

Grace under pressure

Somewhere between Dortmund and Madrid, the conversation turned to great players and their attributes. Sitting opposite me on the plane was Sir Alex Ferguson and we were both extolling the virtues of Lionel Messi of FC Barcelona. In response to my comments about the Argentinian courage – his willingness to drive at opponents with the ball, no matter how many times he had been hit – Sir Alex summed it up when he said: “All great players are brave.” When you think about it, this is a sporting truth. Whether it is Andrés Iniesta gliding past defenders or Xavi orchestrating the play in a crowded midfield, the great talents display, in the words of Ernest Hemingway, “grace under pressure”. When Lionel Messi mesmerised the complete Real Madrid defence with his solo goal in the UEFA Champions League semi-final first leg match, he not only showed his wizardry, but also his abundant bravery. Coaches and referees also need courage, but in their case it is of the moral rather than physical variety.

In the knockout match between Arsenal FC and FC Barcelona in London, the home team recovered from a first-half deficit to win 2-1. According to the UEFA technical observer at the match, Gérard Houllier, bold coaching, which involved the use of an adventurous high defensive block, turned the tide in the Gunners’ favour. “Arsène Wenger’s effective coaching influenced the game and the result,” said Gérard in his UEFA report.

Sir Alex took a risk of a different type when he made nine changes to his Manchester United starting line-up in the semi-final return match against FC Schalke 04. He did this to protect his star players for the decisive Premier League game against Chelsea FC the following weekend. It is said that fortune favours the brave and the United boss was successful that week on both European and domestic fronts.

In a recent presentation to UEFA’s new generation of talented referees, I reminded them that a key to their success was knowing the difference between a legitimate tackle, a foul, a dive and a fall. Just as an interpreter must know the nuances of a language, so the referee needs to be familiar with the subtleties of the game. But an ability to read the game is not enough – the real test is one of courage. Can the man with the whistle make the big decisions, without bias, and with no concern for the consequences? This is the acid test.

The Spanish have a wonderful proverb which I have used on many occasions: “It is not the same to talk of bulls as to be in the bullring.” Many talk a good game, but it is the star players, coaches and referees who deliver in football’s “bullring”. Whether it’s making decisions, handling criticism, managing adversity or facing the aggressive challenge, it takes guts for football’s elite to produce “grace under pressure”.

Andy Roxburgh,
UEFA Technical Director

Lionel Messi, voted man of the match in the UEFA Champions League final at Wembley, is a player of immense bravery



UEFA.technician

In this issue

- The Technician interview: Holger Osieck **2**
- Pro licence – a new dimension **6**
- The niceties of the own goal **10**
- Hats off to Pep, Patrice, André and Albert **12**

The Technician Interview

By Andy Roxburgh, UEFA Technical Director

German football coach Holger Osieck has been a world traveller. Following his playing career at Schalke, Mülheim and Vancouver Whitecaps, he became the coach of his former Canadian club. A decade later, he joined Franz Beckenbauer as coach of the German national team. FIFA World Cup success was achieved at the 1990 tournament in Italy, with victory over Argentina in the final match in Rome. The partnership with the 'Kaiser' continued the following season at Marseille before Holger went solo at VfL Bochum, Germany. Spells in Turkey with Fenerbahçe SK and Kocaelispor, including cup triumphs at both, were interspersed with his first commitment at Urawa Red Diamonds in Japan. He returned to there in 2007 and proceeded to lift the AFC Champions League.

At international level, he managed the Canadian national team (1999–2003), winning the CONCACAF Gold Cup in 2000. Away from the front line for a few years, he represented FIFA as its technical director, but this came to its conclusion after the 2006 FIFA World Cup when he returned to Japan, once again joining the Reds.

Currently, the man born in Duisburg is head coach of the Australian national team and his start has been

impressive, reaching the final of the 2011 AFC Asian Cup (Australia lost 1-0 to Japan in extra time) and achieving some significant results on the road, including a 2-1 victory over Germany in Mönchengladbach.

