



KAYA FC ACADEMY

ACADEMY MANUAL



The Kaya Approach to Coaching



In the Philippines, many of the children only participate in sports in a formal, structured environment, under adult or coach supervision. This has led to a lack of creative, independent thinking footballers who cannot effectively solve problems in real time during the course of the game. It also leads to an artificial feeling towards the game, which subsequently has meant a large number of players dropping out of football as they get older.

It is our responsibility as an Academy to change the status quo and provide our Academy players with the framework to be successful footballers.

At the Academy, we have looked at the football environment in the Philippines, and we have developed an approach to coaching which we have found to be successful.

At the Academy we have adopted a constraints and games led approach to how we coach our players, and it has led to an accelerated learning environment, where our players are more autonomous and have a stronger affinity to both the club, and the game itself.



Constraints Based Approach

In the constraints based approach, the aim is to deliver sessions that are learner-focused and enable players to find their own solutions to problems based on the manipulation of the practice by the coach. This can be achieved through the manipulation of the task, the environment or the player.

TASK

As an example, to manipulate a task, the coach could adjust the field size, play with different number of players on each team or use different sized goals in order to achieve a specific outcome.

In a training session, if the coach is working on a 1v1 defending topic, you may make the playing area smaller in order to give the defending player the advantage of being successful and winning the ball easier. However, you may wish to make the playing area bigger to give the defender more space to cover so you can challenge that defender in a more testing situation.

ENVIRONMENT

Another way to enhance player development is through the manipulation of the environment. As an example, this can be achieved by playing on different surfaces such as indoors, on grass, turf or even on a sloped or bumpy field. This could also be achieved by playing in different weather conditions such as wind, rain or even at altitude.

In Brazil, players play a lot of futsal where the game is played 5v5 on a small, hard court. The environment allows players to have more touches of the ball, in tighter spaces, and by using a heavier ball the game is played on the floor more and requires players to manipulate the ball using different parts of the foot, thus developing their technical and tactical proficiency.

PLAYER

The manipulation of the player relates to the both the physical attributes of the player, such their fitness, height, weight or technical proficiency, as well as the psychological or behavioral attributes such as motivation levels or emotional well-being.

As an example, if you want to improve individual player fitness you can adjust the playing area, the number of players in that area, the time you spend working and the number of sets that you do. This needs to be tailored based on your training cycle and periodization of your game and training schedule. This can also be manipulated by the use of heart rate monitors and other scientific data collection.

From a psychological perspective, if you have a forward who doesn't like to get back to defend following the break down in an attack, you can design a session which motivates the player to work back on defense. For example, the coaches could manipulate the session so if the opposition scores a goal and the defending team (including the forward) doesn't have all their players in their own (defending) half, then the goal counts double.



Games Led Approach

In a games based approach, we aim to allow our players the opportunity to experiment and explore the game through various games, free from over-instruction in match realistic activities.

LIMITED ISOLATED PRACTICE

As opposed to using isolated practices to teach a specific skill, using opposed exercises adds realism to the practice and is a more accurate portrait of what a player will be confronted with in game play. This leads to a greater level of transference from practice to games, as the player has to make decisions in real-time against a live, moving opponent.

Isolated practices within Academy sessions are to be kept to a minimum. Should an isolated practice be delivered because the coach wishes to cover a very specific topic (e.g playing out of the back but wants a centre back or a defensive midfielder to hit a long diagonal switch), the coaching [of the diagonal ball] in isolation must be done with very specific, detailed instruction if it is done within a team training environment. Ideally, that aspect of training will be done as a separate or isolated (one-to-one) practice with individual players or in very small group or unit training.

MANIPULATING GAMES

At the Academy, this approach is conducted through games, which are adapted and manipulated in order to facilitate certain learning and outcomes. At each practice we begin by playing small-sided games, of either 3v3 or 4v4 to get the players playing right from the outset. Depending on the session topic, or what learning outcomes we wish to bring out in a specific practice, we will then manipulate the game to create a specific environment. As the session progresses, the session will typically increase in numbers and realism and begins to look more like the game itself. As the session progresses, so too does the constraints on the game within activity that they administer.

