“5 Things Professional Coaches Keep a Secret”

Hi, thanks for sending me your email address in exchange for this Ebook. Don’t worry, I won’t be sending you emails every day just an occasional email to let you know when a new page has been put up on my website or anything else exciting and new. This is my first ever Ebook and my website is slowly starting to get more populated but I have a long, long way to go. In brief, I started coaching various sports when I was in my teens and have always loved playing soccer. At the age of 22 I went out to coach soccer in America where I spent 2 years coaching various age groups and continued to coach in England thereafter. I now wish to put my ideas into a website called FreeYouthSoccerDrills.com.

Below are five points I put together that I think may help you understand how a professional coach thinks and perhaps allow you to understand what type of coach you currently are and where you wish to be in the future!

1. Coaches will do anything to be the best

Winning is everything for a professional soccer coach. It is not just a hobby, it is their job and more importantly... their life! So there is no wonder that coaches will want to do everything they can to be the best and develop a team that can win soccer games.

A coach needs to be able to attract new players to their club as well as keep and develop the players they already have playing for them. To sign a new player who belongs to another club, a coach must approach the club and ask permission to speak with the player. An issue which has currently been experienced in English football over the last five years or so has been the issue of rival clubs tapping up football players who are under contract with another club. There are laws and rules surrounding approaching a player and ‘tapping them up’ for another club to which they belong.

Often footballers may wish to move away from the club which they currently play for in order to play for a better club and in most cases to earn themselves more money. Often a rival club will wish to attain their services and instead of going through the club which owns that player they will speak directly to the player.

Currently under both the transfer rules established by FIFA and the Football Association followed by the clubs playing in England if another club wants to procure the services of a player that is registered with another club they must speak directly with that club and not to the player or his agent. The individual player and the agent who represents him will only be brought in for discussions with the potential purchasing club once the two clubs have agreed on a fee.

Nevertheless, on countless occasions professional coaches will break this rule and doing anything they can to get their player. They may speak to the player direct or contact their agent and check whether the player would like to join their club.

**Chelsea facing heavy fine over Ashley Cole approach** - Back in 2005 Ashley Cole was playing for Arsenal Football Club and Chelsea supposedly contacted him over a move to their club. A few months later Cole was signing on for Chelsea and Arsenal decided to put in a complaint to the Football Association who fined Chelsea a reported £250,000.

**Turkish FA raise complaint over illegal approach** - It is not only players who can have illegal approaches by a club. Chelsea wanted to secure the services of manager and professional coach Guus Hiddink who was in Charge of Turkey’s international team. It is purely a coincidence that Chelsea has been highlighted twice – they are no worse than any other professional soccer club.
2. Coaches worry about what players think of them

A professional coach is a bit like a school teacher. They are in charge of developing, mentoring and teaching players new things – and how many of us liked our teachers at school? Professional coaches should have the players respect. Some time respect comes easily, other times in must be earned. It is almost impossible with the size of squads these days to keep all players happy and managers should set their ground rules out early so all players know that if they are not playing they have the capability to get back into the side through hard work, talent and determination.

A recent episode has been with Argentine player Carlos Tevez who as of 2011 is currently contracted to Manchester City. After wanting to leave the club in summer 2011, no club were able to afford him and he remained at the club much against his will. After a champions league game in September where Tevez was once again not chosen to start by his manager, he refused to come on as a sub and an enquiry was summoned. The way I see it, Roberto Mancini (Man. City manager) had every right to leave out a player who wanted to leave the club, brings dismay to the squad and refuses to come on as a sub.

Other managers however, have less ‘steel’ when it comes to handling bad-boy soccer players with attitudes. Joey Barton has always been renowned for his aggressive attitude both on and off the field (as well as two convictions of violent conduct) and when playing for Newcastle in 2011 he used Twitter and the media to publicly condemn his current employers but was still allowed to play for some time after until negotiation talks broke down and he moved on to QPR.

Professional coaches / managers are sometimes concerned with what players think of them even if they don’t show it because after all there only human and need to be respected in their role, particularly to be successful and to have the faith of the players to make important, match altering decisions.

3. Coaches have less authority in the club than they would like

The manager / head coach of the club... they are in charge and they make all the decisions, right? Well actually, not always. In world football it is typically known that the manager has the final say on most of the decisions except certain financial issues relating to transfers.

In modern times, soccer clubs have been bought by rich entrepreneur enthusiasts who have been looking for another way to have fun and spend their billions of £/$ on. Chelsea Football Club was the first major club to have such huge investments from Russian Billionaire Roman Abramovich. Overnight it seemed like they bought every top player in the world at huge prices and wages. The current manager Jose Mourinho was under tremendous pressure to bring silverware to the club.