The technician with the well-used passport is vastly experienced and someone highly respected by his coaching colleagues. Known as a strong character and a great football thinker, – he is...

Holger Osieck

As the head coach of Australia, how did you feel beating Germany in Mönchengladbach in the recent friendly?

Obviously, it is a little strange when you play against your own country, but on the other hand it was a big challenge for me. As a professional you must be fully committed in such circumstances because you have a responsibility to those who have employed you. Following the World Cup in South Africa, people in Australia were not too happy and this was a special opportunity to regain some pride after the heavy defeat suffered at the hands of Jogi Löw's side in Durban. We not only wanted to win, but to perform well, and we did that by trying whenever possible to take the initiative. The result clearly hurt them and confirmed that Germans do not like to lose football matches.

You have players playing all over the world. How do you cope with that in terms of scouting and preparation?

There are two aspects to this. One is to use the internet for basic information, such as player appearances, goalscoring, injuries, etc. Then there is the direct contact. I am in touch with the players regularly,

Assistants Holger Osieck and Berti Vogts with their head coach Franz Beckenbauer at the 1986 World Cup



Bongarts/Getty Images



Holger Osieck presents the technical report on the 2006 World Cup at the international symposium in Berlin the same year

either by text or phone. Also, I travel a lot to see them play and to talk to their coaches. This applies to those who have been regulars in our team and to the fringe players. We invited 25 scouts to a camp in Germany – they are the people who help us identify players throughout Europe, at all levels. At the beginning, I knew about 20 players and now there are over 100 that I am familiar with personally. We also, of course, study the league in Australia and we have two squad players from that source at the moment.

You have been with the national teams of Canada, Germany (as team coach working with team chief Franz Beckenbauer) and now Australia – what are the demands on a national coach and what are the most important things you have learned about international management?

First of all, Australia has different expectations than previously. They appeared in the last two World Cups and want to stay at that level. I can certainly identify with that thinking. Qualification, of course, will be harder now that we are in the Asian zone. After a World Cup, changes are necessary for many reasons, and therefore we are in the process of restructuring, reorganising, and I am fully engaged in this process. In the 2011 Asian Cup there were only 11 players left who had taken part in the World Cup in South Africa. A big transition is under way with the national team, but I am also contributing to the next phase of development, working with my various technical development colleagues at the association.

Regarding key elements, I would say that you must quickly gain an understanding about the mentality of the players. In the national team it is, naturally, not the same as at a club, where you can be faced with many cultural differences. However, at the start of this job I did have to adapt to the Australian way of thinking. The first challenge was to gain the respect of the players and to get my ideas over. It helps, of course, if you win and we have had a good start, reaching the final of the Asian Cup and winning some important friendlies. Strangely enough in

our first 12 matches, 11 of them were away from home. The morale has been high and this has allowed me to put over the style I want to create. Sometimes you need to compromise as a coach, but this time I have been able to move forward quickly. We have tried to be aggressive in midfield with creativity up front, and we have some very good players who have the quality to perform on the international stage.

You won the AFC Champions League with Japanese club Urawa Red Diamonds in 2007 – how would you describe the standard of Asia's top club competition?

I'm not sure it would be fair to compare it with the UEFA Champions League because it has its own character. Also, you must remember that Asia is vast and has great differences in levels and types of football. What I learned from that particular experience was that it was very difficult to win, partly because of the different conditions and approaches to the game. Travel, time changes, accommodation, climate, etc. all came into play. The



Instructions for Australia's captain Lucas Neill during an Asian Cup match in January

standards in Japan and Korea, for example, have reached the top international level.

What has been the highlight of your coaching career?

Winning titles is important for a coach and I have been fortunate to win a few, but I have always viewed myself as a teacher and my focus is on modelling a team in line with my philosophy. The best feeling is achieving success, which in turn gains you a step up the ladder in your career. The public are unaware of the effort you put into this and the satisfaction you get from improving your position in the game. Winning the World Cup with Franz and Germany was very special. The Gold Cup success with Canada was also a great moment, especially when you consider the size and pedigree of opponents such as Mexico and the USA.