For example, if the topic is ‘turning with the ball’, we might play a directional game placing 2 or 3 goals at each end for the teams to score in. If multiple defenders block one goal, can the player’s identify this and turn with the ball and head towards one of the other (open) goals? If there is a passing theme, in order to help players find an open player you could play a game whereby if the opponent has a shot that misses the target, the player must run around the outside of the field before re-entering the game. In the meantime, the opposition has a numerical advantage and must use this to create a goal scoring opportunity. The player’s need to identify the correct player to pass to and utilize the overload.

STREET FOOTBALL

As the players begin to get used to this method of practice, we can begin to give some autonomy to the players and they can begin to select their own teams and pick the rules of the games. The purpose of this is to start to give the players responsibility and regulate themselves in the field of play. This autonomous approach to practice is also a deliberate attempt in replicating the most effective way of developing football players- the art of street football.

Many of the worlds greatest ever players began their careers by playing football in the street. These unstructured, highly competitive games are the breeding ground for creative, freethinking players and are something that we try to replicate within the academy sessions. In the Philippines, it is rare to find players who play recreationally due to the lack of facilities in the community.

Particularly in Manila, there is a dearth of parks or recreational facilities, and due to the density of the population and the traffic problems in the streets, playing outside is very difficult and at times, very dangerous. The other issue that we face here in the Philippines is popularity of basketball. Potential facilities that could be used for football are often taken over by basketball, and as such football in the Manila area is almost exclusively limited to the schools and private football academies.

COMPETITIVE EDGE

At the academy, by beginning each session with a small-sided game, we re-create the element of street football to promote independent decision-making, enhance their creativity and develop their competitive edge. In this type of environment, players have to push themselves and not rely on the coach or parent for external motivation. Players in turn will have to regulate their own teammates in order to achieve results.

As a by-product of this, we have found in our experience players enjoy the sessions more and begin to develop a more deep-seeded emotional tie to the sport, as well as the Academy. If they enjoy being at the club, then the players will continue to come back week after week, month after month, year after year.



Coaching Style



Coaching Style

At the Academy, we pride ourselves on offering our players the best possible coaching environment in the Philippines. It is important that coaches understand both the cultural philosophy of the Academy as much as the tactical philosophy. Like our players, we want (and expect) our coaches to express themselves through their coaching, to try new things and to make mistakes and learn from them. As with the players, this must all be done within the framework of the Academy structure and in keeping with its philosophy.

There are three styles of coaches: the authoritarian, the democratic and the laissez-faire coach:

Authoritarian

This style of coaching is most commonly found in the Philippines. In this style, the coach uses a command style (often militant) and uses instructions to tell their players what to do. This type of coach often places discipline as a priority and communication is only often one way. This approach can be successful, as coaches who have a coach-centered approach tend to place winning above anything else, however this approach is not suited to the Academy. A wholly authoritarian approach does not promote freethinking and while we value winning, it should not be at the expense of player development.

Democratic

As a facilitator in the decision making process, a democratic coach outlines the direction in which they would like the team to go, but places the players at the centre of it's progress. In allowing players to be part of the process, this gives the players a greater sense of ownership of the team and players become more independent thinkers. However, coaches need to be aware that giving the players too much responsibility can lead to in-experienced players making ill-informed decisions and too many opinions can be problematic. The key is to give the players an appropriate level of responsibility without losing the control of the group. This coach prioritizes player-development above all else and is the approach that is supported the most by the academy.

Laissez-faire

For coaches taking this approach, the focus is about having fun and placing the social well being of the player at its center. This coach is not about results, but about creating a fun, engaging environment for its players. This can be very powerful as it often creates a strong bond between players and coaches. However, it can lead to problems if the lack of structure leads to stunting player development. This approach is suited for our kindersoccer players that are focused primarily of the social and technical aspects of football.



Our Coaching Style

In our experience of working with players in the Philippines, most of the children come from a background where they are used to working under an authoritarian educator, either in the classroom or on the field of play. While there are aspects of this style that are beneficial, e.g discipline and having a winning mentality, ultimately we are trying to develop our players as footballers who enjoy the sport, and are creative and independent thinking. As such, a more democratic approach to training is preferred from our coaches to

facilitate the player development. This does not mean that coaches will only stick to one style of coaching. Most coaches will dip in and out between the styles when presented with different circumstances and scenarios. What it simply means is that the coaches will ensure that the approach is centered on the development of the player, and will give them a level of autonomy to make their own decisions under their guidance. All players need direction, but the way in which the coach does so is the true art to coaching.

How we implement our coaching philosophy?

