement on the Africans' contribution but were, in any case, of limited relevance in a context where the key elements were

getting the youngsters from both continents together. It's worth mentioning, by the way, that there were no Unite Against Racism activities pegged to the event. Quite simply, the absence of racist attitudes was taken for granted. At the four-day event, racism was not an issue.

Coming back to coaching aspects, the approach by Iñaki, Ginés and Juan to their crash course in team-building was based on: a well-defined tactical system (the 4-2-3-1 traditionally adopted by Spanish age-limit sides), two or three basic concepts clearly delivered to each department of the team, charts giving precise positions for set plays for and against (pinned up in the dressing-room), and individual dialogue to make sure that messages had been understood, in a context where some players might have regarded questions as an embarrassing admission of 'lack of language skills'.

All in all, it added up to an intense experience that coaching students would have relished – and one which raised questions about how technicians can best be prepared to handle their first encounter with a multinational squad.



**JACQUES CREVOISIER,  
A COACH SPECIALISING  
IN PSYCHOLOGY.**

For the technician, the challenge is that developing a young player's mental strength is not a question of devising training routines. That's why there was great interest in a presentation made by Jacques Crevoisier, a coach specialising in psychology who has spent many years with Gérard Houllier, the French Football Federation and, for a spell before he re-joined Gérard in Liverpool a few years back, with UEFA.

Jacques maintains that regular psychological assessments – preferably every six months – are the basis for work on character development. His 'Motivation Profile' caters for evaluations in 16 categories related to competence, team dynamics, learning objectives, competitiveness, psychological endurance, resistance to stress, aggression, emotional control, self-satisfaction and, of course, various types of motivation. The results of the tests need to be correlated with performances and attitudes during training and match play – but Jacques' experience has demonstrated that the best performers in the tests are the best performers on the park.

Regular assessments help to detect weak points to be discussed with the player, and progress needs to be monitored. Clear objectives need to be defined every year and, according to Jacques, one of the key elements is to prevent the player from entering a 'comfort zone'.

The participants in Barcelona acknowledged the importance of psychological factors in the make-up of an elite player but also raised some interesting questions. Some felt that over-emphasising mental considerations can induce artificial 'hyper-motivation' and loss of control. Others felt that more attention should be paid to stress-reduction techniques. Most felt that it should be the coaching staff – rather than a psychologist – who work on attitude and motivation with the players, but some asked whether the average

technician is able or qualified to assess individual levels of motivation or mental resilience. The other key questions – bearing in mind that the discussion was focused on adolescents – are: At what age should psychological analysis and personality shaping kick in? And at what stage is it possible to modify a young player's character – if at all?

**Bridging the Gaps**

Ask any elite youth coach to name the ultimate aims of the profession and the top priority will probably be to help the player bridge the gap – sometimes it seems to be chasm – between success in age-limit teams and success at the sharp end of the professional game, whether it be at club or national team level.

This was an especially relevant subject in Barcelona, given that many of the African technicians at the Meridian Conference had first-hand experience of players leaving their countries at tender ages, keen to earn a living in the European 'big time' but secretly homesick or depressed in moments when a return home is, to all intents and purposes, out of the question. If they are to bridge cultural, geographical and footballing gaps, they often require psychological support in addition to footballing education.

As Andy Roxburgh pointed out in Barcelona, the off-the-pitch demands on top players represent a heavier burden than ever before: more pressure, more influences and more restraints in exchange for more money. It means that traditional virtues such as love of the game and mastery of the ball are no longer enough. At elite youth levels, players also need to be coached in concentration, self-confidence, character or leadership qualities, competitive spirit, athletic proficiency, team mentality, work ethic and, above all, a healthy lifestyle and a mental fortitude capable of sustaining those physical and psychological requirements.



No problem with the language – Sandor Varga translates for the Hungarian boys and Andy Roxburgh.

As careers develop, experience becomes a great teacher. But, at youth level, it can be important to convince players that self-analysis and, as Frank Rijkaard says, self-motivation are items to place high on the personal agenda. As Jacques Crevoisier had bluntly put it, "a player with the wrong personality and the wrong attitude is, for a club, a waste of time and money".

**Finishing the Job**

Kalusha Bwalya, Zambia's most-capped player and all-time top scorer, teamed up with Andy Roxburgh in Barcelona to analyse the art of goal-scoring. Once again, personality development was regarded as one of the key issues during the transition phase from youth to adult football, during which many promising young goal-scorers suddenly run into problems or, to be more precise, more efficiently organised defensive blocks.

