

# **“Winners are different”**

## **A psychological profile of the elite soccer players**

Bill Beswick, Team Psychologist Manchester United  
(For advanced players)

- ✍ Start with the end in mind (Put that in front of the player)
- ✍ Can we teach them to thrive under the pressure
- ✍ They are ordinary people with extraordinary talents
- ✍ Often we ask a player “how do you think you played” rather than “you played well”
- ✍ When a player can't take responsibility that's a player about to fail
- ✍ As a PSYCH; I'll attack you as a player, but love you as a person
- ✍ We always end practice with a challenge game
- ✍ Balance work and rest
- ✍ Beware of player burnout (irritability, boring)
- ✍ Always have variety in your practices, because boredom is the enemy

### **GUIDLINES FOR DEALING WITH TOP PLAYERS**

#### **1. Motivate**

- ✍ Understand it's all about winning
- ✍ Sell the vision – the reason why
- ✍ Make each player a part of the journey to success
- ✍ Help each player set personal goals
- ✍ Find each players sense of self worth and help them achieve it
- ✍ Understand the whole player and the potential stress
- ✍ Emphasize intrinsic rewards

#### **2. Communicate**

- ✍ Modern coach is a communicator/ old was a yeller
- ✍ Never be in awe of superstars
- ✍ Increase communication will decrease anxiety
- ✍ Respect each player, listen and build trust
- ✍ 1v1 communication
- ✍ Be wary of criticism or praise – Players need to self evaluate
- ✍ Give honest feedback on performance

#### **3. Preparation**

- ✍ Coach smart not hard, sell expertise and personality
- ✍ Don't limit players – Let them surprise you
- ✍ Allow players to do what they do best
- ✍ Undercoaching is a skill – Stand back and let them go on their own
- ✍ Attention to detail – i.e. Set pieces

#### **4. Problem solving**

- ✍ Limit stressful situations
- ✍ Be proactive in dealing with problems
- ✍ Use peer pressure when possible
- ✍ Focus on what can be controlled
- ✍ Deal with problems, not react to them

Bill Beswick also has a book called 'Focused for Soccer'.

See also Darren Treasure's Powerpoint Presentation 'Toward Optimal Motivation in Soccer'.