In the coaches toolkit, coaches must use a variety of tools to deliver their message. During the course of a practice, there are a variety of methods that the coach can deliver their message:

FLOW

Coaches make their points as the game is ongoing using short, concise points to keep the game moving. Players enjoy this method as the game may continue however it is important that it does not become commentary on the game. One aspect you need to be aware is that this method can be hard to check for understanding, as the game can be a distraction when trying to make a coaching point.

INDIVIDUAL

As the game is ongoing, the coach may withdraw a player to coach them on a specific aspect of play. This is also a great way of keeping the game going but can sometimes create a man-down scenario that is unpopular with the players!

STOPPAGES

Once the play has broken down and the ball is out of play, the coach steps in to make their coaching points. This again is a great way to keep the flow of the game, and minimize disruption. However, it can be hard to re-create a scene when making a coaching point as the picture can be hard to reenact.

FREEZE

As a coaching point arises, the coach can 'freeze' the moment and make their point. Although it causes disruption during the practice, it is the best way to recreate a scene and keep the picture fresh in the players' minds.

GAME BE THE TEACHER

This is where the constraints the coach places on a practice will bring out the topic or the desired outcomes of the session. By regulating a session in a specific way, such as placing mini goals in the corners of the field to encourage switch of play, the players will understand how to find solutions to the problems through the design of the practice. This is a great way to allow players to self-discover answers to the problems posed by the coaches, and to gain ownership of their player development through guided discovery.

What methods do we use?

As outlined earlier, using the constraints led approach is the way in which we will coach the players, as such let the game be the teacher is the tool coaches will use the most in their coaches toolkit. That being said, coaches can use the methods above to highlight specific coaching points. For example, if we have a switch of play topic and there are mini goals at each end of the field, if a player keeps dribbling towards a goal, which is congested with defenders, a coach may freeze the session so they can immediately paint the picture.

The coach can then use question and answer (Q&A) to facilitate that players learning by asking, “what picture do you see here?” The player should be able to see that one goal is blocked,

while the other one is free. The coach should then follow up with “so if one goal is blocked, where should we look to switch the ball to?” The player should identify that they should play the ball to the other side of the field to expose the vacant space. Allow the player to re-do the play using a live ball and rehearse the play. The same can be done for the other methods of coaching.

In order to maximize the ball-rolling time, our coaches should keep freezes to a minimum, and coaching interventions in general to be made quickly, concisely and then allow play to continue. Long, convoluted explanations should be avoided as it stems the flow of the session.



Age Appropriate Communication

It is important that our coaches understand the importance of age appropriate communication, and when they are speaking or instructing with children that their messages are delivered in the correct way.

With younger players, it is important that you go ‘down to their level’ when communicating. Make sure that you bend down to eye level. It is important that players in their formative stages get lots of positive reinforcement, so always encourage and when correcting mistakes, always praise their effort first before making adjustments.

Coaches should speak in simple terms, which kids can understand and refrain from using technical terminology. Consider also your tone of voice as this can be an effective way to inform a group when it is a more fun activity or when it needs to be more serious. Also consider using different methods to communicate with your players- visual

aids or cones can work, but increasingly technology such as video or ipads are being used to communicate with players.

When working it is very important that appropriate behavior is shown and coaches should not put the players or themselves in uncompromising situations. Things like players sitting on you, hugging you and other situations that involved over-familiar behavior should not take place.

Similarly, when communicating with players off the field (of all ages) make sure it is done via a parent- so messages, calls, emails should typically go through the parents and then passed on to the children. With older players, direct communication must include other adults copied into the conversation- another coach, parent or both.



Organization of Practice

Organization of Practice

In order to make sure the practice flows properly, first we effectively prepare for the practice. For the sessions, the Academy has provided coaches with sample sessions and exercises for them to administer. Should the coach wish to deliver a session of their own choosing, they must provide the Director with a sample session plan prior to the session.

Upon arrival to practice, a few things to consider are:

- Am I in the correct uniform?
- Do I have enough cones, markers and bibs?
- Do I have enough balls and are they pumped up?
- Do I require additional equipment such as mini-goals, big goals and poles?
- Are there any safety issues?
- How can I assist other coaches to set up the field?