During your time as FIFA's technical director, were you impressed with the general development of the game worldwide?

Looking back, my time at FIFA was a great opportunity to study all the international tournaments and to see new players, such as Messi appearing as a youth star for Argentina. Regarding the overall development, each country has made great efforts to improve the quality of young players and coaches. Coach education has definitely made strides forward and this is reflected in the advancement of the game at top level throughout the world.

As a member of FIFA's technical team at the World Cup in South Africa, what was your view about the technical trends?

There were a number of trends, including the use of screening players in midfield and the lone striker in attack. Coaches, in general, seemed to become more flexible and adaptable in changing the game, either the shape or the

and came face to face with new styles of play, new challenges. Our players had to go through the pain barrier to reach the final against Japan and this told me a lot about the character of Australian footballers.

You worked for UEFA on many occasions as an observer in the Champions League – what is your opinion about Europe's top club competitions?

The UEFA Champions league is the pinnacle – in other words, there is nothing above it. You have the best players in the world playing in it and because it involves the greatest clubs, it is the competition which provides us with the main trends in the game. It is, in my opinion, more important than the international tournaments which only take place every four years. The clubs are working with the players every day and this is a big advantage when you are trying to develop your style of play. The UEFA Champions League is the perfect competition.

How would you describe your style of management/coaching?

Over the years you develop your way of working. When you are a young coach you see things differently. You bump into a few walls, so to speak, and you then realise that what you are doing hurts. In time you adapt. For me, communication is important, but I don't like people to try to exploit me. I'm not really a disciplinarian, although I do like structure and order. I suppose you could say that I have an inner core of hardness, because you have to be strong when you take on the leadership role as a coach of a professional team. Things can only work when you give players a direction and this means you need to be focused and determined. I don't like it when individuals consider themselves more important than the team. When you have top-class players who make sacrifices for the team, then you have a winning formula.

What annoys you most about today's football?

Today, young players come with their agents and don't really have their performances assessed accurately. They arrive with the wrong idea about their worth, and this creates negativity before they start to develop their potential. It is certainly a problem in the modern game and something that coaches have to counter if progress is to be made.

Holger Osieck lifts the trophy after having taken Uruguay Red Diamonds to victory in the AFC Champions League



A training session in St Gallen ahead of the Switzerland v Australia friendly in September 2010

approach. The speed, linked to technical quality, was particularly noticeable. As was the transition speed, with counter-attacking (even following a corner) a significant feature of the successful teams in South Africa, just as it has been in the UEFA Champions League.

You had a very successful Asian Cup campaign in Qatar earlier this year, winning your group and only losing, after extra time, to Japan in the final – how do reflect on that tournament and how would you compare it with the EURO?

It was very demanding. For example, we played South Korea in the group phase in a high-tempo, flexible game, with them displaying great interchanges. It was a very difficult experience and I would say, without bias, that Japan, South Korea and Australia would have the quality to play in the finals of the European Championship. We played a lot of European teams, albeit friendlies, but we didn't lose a game. We beat Poland, Switzerland and Germany, so we would not be out of place in such company.

Regarding the Asian Cup, it was a great learning experience for us, in particular adapting to the new environment. I found out a lot about our players in this tournament





Hassenstein/Bongaris/Getty Images

Holger Osieck spurs on his Australian players, while Swiss coach Ottmar Hitzfeld watches the action

As a former Schalke 04 man, were you surprised by their success in the UEFA Champions League this season?

Yes, I was surprised because it is the first time in the club's history that they have gone so far in this prestigious tournament. I was really impressed by their performances against Inter in the quarter-finals. It is a club of emotions,

done by the governing bodies and the authorities, but it is a matter which must be constantly addressed. When you hear about fans (maybe that is the wrong word) threatening players if they fail to deliver results, then football needs to defend itself against such behaviour. We know that society is changing, but football must never accept violence, in whatever form, in or around the game. ●

with a great history and wonderful support. The fans have a real rapport with the team. That is one of the reasons that Raúl was invited into the crowd recently – it is a special, symbolic tradition at Schalke.

