

THE TECHNICIAN

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COVER

Gérard Houllier has taken Olympique Lyonnais into the next stage of the UEFA Champions League as group-winners.

(PHOTO: EMPICS)



Raul (Real Madrid), top scorer in the UEFA Champions League since the competition was launched in 1992.

CRYSTAL BALL GAZING

EDITORIAL

BY ANDY ROXBURGH,
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

As we approach the 2006 FIFA World Cup, just think of the changes which have taken place in football since the 1990 finals in Italy. In roughly a decade and a half, a short period of time in the big scheme of things, the face of the game has been dramatically transformed. In the areas of technology, business, politics, legal matters and technical development we have witnessed a total transformation. Looking back, we see the introduction and evolution of the UEFA Champions League, which has changed top club football forever; we see the negative effect of the Bosman ruling on the financial roots of the game and simultaneously a dramatic increase in the number of millionaire players, not to mention agents; we see football clubs becoming PLCs and big business dominating the sport; and we see the expansion of satellite TV, with football omnipresent on our screens.

In addition, competition regulations and certain other aspects of the game have changed. The golden goal turned to silver and then melted without trace; the technical area became a haven for hyperactive coaches; the multiple ball system reduced waiting time; the number of participants in the European Championship finals increased from 8 to 16, while FIFA expanded the World Cup from 24 to 32 contenders; three points for a win gave victory added value; passive offside stimulated active debate; added time increased the drama; the 1992 ruling

which stopped the goalkeeper from handling the ball following a back-pass from a team-mate helped to keep the game moving; and the purge on tackling from behind reduced violent challenges and encouraged attacking flair.

Fast forward to the World Cup final in 2022, and with a little crystal ball gazing, imagine the changes which might take place between Germany 2006 and that not-so-far-off date in the third decade of the new millennium. Maybe you can see the FIFA World Cup final being played on an artificial pitch in Sydney, contested by national teams from Asia and Africa. Every player – each plying his trade at a top club in Europe – has a skybox in the stadium to accommodate his business associates (personal trainer, agent, lawyer, sponsor, financial director, dietician, etc.). The match is being transmitted in 3D to stadiums throughout the world, with the crowds watching on giant screens on each side of the ground.

Millions are watching the action live on their mobile phones or through the Internet, as they work, rest or travel. The coaches have a monitor in the technical area which provides computer simulations/data about the game via a 'live feed'. Meanwhile the referee, who no longer has touchline assistants, has radio contact with the IT assessor, who has the technology available to confirm whether a player is onside or offside, whether the ball is in or out, or whether or not it has crossed the line for a goal. In this scenario, the man in black only has to decide if it is a foul, a dive, a fall or a legitimate tackle.

We do not know what the future holds, but we need to remember that 'today is the result of yesterday – tomorrow the result of today'. What happens today in technology, business and politics will impact on the game, and technicians must be ready to

cope with the changes. They must remain open, adaptable and innovative about their role, no matter how the football environment evolves. Occasionally, it is useful to reflect on the past and even to indulge in a little crystal ball gazing, but if a professional coach fails to concentrate fully on the here and now, if results go against him, then for the coach concerned there may be no future.



Rafael Benitez, a coach who is always on the look-out for new ideas.

INTERVIEW

BY ANDY ROXBURGH,
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR



**FRANK RIJKAARD
RECEIVES THE
PRESIDENT'S PRIZE
FROM THE
UEFA PRESIDENT.**

FRANK RIJKAARD WAS A GREAT PLAYER. LIKE A ROLLS ROYCE CAR, HE GLIDED ACROSS THE GROUND WITH GRACE AND STYLE. HIS LIST OF CREDITS IS REMARKABLE, AND INCLUDES 73 INTERNATIONAL APPEARANCES FOR THE NETHERLANDS (1981-94) AND A EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP WINNER'S MEDAL. AS A CLUB PLAYER HE WORE THE SHIRTS OF AFC AJAX (TWO SPELLS), REAL ZARAGOZA AND AC MILAN, WINNING THE EUROPEAN CUP THREE TIMES, THE EUROPEAN CUP WINNERS' CUP, THE EUROPEAN SUPER CUP TWICE, THE EUROPEAN/SOUTH AMERICAN CUP TWICE, THE DUTCH CHAMPIONSHIP FIVE TIMES, THE DUTCH CUP THREE TIMES, THE DUTCH SUPER CUP, AND THE ITALIAN CHAMPIONSHIP AND ITALIAN SUPER CUP TWICE EACH. IN HIS ROLE AS COACH, HE HAS LED THE DUTCH NATIONAL TEAM (1998-2000), SPARTA ROTTERDAM AND FC BARCELONA (SINCE JULY 2003), WINNING THE SPANISH CHAMPIONSHIP AND THE SPANISH SUPER CUP. FRANK RECEIVED THE UEFA PRESIDENT'S AWARD IN 2005 FOR HIS FAIR-PLAY ATTITUDE. AS THE HEAD COACH OF FC BARCELONA, FRANK HAS PROVED TO BE A GREAT PROMOTER OF SUCCESSFUL, ATTRACTIVE FOOTBALL. DESPITE HIS REMARKABLE CV, HE REMAINS HUMBLE AND TOTALLY DEDICATED TO THE GAME. HE IS THE GIFTED...