Coaches are required to arrive a minimum of 15 minutes before the start of practice, however it is encouraged that coaches have the field set up before the first player arrives. The field set-up (if there are multiple teams training at one time) is usually designed by the Director prior to the practice so all coaches are aware of the area they will be working in ahead of time. Should the facility not have appropriate sized goals, coaches should utilise the equipment they have at their disposal.

Organize Your Session With the End in Mind

When setting up a practice, you should always start with the end-goal in mind, not only in terms how you want the session to look and how you hope the team plays, but also from an organizational standpoint.

So if your session ends with a small-sided game, set that field up first, then work backwards to construct your field. As a rule, try not to move cones during the session- have a plan already so that when you pick up cones, it will reveal the next field set up straight away. For example, if your activity before a 7v7 game is a small-sided 3v3 on two fields, have the field split down the middle and then when you move to the 7v7, either take out the central line of cones, or keep it there and use it as a half-way line.



Session Order

Each session will be divided into 4 components, the mini-game, the technical & tactical phase, the progression phase (in realism and numbers of going into a phase of play, wave attack or small sided game), followed by a conditioned game which ends with freeplay. Due to the weather conditions typically found in the Philippines, allow for regular water breaks of around 5 mins.

Please note, with the academy booking 2 hour slots for training some of the times may seem long. It is important therefore that we do not over work the players especially when the temperatures get dangerously high. Additionally, if we are working on covered courts, indoors or have a shorter time slot, coaches should adjust the training time and water breaks accordingly.

Each component can be broken down as follows:

0-25 mins	Mini- Game - 3v3 or 4v4
30-55 mins	Technical & tactical phase - using opposed or semi-opposed activity, possession game or functional practice
60-80 mins	Progression Phase- phase of play, wave attack activity or small-sided game
85-110 mins	Conditioned game- progress to freeplay. 10 min cooldown & de-brief

3v3 or 4v4 mini-game

As outlined previously, each session will start with a mini-game. The activity will replicate ‘street football’ and will involve minimal interaction from the coach. As players get used to starting sessions this way, allow them the opportunity to pick their own teams, set their own rules and even pick their favourite games to start the practice.

Technical and Tactical Phase

Depending on the age group, this phase aims to develop the players technical and decision-making skills. This can be done through semi-opposed e.g using a shadow defender or opposed exercises. This is typically done by either 1v1 or 2v2 activities, overloaded activities such as 2v1 or 5v3 games, or in possession based activities such as rondos (see sample sessions in the manual).

Progression Phase

Phases, wave attacks or small-sided games

As we progress through the practice, the session will increase in numbers and realism. To highlight the topic, the session will work towards looking more like the game itself. Phases of play, such as playing to a big goal while the other team plays to a specific target, wave attacks where units of players attack one after the other, or small sided games using bumpers, targets, neutral players etc.

De-Brief & Cooldown

At the end of the session, allow for the players to have a light cooldown and then de-brief the session to ensure they have picked up on the points of the practice. Use Q&A where possible, and try to make sure all the players understand (not just the ones who shout out the answers). This can be done by ‘hot-questions’ where you ask specific players questions rather than opening up to the entire group.

The real check for understanding comes in games, and whether they can recall those points regularly over the course of the season or seasons with the Academy.

*Game

Each practice will end with a game- preferably as close to the regular game that age group plays in match play, given the size of the playing area and the number of players coaches have at training. Don’t be afraid to rotate players in and out of the practice- if for example your team plays 7 a-side and you have 21 players at practice, simply make 3 teams and rotate the teams every few minutes. Do not play 9v9 if the age group your working with plays 7v7- keep it realistic to the age category.

During the game, think about how coaches can condition your game to bring out the topic or the outcome that you as the coach want. For example, if you want to work on playing out of the back, spilt the pitch into three zones and every time the ball goes out, the team re-starts from the goalkeeper and must play into the back zone from the first pass. If the opponent tries to flood that zone, tell the keeper that they can now play either the back zone or the front zone from their first pass in order to try to keep the opponent honest. You can also condition the opponent so they cannot enter the back zone until after the opponent has had their first touch.

For the last 10 minutes, let the kids play and watch and observe to see how well they have grasped the concepts. If you feel the need to coach, speak to some of the players on the sideline to see if they can see what is happening in front of them, and use that time to check for understanding



Style of Play



Style of Play

Our style of play can be described as a possession based model, with highly skilled 1v1 specialists, and a high-octane defensive structure centered on aggressive pressing.