Is there something about the game today which you would like to change?

Well, it is not a new problem, but I still get troubled when I hear about hooliganism. I know a lot has been



Getty Images

Pro licence – a new dimension

The coaches of half of the teams who competed in the knockout rounds of the 2010/11 UEFA Champions League were not working in their native countries. That seemingly anecdotal fact serves as a serious indicator that international perspectives are taking on greater relevance at the top end of the modern game. In May, UEFA took an important step towards adding international elements to coach education courses by organising a pilot exchange project for Pro licence students from three of its member associations.

The objectives of the project were profiled in the previous issue. As a brief reminder, they are to provide Pro licence students with opportunities for international knowledge exchange, to promote direct access to UEFA tutors and UEFA content as part of their education and to offer UEFA involvement as added-value support for Pro licence

courses run by national associations. The pilot course in Nyon was a chance to assess the viability of the project and to fine-tune the content and logistics of a fairly complex event.

The pioneering teams of Pro licence students (led by their coach education directors) came from the Czech Republic, Poland and Scotland. Language skills were therefore an important element and, amid the usual 'first night nerves' which are inevitable when the curtain goes up on a new project, there were concerns about possible language barriers. In terms of the content of the course, they were avoided by means of simultaneous interpretation in the auditorium and on the pitch at the Colovray stadium next to the UEFA headquarters, where the practical sessions were staged. But one of the other aims of the event was to promote an informal exchange of knowledge and questions, and it was here that language skills were put to the test. English was generally adopted as the

Participants on the pilot course for Pro licence applicants, held in Nyon





Theory time

most convenient vehicle for cross-border communication and many of the students went home vowing to improve their linguistic abilities, having been made aware that these can be a major plus point in terms of career advancement.

The pilot course also offered an opportunity to test the structure of the four-day event, which was conducted under the aegis of an overall 'course director', in this case former England manager Howard Wilkinson, who helped UEFA's technical director, Andy Roxburgh, to deliver the content.

The opening session took the shape of an interactive debate on the profile of a top coach in the modern game and the qualities which he or she is likely to require. In this respect, one of the salient features of the pilot course was a dialogue between Howard Wilkinson and Gareth Southgate, the defender who represented England 57 times (including at a FIFA World Cup and two EUROs) and who, after 504 games in the English league, was fast-tracked at Middlesbrough FC from player to manager in 2006. On stage in front of his would-be colleagues at Pro licence level, he was candid about the difficulties he



encountered. Without divulging too much of what he shared with a select group, Gareth stressed that the seemingly glamorous nature of the fast track from pitch to bench can give a very false impression of the realities of the role change. He listed a number of situations which a coach or manager needs to be well equipped to deal with and admitted that, in his particular case, he would have benefited from more education and greater experience before being obliged to face some of the difficulties that are endemic to coaching in the modern game.

This provided the perfect cue to pose a number of management questions to the Pro licence students. In deference to teamwork parameters, the questions were limited to 11 – but they were hard hitting in terms of challenging the students' motivation and commitment to a life-absorbing profession. As Howard Wilkinson stressed on the final day, *"there's no shame in looking at yourself in the mirror and admitting that you don't see yourself in such a demanding position, and asking yourself whether you might find it more fulfilling in a different role."*

Mentioning that one of the other sessions was based on crisis management might create the impression that the course

had alarmist undertones. This was far from the truth. The objective was to prepare the Pro licence students for the realities of top-level management – an environment where the word 'crisis' seems to be permanently on the tip of media tongues. The ability to deal with a crisis and to deal with the media are, like it or not, essential items in the survival kit. The topic of one of the other interactive sessions was therefore the definition of a footballing 'crisis' and the need to pinpoint and deal with the sort of crises which can have a negative impact in the dressing room and on team performance.

