



Philosophical Consideration

Having a coaching philosophy is a fundamental element

This issue of *Soccer Journal* should help you. It should help youth coaches, college coaches, coaches of women and professional coaches. As coaches we must continue to learn and improve. Good coaches don't stagnate. Good coaches learn every day. Good coaches continue to learn throughout their career. Good coaches listen to good coaches. In this issue you will have the chance to learn from good coaches.

Have you ever sat down and really thought about your coaching philosophy? Have you thought about the "how's and why's" of everything you will do as a coach? A philosophy will guide all of your actions as a coach – on the field and off.

There are two parts of a philosophy. The first is your philosophy of how you want to play the game. Do you want four backs? One striker or two? Do you prefer attacking down the middle or using the wings? Do you want your team to play direct soccer or more possession? A few years ago at the NSCAA Convention Alan Wade, former head of the Irish FA, offered his concept of "Good Soccer v. Bad Soccer," which is outlined in the box below.

This may be a good place for you to start. List your concept of "Good" and "Bad" soccer. This will guide how you select players, how you prepare training, how you prepare the team and how you coach during a game. Give this a try.

The second part is a bit tougher. The second part of a philosophy is more global – it will guide your actions on and off the field as a coach. This part of philosophy deals with your objectives and the beliefs and principles that will help you achieve your objectives.

The book *Successful Coaching* suggests that

three concepts of self are essential ingredients in helping all coaches form a successful philosophy: self-awareness, self-esteem and self-disclosure. Learn about yourself, and think about important issues to guide your actions.

This issue of *Soccer Journal* is about coaching philosophies. We have interviews from 16 coaches from around the world. These men and women answer questions about their "playing philosophy" and their "philosophy for action." Here are a few examples:

Sir Alex Ferguson, what are the qualities required to be a top level coach?

*"I have thought about this a lot and there are a number of things. As I progressed as a coach, I learned that **observation** is vital. To coach and watch at the same time is hard. If you are involved too much in the coaching, you may miss many things. I have learned to **delegate** more to my assistants and I take a step back. Observation is important in order to make sure that you get out of training what you want and to make sure the quality is high. I think you need **perseverance** because coaching is not easy. If you come in Monday morning after a defeat and you lack this quality, then it will show and the players will know. I also think a top coach needs **imagination**. I remember teaching players as a young coach take-overs in different parts of the field. It was unusual to do this at that time. So you put your imagination into a player's mind – he can take it to another level because he realizes you both want to try things. It is also important to have simple **communication**. Keep it simple – be brief, but be decisive. Make it perfectly clear what you want out of a session."* From UEFA.com

Arsene Wenger, you have a great "eye" for a player – what do you like to see in a young player?

*"**Motivation and intelligence** are the two main elements, because I believe you need minimal intelligence (do you know why you make a mistake?) and a desire to become better. The talent aspect is not enough, because what makes a career depends on how much you want to be somebody, and are you intelligent enough to understand what you can do with the talent you have? Ideally you want to have a player that has everything. Our game at Arsenal is based on **technique** and movement – that means I look at **pace and technical level**. These elements don't always go with power or physical commitment, but we want our game to be very mobile and very fast."* From UEFA.com

Fabio Capello, how would you describe your style of coaching?

*"I believe wholeheartedly in **hard work, group spirit and discipline**. I always say that if a player has **discipline, respects his teammates and works in a serious way**, good things will happen. Otherwise the positive results will be short-term. It is the **system** and the way you work which allows you to win on a continuous basis. You win by remaining **concentrated, determined and disciplined**."* From UEFA.com

Rafa Benitez, you had a difficult start as a head coach. What advice would you give to those who are starting out as a coach?

*"Put simply; you need passion and time. You need passion to spend endless hours **developing yourself as a coach**. You also have to have faith in your ability. After two sackings, I went on a study tour to Italy, England and Brazil. I met many coaches and asked a lot of questions. **If you don't know something, you look for answers.**"* From UEFA.com

Enjoy the issue.



Good Soccer

- Played on ground.
- Ball control and accurate.
- Frequent and accurate shots.
- Shots come from skillfully created openings.
- Players vary passing and dribbling.
- Players make space.
- Players have purpose.
- Players change position.
- Players use skill.
- Defenders mark, cover and tackle fairly.
- Players play for each other.
- Players use positive communication.
- Players come off the field physically exhausted.

Bad Soccer

- Played in the air.
- Played first time.
- Rare opportunities.
- Shots come from rebounds and errors.
- Players pass and kick hopelessly.
- Players create no time or space.
- No purpose or aim.
- No movement.
- Players foul to intimidate.
- Late hits, yellow cards and violent tackles.
- Players play for themselves.
- Players whine and curse.
- Players come off the field with something left.