FRANK RIJKAARD

1 • How would you describe your team's style of play?

I think you could describe it as an attractive way of playing but nevertheless with the final result in our mind. That goes with the philosophy of the club and the way supporters think about football here in Barcelona. They like to see a good team, to be offered an attractive game with good skilful players, but in the end they always want to win. So we try to make a combination of these things, which has always been the task of the big teams.

2 • Does Frank Rijkaard the coach have the same view of the game as Frank Rijkaard the player had?

No. I think your view of the game changes because you are developing.

As a player you are more concerned with the moments when you have possession of the ball or are about to receive the ball. You are watching your team-mates and trying to decide what the possibilities are. When you are a coach you are watching how the team is positioning itself on the field – if your team is in possession of the ball, you are already anticipating what could happen if you lose the ball. As the coach, you have more of a holistic view. When you are playing, you have certain players who can create magic in a moment – you could not even imagine what they will do because it is not logical. If you are playing yourself, you are prepared to do things in the game and afterwards you don't

remember doing them. But as a coach, you are looking at more general things. Are we organised? Are the lines between the defence, midfield and attack short enough? Do you leave any space? Things like that. So it is more about controlling the system. But the most important thing and the most enjoyable thing is when players create something out of nothing and that is the most beautiful thing about football.

3 • To what extent have you been influenced as a coach by the top coaches you played under?

It is a privilege if you have had the opportunity to work with great people in the

**FINDING
THE RIGHT BALANCE
BETWEEN
GESTURES AND
ORDERS.**



world of football. If you know them personally and you know their way of working, it gives you great experience. Of course, you gain many impressions from the past. You still have it in your mind when you become a coach, and if something happens you can recall how it was dealt with. But I strongly believe that you cannot copy anyone. The decisions that a great coach made years ago will not necessarily work today. It was wonderful to see how Rinus Michels, Arrigo Sacchi, Johan Cruyff and Fabio Capello were working, what they thought about football, and how they handled their teams. I repeat, it was a privilege to gain such an experience.

4 • As someone who has been a national coach and is now a club boss in charge of many international players, what is your view about the relationship between club and country?

I understand very well that if you are a national coach you want to use all the opportunities that you have to meet up with your team. Of course, as a club coach the national-team commitments do not always come at the right moment, but there are international rules and we have to live by them. So I can always understand the national coaches when they are pressing to select certain players, although it might be better to give them some rest. But I understand. When a lot of our squad are away on international duty, we cannot have a normal preparation, but I am not the only one who is in that situation. Teams have to cope with that fact. It is not the best way for us to prepare a game, and with South American players exposed to long journeys and different time zones, the games and

training are only part of the problem.

It is very difficult for some players to recover in time

after international duty. I do not worry about injury, that can happen anywhere, at any time. The travelling, the recovery time, that is what concerns me most. However, we simply have to cope with it.

5 • How has football changed since you were at the height of your playing career?

The evolution of football has seen a reduction in the space between the teams. It is therefore important for the modern footballer to react and be quicker than in the past, because there is more happening in the restricted space. The basic skills, however, remain the same, although times are changing. The attention of the media is growing, so it means that you can watch games from all over Europe on TV. Even friendly matches are covered and it means that the players from the top clubs have to deal with the enormous pressures of the media. It seems like they are always being scrutinised.

6 • What are the main problems facing top clubs today?

If a big team, like Barcelona, is winning the championship or another important competition, no coach will talk about the problems. It is just a moment of happiness. I think you must point yourself towards the beautiful things you can experience in football. This last year, the happiness of all the Barcelona fans after winning the Spanish championship is something we will never forget. To be part of that is what we are working for. Of course, in a big team you have to make results, you have to play an attractive type of football. But I do not think you can view this as a problem. Having too many top players in the squad is not something I should complain about because other less high-profile clubs also have big squads and their coaches still have to deal with each human being. Being a coach is a privilege, but of course success is important because it influences the way