Dealing with the media requires skills of a slightly different nature and in this field – as on the pitch – students who have experienced media exposure as top-level players still need to adapt to situations in which, as coaches and leaders, their words (and the way they are expressed) have an impact on a wider group, instead of being interpreted as the opinions of an individual player. Some of the students were put through an on-stage test between a camera and the UEFA Champions League backdrop – with the replays then analysed in terms of body language and choice of words. As Arsène Wenger always maintains, *"the coach's face is often a mirror to the health of the team."*

The UEFA president, Michel Platini, attended one of the practical sessions at the Colovray stadium





After the theory came practice on the pitch at Colovray

All this formed part of 'management' content which was, during the course, counterbalanced with solid practical issues. Each afternoon comprised teaching sessions on the pitch at the Colovray stadium, culminating in a challenge match between the Czech Republic and Scotland which produced a 1-0 victory for the latter.

As it happened, the pilot event coincided with the second legs of the UEFA Champions League semi-finals – which offered the students an opportunity to watch the FC Barcelona v Real Madrid CF and Manchester United FC v FC Schalke 04 matches in giant screens at UEFA's headquarters and – even though TV inevitably comes second best to a seat in the stadium when it comes to getting a technical overview of a game – to do some detailed match-analysis exercises which were then presented on-stage to their colleagues the following day. This, in itself, was an interesting exercise which gave some of the participants a taste of what it's like to stand in front of a group of people and put their communication skills to the test.

"This sort of thing is important," UEFA's technical director, Andy Roxburgh, commented. "The development of a coach is not only about coach education but also about the development of the individual. It's about your personal studies, the experience you gain, your football background, the contacts you make... It's about lessons in life. If you've been lucky enough to play in the professional game, that will stand you in good stead. If you have not, you will in all probability need to compensate by being extremely knowledgeable about the game, a great communicator and so forth. You'll be better equipped for the job if you realise this right from the beginning of your coaching career."

The UEFA Champions League – or, to be more precise, the observations which go into the annual technical report on the competition – provided the foundations for another discussion session based on tactical trends and their possible repercussions on the way the game is played in national leagues. The presentation by Andy Roxburgh

provoked debate and reflections on topics such as the importance of the counter-attack and the relevance of team shapes and formations. In this area, the pilot project provided a valuable add-on to traditional courses, in that the students were offered information about some of the elements which make up the broader, global picture and, in particular, the tendencies in the competitions organised by UEFA and the sort of challenges that top coaches will be required to meet when they step out onto the international stage and face an extremely demanding audience.

Jerzy Engel, one of the gurus of Polish coaching, commented in Nyon: "This European exchange of coaching concepts is really important for young coaches who are just about to start their careers. If they're successful in their Pro licence, they'll soon be starting to work in their own countries. But they also need to be prepared for a situation where, as holders of a UEFA-endorsed diploma, Europe and, in fact, the whole of the world is open to them. So coming to the footballing heart of Europe has undoubtedly been something very special for all of them."

It was something special for UEFA as well, if only because, as Michel Platini put it, "It's the first time I can remember seeing the offices full of people wearing track-suits!" For the students, the opportunity to rub shoulders with the UEFA president on the touchline of the training pitch added to the uniqueness of an experience which was unanimously rated as a tremendously positive development. The UEFA Executive Committee has been quick to see the benefits of promoting cross-border exchanges at Pro licence level – which means that the pilot course in Nyon is the precursor to a series of international events of the same nature that will be organised by UEFA in the near future. ●

The niceties of the own goal



A raised head that turns into an own goal during the FC Barcelona v Arsenal FC match in the UEFA Champions League round of 16

Ask a coach to name the top ten (or maybe bottom ten) things that he or she least likes to see in a game of football and an own goal is likely to be on the list – if, of course, it is put into the net by a member of his or her team, rather than the opposition. Players may need help from their coach in terms of repairing morale, which can be heavily damaged. The coach needs to feel satisfied that the performance of the player concerned over the remainder of the 90 minutes will not be affected. And, in some cases, an own goal can inflict damage on collective confidence as well as individual contributions. A player may take on a heavy burden of individual blame or, in some cases, direct verbal abuse at a team-mate based on the circumstances which led to the moment of misfortune.