The game model consists of 8 phases of play:

- *Build up from the back*
- *Possession through midfield*
- *Attacking in the final third*
- *Pressing from the front*
- *Defending in a midfield block*
- *Deep defending*
- *Offensive transition*
- *Defensive transition*

Within this structure, it is key that our Academy develops and recruits players capable of playing within this system, and coaches must be able to adapt their model if they have players or teams that do not fit this profile (player profile is something which we will touch on later).

However, it is expected that coaches follow the game model as closely as possible. In doing so, the Academy enjoys consistency throughout the age categories and enables a smoother transition for players as they go through the development pathway.

Buildup From the Back

In this phase, we encourage our players to play out from the back with our objective being to work the ball into the middle of the field in a controlled manner. Primarily using the goalkeeper and our back-line, the aim is to look to find an opportunity to find an open player to either carry the ball or pass the ball into the midfield zone.

The key to build up from the back is identifying how the opposition is setting up to press, and where we can expose them using the spare player or players. For example, if we are playing 5v5 and the opponent only presses with one forward and leaves three defenders back, can two of our players split either side of their forward and can the goalkeeper play out to one of the open players? The defender then can either carry the ball into midfield or if it is being pressured by the lone forward, they can switch the build-up using the goalkeeper to play out the other side.

Regardless of the system or the age group, coaches are expected to build out from the back, especially at the younger age groups where it may not always be successful. This is where the players will make the most mistakes but have the greatest capacity to learn. It is up to the coach to up skill their players to be competent and confident enough to play this way, and to develop and recruit players to fit this model.

Possession Through Midfield

Through midfield, the object is to possess the ball using short, sharp passes, to probe and shift the opponent with the ultimate aim to find a way to penetrate the opposition backline. This can be created one of three ways- player movement, incisive passing or by beating an opponent. With player movement, we are looking to get certain rotations to clear and fill spaces to expose the opponent once they react to the movements. For example, if the winger comes in off the line and the opposition full-back follows, can we exploit that vacated space by either a forward, midfielder or full-back attacking that space?

This then brings into play our incisive passing and do our players have the ability to firstly see the movement, and then secondly have the technical proficiency to execute the pass to penetrate the opposition? Players therefore must be proficient in a variety of passing techniques as well as having the perceptual and analytical skills to select the correct type of pass.

The final one is having players who are highly proficient in 1v1 situations and is a key component to our playing philosophy. If there is no obvious way to penetrate and the opponent keeps their shape and discipline well, we must patiently keep possession of the ball until an opportunity for a 1v1 match up to occur. More on 1v1 specialists in our next section.

Attacking in the Final Third

This phase of our play is largely open to interpretation of the player. Essentially, we are looking for players to express themselves by trying to find creative ways to break down the opponent. As a framework, our aim is to either find overload situations in wide areas, quick combinations and interplay in central areas, or find the 1v1 specialists in isolation.

In overload situations we are looking for overlaps, underlaps and third man combinations to try to expose them in wide channels. This takes well-coordinated movements and excellent timing of runs and passes. Quick combinations in central areas may be things like 'jack's' (also known as 'overs'), one-two's, balls around the corners and other disguised or intricate passes. Finding the 1v1 specialist is highly important in the final third, as these players are the ones who decide the game. They must also be able to produce high quality end-product by delivering accurate crosses, clever through passes and finishes on goal. Players competent in 1v1 situations are the players fans come to see and get the people out of their seats. These types of players need to be nurtured, encouraged and given a platform to be successful.

Pressing From the Front

As a rule, our teams aggressively impose ourselves on our opponents through high pressing. The aim is to have a relentless desire to regain the ball and to unsettle and suffocate our opponents throughout the game. Simply put, by winning the ball higher up the field we are closer to our opponent's goal, and further away from our own goal.

The press from the front usually begins by making the play predictable. The front players will allow the first pass from the goalkeeper to a centre back or a centre back to the full-back to establish a pressing trigger. Once the ball reaches the trigger point, the team will hunt to regain possession by doubling, tripling-up on opponents and making the field as small as possible.

Upon regaining possession, we aim to transition to goal as quickly as possible. It is important that the players understand the visual cues set by the coach and that players read the situation well. It is also important that players fully grasp the concept and the benefits of playing in such an aggressive manner as it is a physically exhausting method of defending. However, if the players understand the rationale behind it then buy-in should be easy.