GETTY IMAGES

**BARCELONA'S STRIKER
ETO'O LISTENS TO HIS COACH'S
INSTRUCTIONS.**

suffering and needs help, then the coach comes into play. It is part of the job to be constantly watching the group. I do not do this alone because my staff are also part of this. Every day we discuss the attitude of the players and if we detect a problem, then we talk to the player involved. We are always trying to find a way to help each player. Sometimes, however, you may have to disappoint someone. Maybe you need to correct him because he will not accept this or that. So it depends. There is no book to deal with this – you have to keep your eyes open, and if you have good people around you who communicate well, there is a better chance that you can detect problems which could arise in the dressing-room. Motivating through passionate speeches is a great gift, especially if your team lacks quality. This way you can get something extra out of them and you make them hard to beat. But if you are working with players of a higher quality, the more passionate you get as the coach, the less credibility you get. Sometimes you have to find other things to motivate players, and often these are small things. With the talents we have, always speaking passionately

people think about you. I try not to think about this and focus on our goals and the job to be done. Our main target is, I think, to satisfy the spectators. Everything starts in the dressing-room, with having a good team spirit. You have the task of making decisions, of preparing the squad, but I do not think you have the right to complain about it.

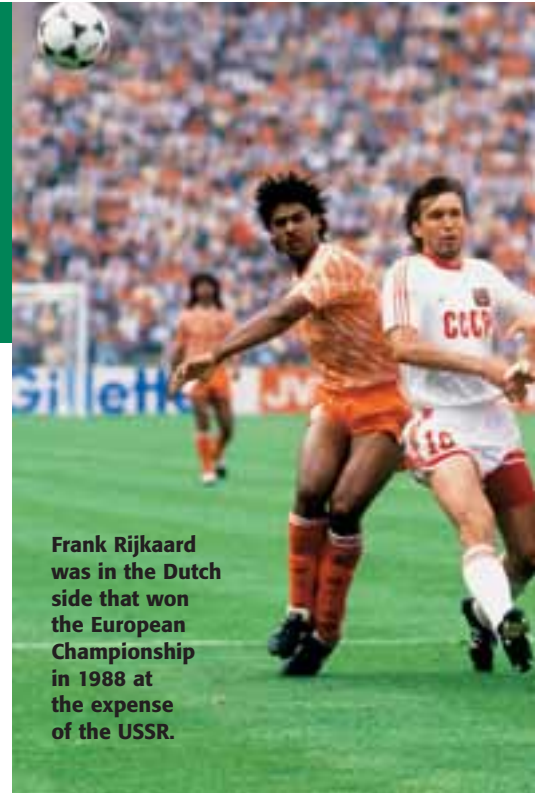
7 • As a manager, how do you motivate millionaire players?

I very much believe in self-motivation, because that is what it takes to reach your goals. Of course, if somebody is



EMPICS

As a player, Rijkaard spent a few glorious years with AC Milan.



Frank Rijkaard was in the Dutch side that won the European Championship in 1988 at the expense of the USSR.

would not work. Many times I pay more attention to the players who are not playing because they are important in the dressing-room. The key to success is to keep on working, and to have the right team spirit by treating everyone as an individual. You never do this job alone, or without staff you can trust. It would not be possible to achieve things without the support team.

8 • Do you think the game has become more defensive at the top level?

In professional football results are very important and every team has the right to choose their system and their way of playing in order to gain points. With all respect, it was not a great moment for football when Greece, playing a defensive game, won EURO 2004. The coach did a wonderful job but it was a defensive way of playing. Playing an attacking game requires more risk, better quality players, a greater game intelligence. I think it is sad that a lot of coaches are choosing a defensive style because we must remember that we are playing for the public. Football has to be something that people want to see. It can, of course, be interesting to see talented players defending well, but it would be great if we all tried a little more to promote an offensive game.

9 • You are part of the Dutch dynasty at FC Barcelona – what has made this relationship so successful?

Rinus Michels was the first and he had great results. Then Johan Cruyff, Louis van Gaal and others came to Barça and

**ANDY ROXBURGH
PRESENTS A SET
OF UEFA COMPETITION
MEDALS TO
FRANK RIJKAARD.**



all had a big influence. With all the success of the Dutch coaches and players of the past, it was understandable that Barça might try another Dutchman. But we must not forget all the coaches from other countries who made a great contribution here. Personally, I must be grateful for the work of the pioneers at this club, like Rinus Michels and Johan Cruyff, because they opened the door. I think the people here admire star players first and foremost, but they also have a positive philosophy about the game, similar to us in Holland.

10 • Apart from your own team, which sides have impressed you most in recent years?

I have seen a few great games in the last year involving Lyon. They have been especially impressive against other strong teams. They certainly have a lot of talent. I think Chelsea were impressive the way they won the championship in England. They were very well organised and great on the counter-attack. Our match with them in the UEFA Champions League at Stamford Bridge was a great spectacle, but we made one or two mistakes too many.

11 • How important is youth development to a club like Barcelona?