One school of thought maintains that goal-scoring is an innate instinct – and there is certainly an element of truth in that assertion. So what can the youth coach work on?

The answers start with athletic preparation, in areas such as leg mobility, body shape, balance and the timing of runs into scoring positions. Speed, these days, is a basic premise – and that also means speed of thought in terms of awareness and anticipation. Speed of execution is a fundamental asset, not only in terms of being able to produce



**ÁNGEL MARÍA VILLAR LLONA,  
A FIFA AND UEFA VICE-PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENT  
OF THE SPANISH FOOTBALL FEDERATION.**



the explosive finish but also the ability to contribute to high-tempo combination play. On the training ground, we can work on the first touch, which needs to be precise and, in and near the opposing box, needs to be something more than 'control of the ball'.

Kalusha and Andy approached from a different angle to look for reasons why attackers fail to score – and players who are expected to define the team's approach work by scoring goals are often the first to suffer anxiety syndromes when the ball refuses to go in. It is up to the technician to offer first aid by pinpointing problems such as technical shortcomings, poor timing of runs, problems with vision and awareness, slow or ineffective decision-making, reluctance to take responsibility, insufficient of speed, lack of psychological resilience or fear of physical challenge.

Another useful training ground tool is to help the young goal-scorer to appreciate what defenders and goalkeepers dislike most. In this respect, dialogue between team-mates can obviously be helpful and, in practice or small-sided games, role reversals between departments of the team can give the youngsters first-hand experience of what hurts most at the other end of the field.

In terms of confidence-building, goal-scorers are more at ease when offered full-size goals – with nets – during training sessions and benefit from constant repetition of goal-scoring moves and execution. For attackers, practice games need to have a competitive edge. Goals should never be made to appear 'irrelevant'.

### **Postcards from Barcelona**

The presentations – particularly those angled towards the development of the person rather than the footballer – fuelled some fascinating debate in the Catalan capital. The need to focus on personalities as well as footballing virtues prompted questions about what can be done to prepare young coaches to cope with a 'father figure' role that entails considerable responsibility. Role-play exercises within coaching courses were among the proposals, along with a call for specialised seminars. There was also a proposal to add sessions of personalised training to the general schedules for the squad.

At the same time, there was a current of opinion in favour of 'tinkering' with personality as little as possible and to focus primarily in correcting excesses: if excessive aggression is visible, the

player should be helped to control it and channel it; if a player is excessively shy, there should be encouragement to speak; if a player is excessively submissive, he or she must be helped to stand up and be counted, to express personality; an excessive 'I'm already a star' attitude needs to be countered by putting feet on the ground and encouraging modesty.

In Barcelona, it was never overlooked that coaches also have different personalities and different approaches to the development of young players. But one undeniable requirement emerged from the debating room: the coach must be well equipped in communication skills and the ability to *convince* pupils as well as teach them. This is why events such as the Meridian Conference, seminars and workshops, which offer opportunities for coach educators to exchange information, received such an enthusiastic reception.

The technicians also acknowledged that first-hand playing experience is often just as valuable – if not more so – than advice received from a mentor. Hence a call for the administrations in both continents to consider offering more match opportunities to age-limit players in the 'weaker' countries who are not generally expected to leap many hurdles in qualifying rounds.

In summarising the hectic, intensive four days in Barcelona, Andy Roxburgh remarked: "Some of the boys we have seen here are already on the verge of becoming top players and I hope that this experience will contribute to their further development." But let's leave the last word to the head coach of Team Africa, Frederick Osam-Duodu: "I'm pleased the boys had a chance to learn how to criticise themselves and how to correct things. They learned a lot from each other. The experience of being in Barcelona was great. The future of football has been shown to them."



The UEFA U18 team at training.



UEFA-pjwoods.ch

THE FORUM IN ACTION.

# SUPPLY AND DEMAND

**THE STEADY INCREASE IN THE NUMBER AND DIMENSIONS OF UEFA COMPETITIONS IS A FAITHFUL REFLECTION OF BULLISH 'MARKET CONDITIONS' AND AN ENCOURAGING SYMPTOM OF THE HEALTH OF THE GAME. THE LATEST ADDITIONS TO THE UEFA MENU ARE THE WOMEN'S UNDER-17 CHAMPIONSHIP AND AN UNDER-21 FUTSAL TOURNAMENT.**

The rapid growth of the women's game (ten years ago there was only one UEFA competition; today there are four) means that it has not only become a greater component within the four walls of the House of European Football in Nyon but is also taking on much greater relevance within UEFA's member associations. This was one of the central themes at the 2nd UEFA Elite Women's Coaches Forum, staged at UEFA's headquarters.