This type of situation (giving away a key penalty or being red-carded can have similar after-effects) is on the agenda when it comes to tutoring players during youth development stages on mastering their emotions and controlling their responses to situations which might generate strong feelings of individual culpability. The own goal,



however, is a little different. It remains in match reports and annual statistics as a permanent record of an unfortunate accident. A match report which contains an own goal can appear to be pointing a finger of blame or, to put it another way, can be interpreted as an uncharitable act. For instance, there was a situation during the 2010/11 European season when the FC Porto goalkeeper had to have an 'own goal' entered into his personal account, simply because, inadvertent as his participation might have been, there was no doubt that if the ball hadn't struck him it would not have entered the net.

UEFA is sometimes confronted and asked to make an official judgement on an incident where the referee may have little or no chance of detecting nuances either out on the pitch or when drafting his match report in the office. Some situations require several camera angles and umpire reviews before an accurate judgement can be made. UEFA has been obliged to draw up a set of guidelines for decision-making, based on fairness, player protection and the promotion of the game. Here's an overview of the criteria currently being applied.

As a basis for judgement, there are key elements. Was the shot goal-bound before any intervention by another player? And did the player play the ball or did the ball strike the player?

A goal is evidently classed as an own goal when a player directs the ball into his own net via, for example, a poor back pass or a mis-hit clearance.

It is also classed as an own goal if a player redirects an opponent's shot, cross or pass – which is going wide of the target – into the net.

Shots which deflect off a defender or the goalkeeper are not considered own goals. In such cases, credit for the goal, according to UEFA's basic principle, should go to the attacking player who hit the shot in the first place. On the other hand, shots which rebound from the goal frame and are redirected into their own net by an outfield player or a goalkeeper are viewed as own goals, as demonstrated in the FC Porto situation mentioned above.

Similar principles apply at, figuratively speaking, the other end of the park, when the ball hits the net without any intervention by a defending player but, rather, two or more members of the attacking team.

In the case of shots which inadvertently deflect off a team-mate into the opponent's net, the goal is awarded to the player who struck the goal-bound shot in the first place. But if the shot is not goal-bound before it strikes the team-mate, the goal is awarded to the player who last touched the ball.

When a goal-bound shot is redirected into the opponent's net by a team-mate, the goal is credited to the player whose action produced the change of direction.

In cases of disputed goals, the decision-making process is that the referee will identify the goalscorer in his report – if necessary, after consultation with the UEFA delegate, the UEFA referee observer and the participating coaches. In some cases, when there is disagreement about the decision, UEFA confirms the goalscorer after studying TV footage from various angles. ●

Paul Scholes can't save Manchester United from an own goal in favour of Olympique de Marseille in the UEFA Champions League round of 16



Hats off to Pep, Patrice, André and Albert



Josep Guardiola with the European Champion Clubs' Cup after Barcelona's victory against Manchester United at Wembley

The UEFA technician makes a point of saluting coaches who have earned medals on international fronts. At the time of writing, the three major club titles and one national team competition had been decided with, in the cases of the men's and women's UEFA Champions Leagues, a touch of the déjà vu about the finalists. But, whereas Pep Guardiola won his second gold medal in three seasons, Olympique Lyonnais turned the tables on defending champions 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam in the women's final to take the trophy to France for the first time.

Congratulations to the technicians who stepped up to receive medals.

UEFA Champions League

at Wembley, London

FC Barcelona v Manchester United FC 3-1

Gold: Josep Guardiola

Silver: Sir Alex Ferguson

UEFA Europa League

in Dublin

FC Porto v Sporting Clube de Braga 1-0

Gold: André Villas-Boas

Silver: Domingos Pâciencia

UEFA Women's Champions League

in Fulham, London

Olympique Lyonnais v 1. FFC Turbine Potsdam 2-0

Gold: Patrice Lair

Silver: Bernd Schröder

European Under-17 Championship

in Serbia

Netherlands v Germany 5-2

Gold: Albert Stuivenburg

Silver: Steffen Freund

Editorial Group

Andy Roxburgh, Graham Turner

Production

André Vieli, Dominique Maurer

Layout, Print

CO Créations, Artgraphic Cavin SA