It is very, very important, especially because the people appreciate very much Catalan players who play in the youth sides and then reach the first team. So for the culture of the club, you must keep developing youth players. I think it is much easier for the youth player as a defender or a mid-



field player to get into the first team than it is for a striker. Barça is a great club and they always buy top players with big names. It is therefore more difficult to get into the top team as an attacker. We must develop a few players through our academy because it is vital that the culture of the club is maintained.

12 • What do you emphasise most during your training sessions?

We favour ball-possession games, played in a small area because we like to play our matches in the opponent's half of the field. This means less space and time and if you are better in ball possession in these restricted spaces you have an advantage. We also like to press in the opponent's territory in order to make it difficult for them to get behind us. We have a lot of exercises for practising this, so that the players know how to position themselves in pressing situations.

13 • What has been the advantage/disadvantage for your coaching career that you were an experienced star player?

An advantage is that some people will immediately give you more credit because you were a well-known player. But there are other coaches with greater experience who are not famous and they are not selected as the coach of a top club. If you have a certain his-

tory as a football player, it is an advantage. But the advantage stops when you start working because you have to pay the bill. If you do not get results, then you have a problem. It is the law of football. Also, having great experience as a player does not guarantee that someone can be a successful coach. I had an advantage in that I played in almost every position in my career as a player and I observed a lot. Therefore I am able to understand what my players are experiencing. Yes, I can read the game from individual playing perspectives, but as a coach you need to see the big picture and to read the opponent's game. How can we take advantage of certain situations? When do we need to pay attention? We have great scouts and we have our video sessions to prepare the next match. I delegate much of this because my mentality is not to be too concerned with the opponent. In my opinion, if you make players think too much, they will lose their great gifts. Some players will absorb all the information you give them, and then try to implement everything. But some players do not like you to talk too much. I can recognise this because I did not like the coach talking to me too much. If you give a player individual tips, that is OK, but do not burden him with excessive details.

14 • If you could change something about today's football, what would it be?

I would change the offside rule. If you want to play attacking football, I do not see how someone can stay behind your back line and then gain an advantage. I think this is ridiculous. Winning teams always used to play as a unit, so when they won the ball they would push out as a group. But now, this great tactical weapon is in doubt because an opponent can stay behind, in an offside position, but it does not matter because the through ball is not played directly to him. The 'offside' player then receives a pass from another team-mate, gains an advantage, and scores. It really is ridiculous. So, if I could change something in today's football, it would be the offside rule.



FUN FOOTBALL IN CYPRUS.

WHICH WAY TO THE TOP?

AS ANY CLIMBER WILL TELL YOU, MOVING UP THE MOUNTAIN FROM BASE CAMP TO THE HIGHER CAMPS IS NOT NECESSARILY THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE. THE REAL TEST IS USUALLY RESERVED FOR THE FINAL LEG, WHICH WILL DECIDE WHETHER THE ENTIRE EXPEDITION IS CLASSIFIED AS A NEAR-MISS OR ENTERS THE RECORD BOOKS AS A SUCCESSFUL BID TO PLANT A FLAG ON THE SUMMIT. THE SAME APPLIES TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES, IN WHICH THE COACH PLAYS SOMETHING AKIN TO THE ROLE OF THE LOYAL AND INVALUABLE "SHERPA" WHO HELPS THE STAR PERFORMER IN HIS ATTEMPT TO SCALE THE HEIGHTS.

At the UEFA Youth Conference in Cyprus, coaches from various countries raised questions about whether the final assault on the summit is being properly organised. In other words, there was a general feeling that base and intermediate camps are being correctly set up, yet doubts have crept in about whether we are doing enough to help young talent through the crucial 18-21 age bracket and on to the footballing summit.

The English coaches are wondering if, in this day and age, their reserve leagues are the best solution. Their French counterparts might ask the same about learning curves at *National* or *CFA* levels, or the Spaniards about the sort of lessons being imparted in *Segunda B*. And, with more and more young talented players being attracted to elite clubs like iron filings to magnets, it is legitimate to enquire about the number of genuinely tough games the top youth players face in a domestic league season. At the same time, it was recognised that the European footballing map features countries where the national association offers better development facilities than the club academies.

As Wim Koevermans highlighted in Limassol, this problem has been addressed in the Netherlands, where three clubs – AFC Ajax, Feyenoord and PSV Eindhoven – traditionally rule the roost. Other clubs are now being encouraged to pool their most talented youth players on a regional basis with a view to upgrading the level of competition and laying better foundations for the push to the summit.