The list of participants was not so much a roll call as a roll of honour within the women's game. In alphabetical order, they were Bjarne Berntsen (Norway), Yury Bystritskiy (Russia), Marika Domanski-Lyfors (Sweden), Pietro Ghedin (Italy), Valentin Grishin (Russia), Andrée Jeglertz (Umeå IK, Sweden), Michael Kåld (Finland), Elisabeth Loisel (France), Maren Meinert (Germany), Carolina Morace (Italy), Silvia Neid (Germany), Vera Pauw (Netherlands), Hope Powell (England), 'Nacho' Quereda (Spain), Bernd Schröder (1. FFC Turbine Potsdam, Germany), Alexander Shagov (Russia), Anna Signeul (Scotland), Béatrice von Siebenthal (Switzerland), Jürgen Trittchoks (1. FFC Frankfurt, Germany)

and Dusan Zovinec (Czech Republic), not forgetting Karen Espelund, chairperson of UEFA's Women's Football Committee and a full squad of UEFA's 'backroom staff'.

The addition of an under-17 competition, allied with the development at under-19 level and the expansion of the senior European Championship finals to a dozen teams, was viewed as a solid basis on which to build future development of the women's game. On the other hand, there are still logistical issues in the pending tray, not least the over-close proximity of the FIFA Under-20 World Cup and the European Under-19 Championship last summer, in addition to the thorny issue of a specific Olympic Games qualifying competition which, currently, doesn't fit into the fixture list jigsaw puzzle. At the same time, the future of the UEFA Women's Cup was discussed and, although there was widespread endorsement of the current home-and-away format for the final, there was a call for a more rationalised fixture list. This was in response to this season's competition, in which the semi-finals were played at the beginning of November and the final in April.

In terms of the European Championship, the upgraded finals will entail greater attention to accommodation for the finalists and the quality of training facilities.

However, there are also broader issues to be addressed. Refereeing, for example, needs to keep pace with growth and there was a proposal to create special training programmes involving elite referees from the men's game.

In terms of The Technician, all of this represents something of a preamble. Because the specific issue is that the rapid expansion of the women's game offers enormous opportunities on coaching fronts. So much so, that there are questions about supply meeting demand and thoughts about the most appropriate ways to encourage more women into coaching.

In most European countries, women are now integrated into coach education programmes, with the majority simply offering mixed courses based on exactly the same content. On the other hand, some national associations have developed specific courses for women which, in principle, open the door to a wider field.



## THE UEFA ELITE WOMEN'S COACHES FORUM PARTICIPANTS.



The forum also endorsed the idea of encouraging more top players to stay in the game as coaches and, obviously, a spin-off from the growth of women's competitions will be, in the future, a greater number of players with international experience. This raised the issue of how best to help them cross the threshold from playing to coaching and there was widespread approval of schemes to mirror the fast-track coach education courses currently available to top-level players in the men's game.

The meeting also served to underscore the value of interchanging information and sharing best-practice methods. There was a call for UEFA to act as a 'clearing house' by gathering data on

the sorts of courses currently orientated at women's football and the routes offered by pioneering national associations for players to switch as fluently as possible into coaching. UEFA, by the way, will continue to feature women's football in the extra-net section of the Coaches Circle.

Looking further down the road, there were proposals to respond to the vast influx of girls into the game by establishing centres of excellence or, at least, establishing working relationships with the academies already in place for talented young boys – and this is something that, as Elisabeth Loisel reported, the French federation is already working on.

At the same time, there are blueprints for a development programme aimed at the 16 nations eliminated in the first qualifying round of the European Championship. The idea is to involve experienced coaches from leading countries, asking them to contribute to the development of the women's game in other nations by going there, conducting training sessions, and meeting coaches and coach educators.

In other words, the rapid growth of women's football has prompted an unprecedented demand for coaching staff, right from the grassroots to the top of the tree. The challenge for the coaching fraternity is therefore to make sure that supply can meet the demands.



Maren Meinert led Germany's U19s to the European title.