Mourinho was told that the owner would input money and be a spectator only with no authority over which players played games. However, the more Abramovich put into the club the more control he wanted over which players the manager should bring into the club and when they should play. This infuriated Mourinho who after three successful years at Chelsea left to eventually join Inter Milan and Real Madrid.

BBC - Jose Mourinho
The impasse between Mourinho and Abramovich came to a head after their 2-0 defeat to Aston Villa in 2007.

Mourinho has been at loggerheads with the Russian since their disagreement over the lack of funds to sign players during 2007 January transfer window. Mourinho’s reluctance to play Ukraine international Andriy Shevchenko, brought in by Abramovich at a cost of £31m only served to heighten the tension.

Mourinho was brought into manage Chelsea to win games and ultimately win trophies. This he did. However, this wasn’t enough for Roman Abramovich after a while and he demanded that Chelsea start playing a more stylish, attractive form of soccer rather than the solid defensive displays commonly renowned by Mourinho’s Chelsea. This was enough to make Mourinho leave as the most successful and colourful manager in Chelsea’s club history.

Other clubs around the world (especially English clubs) are being bought by wealthy businessmen who are demanding quick results from managers with the players they wish to see at the club. Manchester City have spent millions of pounds recently to bolster their squad and as a result have a massive squad with top players not even making the substitutes bench which then brings on trouble mentioned in the previous point (2).

4. The way they coach today is a lot like how they were coached when they were younger

I remember when I was a young lad (perhaps 3 or 4 years old) kicking a soccer ball about in the back yard with my dad showing me how to shield a ball with my body so no-one else could get it from me. I still think about this lesson when I coach young kids this drill even now. If it’s coached in the right manner.... players remember forever!

When I first started playing as an attacking, side midfielder (winger) I used to be positioned too central and it was only when my sports teacher at school told me to “hug the touchline” and stay out wide that I received the ball more often and had more space. In later years I would realise that sometimes I needed to stay more central to lose the defender and then pull out wide to create space.... This lesson I also coach to this day.

It may come across as amateurish or as having a lack of ideas for professional coaches to bring up stories of when they were younger and playing soccer and repeat old drills, but whether they admit it or not that’s what they do... because they work! And besides, why change a good thing? A coach should have more experience of the game of soccer than any player on the field and reliving lessons learned and skills / drills is a great way to coach.

It is not only types of drills and skills learned in the past that the coach will transfer to his/hers players, but also the way in which they coach. Some coaches are passive and prefer to watch whilst saying very little. Other coaches are heavily involved with everything and prefer to have a more hands on approach. I believe it is good to have a combination of both of these. A professional coach will often pick-up mannerisms from past coaches they have admired or even been afraid of but have discovered the way players react and stick with it.

A passive head coach rarely speaks and will often leave most communication up to other coaches. This way, once they do speak it is greeted with respectful acknowledgement from the players. This also works particularly well when they are dissatisfied with a player or team performance and the shouting or emotional rage comes across a lot more abrupt/offensive as it is rarely seen from the manager. On the other hand, an outgoing coach will often show passion and frequently show emotions toward players enabling players to know where they stand with the manager. If an outgoing head coach becomes quiet and passive then you know something is not quite right.
5. Coaches use professional coaching websites to search for fresh ideas - FreeYouthSoccerDrills

When a coach has been in charge of a team for a prolonged period of time, where do they find new and exciting drills to keep their players interested? The simple answer is, all over the internet! Some websites are better than others and I’m hoping that once my website is complete there will be plenty on here for all ages and abilities. The feedback I have received so far from top coaches is that the content is original, precise and illustrative.

I learned the majority of my coaching practices from watching other coaches but this can be very time consuming. Therefore, why not take advantage of a professional soccer coaching website from an author who has years of top experience at playing and coaching?

The illustration on the left here demonstrates a page from my U4 drills section with a game called ‘Animal Hunt’. I wanted to show some fun diagrams to help explain my coaching points and ideas for different games. Every drill on FYSD has a diagram attached to it to ensure user friendly reading and understanding.

FreeYouthSoccerDrills.com focuses not only on particular age-group soccer drills but also includes other pages such as:

- Soccer Video Clips
- Skills, Tricks & Flicks
- Soccer Positions
- Soccer Formations
- Soccer Injuries
- Soccer Nutrition

... And many, many more pages available for FREE at FreeYouthSoccerDrills!