The Danish association (DBU) has been addressing the same issue for over a decade and Flemming Serritslev was in Cyprus to report on the Integrated Talent Development (ITD) programme that swung into full operation in 2004 after four years of pilot projects. The DBU has made funds available for the appointment of full-time 'ITD coaches', whose role is to ensure that talented players in the 16-21 age bracket are given optimum opportunities to develop into elite footballers. The ITD coach works in conjunction with 14 leading clubs to ensure that each individual has a structured plan for complete football development and academic education. He also monitors the electronic diary kept by each individual on a protected

intranet site to make sure that the player's work schedule is in keeping with his needs and his development targets (working on weaknesses in his game, for instance), while the DBU's technical director also monitors progress via the intranet four times a year. Academic targets are also monitored and no player is allowed more than one year without some form of further education.

As a knock-on benefit, the close relationships between the DBU's ITD coaches and the clubs where 'their' players do their day-to-day training allow both parties to improve levels of communication and cooperation – and the club versus country issue was, once again, among the major concerns expressed by the youth coaches at the conference.

Another area of concern was development plans for the coaches themselves. There are wide discrepancies with regard to the sort of contracts offered to youth coaches and frequent changes are hardly conducive to stable, well-organised development programmes – and it was widely felt that stability is a valuable element within today's frenetic footballing environment. As more clubs become aware of the value of their youth development programmes, the time has come for the youth coaches to be given the status and respect they deserve so that the "sherpas" can help the young climbers find the best route to the summit.



Flemming Serritslev at the UEFA Youth Conference.



UEFA TECHNICAL

DIRECTOR ANDY ROXBURGH

TALKS ABOUT

READING THE GAME.

The 8th UEFA Youth Conference in Cyprus proved that

SILENCE IS NOT GOLDEN

MOST COACHES AND PLAYERS HAVE BEEN ON THE PODIUM AT PRESS CONFERENCES WHERE, WHEN INVITED TO DO SO, THE MEDIA ARE STRANGELY RELUCTANT TO BREAK THE ICE AND ASK QUESTIONS. WHEN THE YOUTH CONFERENCE GOT UNDER WAY IN A PACKED AUDITORIUM ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF LIMASSOL, THERE WAS NO HINT OF EMBARRASSING SILENCES – JUST THE OPPOSITE.

The enthusiasm and commitment of just over 200 people deeply concerned with youth development was illustrated by a welter of observations, ideas and proposals, many of them in response to top-class presentations by top-class youth coaches. Some of the proposals strayed beyond UEFA's jurisdiction and will have to be forwarded to FIFA, such as strict rulings on the release of players for youth tournaments; the reduction of the maximum age for changes of nationality from 21 to 19; and the question of financial compensation for the association that has invested in a player's development only to be faced with a change of nationality, thereby excluding any possibility of a 'return' on the investment. Sorting the others is no easy task. But maybe the best way to go about it is to classify them under sub-headings, starting, for example, with a few of the answers to questions concerning competition structures:

- Welcome the UEFA Executive Committee's endorsement of the proposal to introduce an extra rest day between matchdays 2 and 3 of mini-tournaments as from 2006/07.
- Do the same between matchdays 1 and 2 of final tournaments as from 2008.
- Agree to delete paragraphs relating to 'matches played under the league system' from youth competition regulations.

- Increase substitutions from three to five at Under-17 level.
- Increase squads from 18 to 20 for final tournaments and increase delegations from 24 to 26, with one of the two extra places to be occupied by a press officer to help promote the tournament. It was mooted that the other place could be filled by a teacher.
- Allow up to two replacements to be drafted in to replace injured players at final tournaments – and, possibly, at mini-tournaments.
- Maintain the status quo in terms of structures and dates for youth competitions but ask FIFA to incorporate three 'European youth football weekends' into the international calendar during the autumn, clarifying the exact dates three years in advance.

In terms of the future of youth development, the proposals landed thick and fast on UEFA's table – and some of them will undoubtedly provoke some serious thinking about the best ways of channelling resources into youth football.

When asked how to further improve relationships between clubs and national associations, the participants in Cyprus pointed clearly to better routes of communication aimed at increasing mutual consideration and respect in an area all too often dominated by self-interest on the part of clubs or associa-

tions and where there is a need for a common strategy. There was also a call for each association to identify a 'contact person' to act as go-between on all youth football matters; for associations to provide better feedback to the players' clubs after matches, tournaments and training camps; and for the material, feedback and action lists from UEFA conferences, seminars and workshops to be distributed to clubs as well as national associations. At the same time, several concerns were expressed about the number and status of specialised youth coaches, with suggestions that 'big-name' technicians could be recruited as 'ambassadors' to help attract coaches into youth football. UEFA was invited to help create a clearer 'career pathway' for youth coaches who, at the moment, tend to be undervalued and therefore consider work at youth level as little more than a stepping-stone on the way to 'higher things'.