**RENÉ HÜSSY IN HIS DAYS AT THE HELM OF THE SWISS NATIONAL TEAM, DURING A MATCH AGAINST LUXEMBOURG.**

# RENÉ HÜSSY – A TRIBUTE

**RENÉ HÜSSY, THE FORMER NATIONAL COACH OF SWITZERLAND, PASSED AWAY A FEW MONTHS AGO, AND THE GAME LOST A TECHNICAL AMBASSADOR OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY.**

René was one of football's gentlemen whose dignity and humility concealed his impressive credentials. As a player, he won three Swiss championships and three domestic cups. But it was his contribution to coaching that made him internationally recognised. Following a decade as a trainer at club level (he won the league title with Grasshoppers of Zurich), two spells as Swiss national team manager, and becoming the first president of the Swiss Trainers Union (USFT), he joined FIFA as an instructor/Technical Study Group expert/Technical Committee member. In addition, he was appointed to UEFA's Committee for Technical Development, acting as vice-chairman from 1992 to 1996. René was passionately interested in coach education and contributed extensively to the UEFA working group which explored the concept of a European coaching licence. He actually chaired the working group for a short period following the death of its leader, the Czech Dr Václav Jirá.

René, who was a member of the FIFA World Cup Organising Committee from 1990 to 1998, received the FIFA Order of Merit in 2002 for his contribution to the world game, and was included in UEFA's 'Amicale des Anciens' for his efforts on behalf of European football. He will be sadly missed by his friends at FIFA and UEFA for his wise counsel, for his sense of humour, and for his football passion. René Hüssy was an expert on football, and on behalf of his technical colleagues, I pay tribute to a great technician, but above all, I salute a wonderful man.

*ANDY ROXBURGH*



**THE NETHERLANDS  
WILL BE DEFENDING THEIR  
EUROPEAN UNDER-21  
TITLE ON HOME GROUND.**



# TRAINING

## Tactical Exercise for Organised Attack – Variants



**BY GINÉS MELÉNDEZ SOTOS**

Spanish Football Federation Director of Coach Education  
and Under-19/Under-20 National Team Coach (Current European Champion)

### Key coaching points

- 10-minute exercise:
  - a) The 4 moves, a, b, c and d, must be continuously repeated until the movements are synchronised.
  - b) The teams take it in turns; the other team presents passive opposition.
- 5-minute exercise with active opposition.
- 10-minute final match with the following objective:  
A goal scored using one of the four moves, a, b, c or d, counts double. Active opposition during the match, in other words real play.

# AGENDA

**2007**

### June 10 – 23

16th European Under-21 Championship (Netherlands)

### June 20 – 26

5th UEFA Regions' Cup (Bulgaria)

### July 16 – 27

6th European Under-19 Championship (Austria)

### July 18 – 29

6th European Women's Under-19 Championship (Iceland)

### September 5 – 6

9th UEFA Elite Club Coaches Forum (Nyon)

### September 24 – 26

7th UEFA Symposium for Coach Education Directors (London)

### November 16 – 25

5th European Futsal Championship (Portugal)

### November 27

3rd UEFA Elite Club Youth Coaches Forum (Cannes)

### November 27 – 29

9th UEFA Elite Youth Football Conference (Cannes)

of three touches in defence before opponents can pressure (defenders have a maximum of three touches, other players have an unlimited number of touches).

- a) After their three touches, defenders can only pass to the player on the wing. The fullback then moves up to make it 2 against 1 on the wing.
- b) If passing to a central midfielder, the midfielder must pass to the wing opposite from where the ball came so that there is a change of direction of play.
- c) If playing the ball to the forward, the forward returns it to a central midfielder and changes direction to either the near or far wing.
- d) If the player on the wing receives the ball from the defender and returns it to the fullback, the fullback has to pass to the forward or the midfielder who is furthest forward.

### Development

- The central defender cannot move out of position.
- When they do not have possession, the fullbacks move up to make it 2 against 1 on the wing.
- There should be continuous changes of direction during the game.
- When the defence has the ball, the other players have to keep moving.

### Aim

- To improve players' creativity and capacity to develop attacking moves within our style of play.
- To develop a player's capacity to identify and understand the most effective routes of attacking the opponents' goal, depending on their position.

### Numbers

- Two teams; 9 against 9 (including goalkeepers); 1-3-4-1 formation.
- 1 goalkeeper, 3 defenders, 4 midfielders and 1 forward. There are fewer defenders so that the concepts of assistance and zonal marking must be applied.

### Area

- A reduced pitch (60 x 50 metres)

### Rules

- The defender receives the ball from the goalkeeper and has a maximum

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