In telegraphic form, here are some of the other suggestions:

- Focus on creating a 'football for all' environment
- Invest in better training facilities and structures
- Bring youth coaching systems up to UEFA standards
- Search for better coordination of school football
- Ensure that national association youth coaches' tasks are clearly defined
- Achieve greater pan-European uniformity in terms of domestic competitions
- Maintain and enhance the support offered by UEFA's HatTrick programme
- Establish youth coach education within UEFA's coaching convention
- Create an international documentation centre and establish a UEFA national youth coaches' forum.

In other words, there was no time wasted during the conference in Limassol – and it will be interesting to see how many proposals have been converted into reality when the next Youth Conference takes place in Cannes in just under two years' time.



GUIDO VANTAGGIATO A TRIBUTE

ON 19 NOVEMBER 2005, GUIDO VANTAGGIATO, A VALUED MEMBER OF THE JIRA PANEL (THE GROUP RESPONSIBLE FOR UEFA'S COACHING CONVENTION) AND A FORMER MEMBER OF THE UEFA TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE, DIED SUDDENLY OF A HEART ATTACK AT THE AGE OF 60.

After gaining his master's degree in sport (with a specialisation in football), he became a coach with the Juventus youth teams. Then, in 1971, he was employed by the Italian FA (FIGC) at their technical centre in Florence, and took charge of coaching activities and the secretariat of the Italian national youth teams. Three years later he was appointed national-team secretary, responsible for the senior, Under-23, Under-21 and

Olympic teams. During a 17-year period, he participated in five World Cups (Germany 1974, Argentina 1978, Spain 1982, Mexico 1986 and Italy 1990), two European Championships (Italy 1980 and Germany 1988), and two Olympic Games (Los Angeles 1984 and Seoul 1988), the crowning moment being Italy's World Cup triumph in 1982. It is significant that four former Italian national coaches (Dino Zoff, Enzo Bearzot,

Azeglio Vicini and Cesare Maldini) who had worked with Guido in some capacity travelled to his funeral in Florence in order to pay their respects to a man who had dedicated his life to football in general, and the Italian FA in particular.

Former UEFA CEO Gerhard Aigner, who had known Guido for over 30 years, was in South Africa when he heard the news of Guido's sudden passing. He immediately flew back to Europe to offer moral support to Guido's wife Roberta and the rest of his family. For Gerhard Aigner, Guido Vantaggiato was a consummate professional, a fighter and a man of great integrity – above all, he was a wonderful friend.

Gérard Houllier, the Olympique Lyonnais coach, who had worked with Guido on UEFA business for more than ten years, sent his condolences – a UEFA Champions League match against Real Madrid made it impossible for him to travel to Florence. On hearing the sad news, Gérard immediately paid tribute to Guido in glowing terms: "Guido was a great inspirer. He always made everyone feel special, because as a man he had great warmth and sincerity. Profes-



Guido Vantaggiato took part in many UEFA conferences.

WE CARE ABOUT



of the Jira Panel), and he also acted as vice-chairman of the Italian Association of Football Coaches. No matter which hat he wore, Guido always showed his passion for football and his genuine desire to help people. In a business where many seek fame and fortune, Guido Vantaggiato was an 'unsung hero' whose major concern was to help others with their development.

Guido will be sadly missed by his UEFA coaching colleagues, and on their behalf I salute our friend, Guido Vantaggiato, the professional and the man.

Andy Roxburgh



sionally, he made a valuable contribution to the development of coaching, both in Italy, and through his work with the Jira Panel, in many other UEFA associations. We will miss him."

Guido Vantaggiato's last job was as director of the FIGC coaching school at Coverciano, one of the top coach education centres in Europe. Despite the demands on him, he managed to find time to work with UEFA (he was a founder member



Guido Vantaggiato with Giovanni Trapattoni and Andy Roxburgh.



**PACKIE BONNER,
TECHNICAL DIRECTOR
OF THE FAI.**

KEEPING YOUR BALANCE

WHAT ARE THE MAIN CHALLENGES FACING COACH EDUCATION?

WHICH IS THE BEST WAY TO FURTHER IMPROVE COACH EDUCATION? AND WHAT CAN UEFA

DO TO HELP NATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS ALONG THE UPWARD PATH?

These key questions were put to the participants by UEFA Technical Director, Andy Roxburgh, at the 6th UEFA Symposium for Coach Education Directors

which was staged in Dublin and hosted by the FAI, with their Technical Director, Packie Bonner, at the helm. For once, the former international goalkeeper was fronting the team and, as it happens, the theme of top players moving from the pitch to the technical area was one of the salient features of the event.

The coach education directors had already remarked that more top players are moving on to a coaching career, and Zvonimir Boban, Gabriel Calderón, Vlatko Markovic, Roland Nilsson and Dan Petrescu were in Dublin to explain their personal motives for making the switch. Each told a fascinating story – but the common denominator was a love for the game and a desire to carry on being a part of it.

Their presence and their viewpoints provoked some interesting reflections among the coach educators. There was a unanimous desire to keep top players in the game as coaches but, at the same time, there was an equally unanimous call for former players without proper qualifications not to be admitted to coaching posts, for ‘shadow coaches’ not to be allowed to offer their diplomas as collateral for unqualified coaches, and for it to be absolutely mandatory for technicians in role-model positions, such as national team coaches, to be properly licensed.

However, the debate went far beyond the issue of official status. There was a clear feeling that top players would

benefit from career counselling when launching themselves as technicians. There is a tendency to assume that a star on the pitch will instantly become a star on the bench, with the consequent risk that they will begin too near the top, find themselves out of their depth, lose motivation (or their job – or both), and ultimately be lost to the game. There is no shortage of examples. Roland Nilsson graphically recalled how, when starting his career as assistant manager, he was thrust into the hot seat when his ‘boss’ was fired and, to put it briefly, was ‘burnt out’ so quickly that it has taken him years to rekindle the flame. The important question, therefore, is how far the coach educator should go in terms of offering career advice in addition to the purer science of teaching.

One of the other interesting facets is the impact of an increasing number of former players on the content of coaching courses. It can be argued that top players are already street-wise in terms of reading the game and understanding the day-to-day mechanics of keeping a squad in optimum running order. The areas where they may be less well-equipped come under sub-headings such as character development, leadership, man-management, communication skills and stress management. In this chapter, the question for the coach educators is whether these components need to be given greater importance within coaching programmes. And it is a *question*,



Dan Petrescu playing for National Bucharest.



**ROLAND NILSSON AS
A SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
BEFORE TRAINING
TO BE A COACH.**

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bearing in mind that not all the participants – nor even a majority – in coaching courses will necessarily be former or current top players. The stars need to be catered for, but not at the expense of the students with lesser pedigrees on the pitch. Otherwise we run the risk of running the likes of Rafael Benítez and José Mourinho out of the game. In other words, the challenge facing the designers of coach education programmes is achieving the right balance so that ex-players and non-players are offered equal opportunities to acquire the skills they might lack.

Balance was also the key word when the coach educators debated current trends. Erich Rutenmüller of Germany, Henk van de Wetering of the Netherlands and Howard Wilkinson from England took the stage in Dublin to

analyse the evolution of teaching methods. In some respects, nothing has changed. Students still learn more quickly and more effectively from personal and practical experience. There is no replacement for know-how acquired on the training ground. But the opportunities for distance-learning have multiplied dramatically in a short space of time. Historically, courses have had to find a nice balance between practice and theory. Suddenly, they also have to strike the right mix of ‘solo skills’ and team-work.

These days, the ‘solo skills’ are related to the material easily accessed via websites, video tapes, DVDs or CD-ROMs. Internet and audio-visual technology have added new dimensions to coach education and represent wonderful learning tools. Many national associa-



**Erich
Rutenmüller**

EMPICS

tions already exploit these resources very effectively, especially in terms of offering great opportunities for coaches or would-be coaches who need to combine studies with a working day. But is it a good idea to over-rely on studies undertaken in ‘solitary confinement’? The view in Dublin was that the challenge now facing the coach educators is finding the right mix of various ingredients: residential courses, club visits, practical sessions, self-teaching material, web-based resources, and, as a sort of ‘halfway house’ between the home university and the training pitch, conference calls involving small groups of students.

But, from UEFA’s point of view, it definitely wasn’t a question of waving goodbye in Dublin and telling the participants “you’re on your own”. For UEFA, exactly the same challenges need to be faced. Current development programmes are based on competitions at all levels; meetings and forums from elite to grassroots levels; courses, symposiums, conferences, workshops and specialised panels; extensive material in printed, video, DVD and web-based formats; and, of course, pan-European coaching conventions and grassroots charters. For us, just like the coach educators who joined us in Dublin, the challenge is to find and keep the right balance.



Gabriel Calderón

JAAFAF/AFP



CLUB FIXTURE IN CYPRUS

COACHES FROM 15 OF EUROPE'S LEADING CLUBS WERE INVITED TO THE 3RD UEFA ELITE CLUB YOUTH COACHES FORUM – A FIXTURE WHICH WAS PLAYED IN LIMASSOL AS A 'PRELIMINARY ROUND' TO THE UEFA YOUTH CONFERENCE.

Their brief was quite simple: to express their views on fundamental issues related to youth development at club level, such as:

UEFA's club licensing project:

warmly welcomed as a way to improve the quality of players and coaches at youth levels, especially as the UEFA endorsement programme for club academies has been written into the licensing system and grading will be conducted. Call for UEFA to monitor standards regularly in order to upgrade them and promote consistency throughout Europe.

Youth coach licences: another warm welcome for the news that, as recently

agreed by the Executive Committee, coaches who have completed their B-licence course can now choose between a 'standard' or 'youth' licence at A level.

Homegrown players: UEFA's move to set minimum levels in squad lists for UEFA club competitions was regarded as positive news for youth development programmes with, indeed, some voices calling for a stricter definition of 'home grown'.

UEFA's role: call for UEFA to organise or support specialised courses for youth coaches or stage seminars where youth coaches can exchange knowledge and experience.

Youth internationals: UEFA to encourage clubs to arrange international matches by, for example, pegging them to UEFA Champions League fixtures and to help national associations to stage non-competitive tournaments.

However, much of the discussion was centred on the clubs' increasing need – or, rather, obligation – to strike the right balance between footballing and academic education. With recruitment now targeting eight or nine-year-olds, clubs are becoming educating agents with responsibilities in terms of child welfare and protection. Expectations of a career in professional football can tempt youngsters and their parents to neglect academic education, leading to high-risk situations in an environment where the zealous search for young talent (some coaches reported that, in their area, there are too many clubs chasing too few players) coupled with early recruitment ages can ultimately lead to drop-out rates of 50 or 60 per cent in later teens – and the clubs need to respond to a moral obligation to give the 'discards' a viable alternative for a future career. In other words, there is a need to plot 'exit routes' for youngsters who do not quite make the grade. For much the same reasons, it was felt that family values need to be protected as far as possible and that emigration at early ages should be discouraged, as it disrupts family life and education.

One interesting viewpoint is that family parameters have changed. Smaller families mean that the traditional image of adults surrounded by children has shifted into a situation where children are surrounded by adults and have less need to compete. In other words, the youth coach and the club academy are taking on greater social relevance and responsibility, along with the need to 'teach' qualities that, in the past, have been innate.



The Elite Club Youth Coaches Forum.

THE STADE DE FRANCE
IN PARIS-ST.DENIS.



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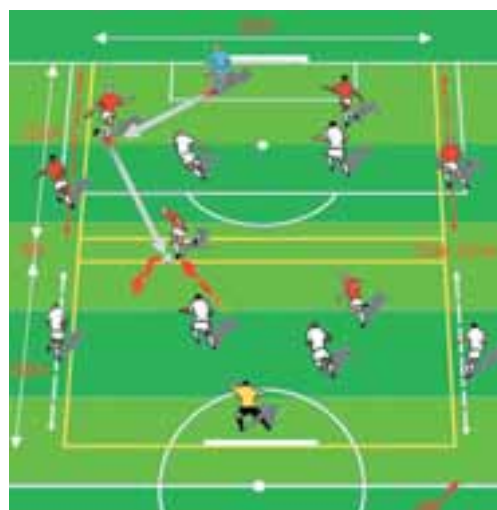
TRAINING

MY FAVOURITE PRACTICE



DROPPING OFF THE FRONT

BY JOHN PEACOCK
National Under-17 Coach England



Aim

- To work on the strikers' movement, in particular 'dropping off the front'.

Numbers

- 2 teams of 7 v 7 (including goalkeepers) – two defenders, two strikers and two wide players (the latter cannot enter the field).

Area

- Two areas (33 x 22 metres) divided by a 3-metre free zone.

Rules

- One defender receives the ball from the goalkeeper. On the first touch, the opposition strikers can press.

- The player on the ball can use the wide players (they are restricted to two touches) or can directly find the striker who has come off into the free zone (i.e. defenders cannot enter this area).
- The striker turns and plays 1 v 1 or combines with his attacking team-mate.
- Repeat the move in the opposite direction.

Development

- One defending player can join the strikers to create 3 v 2 in the attacking zone. A wide player can replace the 'missing' defender in order to maintain 2 v 2 at the back.
- Remove the central zone restriction.

Key coaching points

- The players in possession should always try to play forward.
- The turning skills of the strikers in the free zone should be quick and fluid.
- Communication and support play must be emphasised.
- The finishing skills should be fast and appropriate.

AGENDA

2006

January 17

Disability Football Panel
(Nyon)

January 19

UEFA Women's
National Team Coaches Forum
(Nyon)

January 27

EURO 2008 draw
(Montreux)

February 13-15

2nd UEFA Futsal Conference
(Madrid)

March 14-17

6th UEFA Grassroots Course
(Florence)

May 3-14

5th European Under-17
Championship
(Luxembourg)

May 10

UEFA Cup final
(Eindhoven)

May 17

UEFA Champions League final
(Paris)

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