Defending in Midfield Block

If the opponent manages to either beat the press or a scenario occurs where the opponent has comfortable possession at the back, the team should set-up in a midfield block. In this set-up, the team aims to provoke space by allowing the opponent to carry the ball to a particular line of engagement until the press starts again.

For example, the team will allow the opposition to bring the ball up to the half-way line, with the forwards simply trying to cut off passing lanes and providing a screen for the midfielders. The midfield line does the same for the back line and we remain compact, and limit the spaces in our half. Once the ball crosses the half-way line, that is the trigger to aggressively press the ball and can be developed by either showing the ball to a specific area or to a specific player which the coach has identified as a weak link.

Like the high-press, the players press aggressively (in two's and three's where possible) and aim to regain the ball. Once this is done, the aim is to exploit the space the opponent has left, as they will most likely have vacated their defensive half and committed numbers forward. This affords us the opportunity to exploit the space if we can counter by getting numbers ahead of the ball quickly to ensure a fast break can occur.





Defending Deep

In deep defending, the primary aim is to protect the goal, therefore we must get numbers back and in central areas. When defending deep, the aim is to deflect the ball towards wide areas and deny spaces through the middle. In this scheme, our full-backs need to be effective 1v1 defenders and be confident defending in wide zones 1v1. If we are up against an opponent who has a 1v1 specialist or they are aggressive in creating overloads in wide areas, then a support must be provided by recovering midfielders or forwards.

In the older age groups especially, defensive players in this scheme must be competent in dealing with crosses and be aerially aggressive. The goalkeeper is key in this scheme, both in terms of collecting crosses and as controlling the line of the backline

Attacking Transition

[The English FA defines transition as ‘the process of recognition and response in the first few moments following the regain or loss of possession’.] In attacking transition, one important aspect of this phase is that typically in the moment that possession changes hands, the opposition defense is disorganized and spread out. The other major aspect in this phase is the area of the field has possession been regained. For example, if it is regained after defending in a deep block, the emphasis might be to counter quickly using a more direct ball early in the transition phase to utilize the space behind the defense.

Alternatively, quick fast interplay or finding players who at high speed can carry the ball down the pitch can also expose big spaces left by a disorganized team. If the ball is regained from a high pressing situation closer to the opponent’s goal, it may be to counter by trying to play a forward 1v1 with the goalkeeper, or overload or isolate a defender to create a goal scoring opportunity quickly. If the opportunity to counter is not possible, then we simply maintain possession and go through our phases of play as outlined earlier.

The main aspect to this phase however is for the players to not just react quickly when the transition occurs, but also to anticipate that a turnover is about to happen and to position themselves (or know where they will position themselves) to maximize the potential for a goal scoring opportunity to be created. In reading pressing cues and triggers allied to a strong motivation to retrieve the ball, players and teams can transition quickly, and effectively and turn defense into opportunities to score goals.

Defending Transition

In defensive transition, the objective for us is to win the ball back as quickly as possible. The first few seconds after the ball has turned over is critical, so the emphasis is on us to try to win the ball back right away. We do that by the nearest defender presses the ball, and players in proximity to the defender either double up with the defender or quickly marks a player close to where the ball is to deny short passing opportunities.

Because our Academy like our players to play quick, short passes in build-up, our players are typically closer to one another. This serves to ensure that the ball travels quickly, accurately and efficiently but it also means that we are closer together for pressing actions if we do turn the ball over.

With primary players either closing the ball down and secondary players marking someone close to the ball, tertiary players must be compact in order to suffocate the opponent. However, we must recognize if the opponent tries to expose the space behind the defense line (as outlined earlier, once possession is lost, often the team is disorganized) we will need to be well balanced, prepared to drop and track runners beyond the defense.

Player Profile

At the Academy, there are types of players we are trying to develop, or trying to recruit.

To illustrate the type of player we are looking to develop or recruit, we look at the attributes that players in that position possess, and examples from the Academy who fit the profile, as well as professional examples at the highest level.



GOAL KEEPER

#1 GOALKEEPER

- Brave
- Organizes defense well
- Good shot stopper
- Hates to concede goals
- Good distribution with feet and hands
- Ability to come quickly off their line
- Good anticipation skills
- Confidence to initiate the build from the back

PROFESSIONAL: *Manual Neuer, Jordan Pickford*

KAYA: *Nathan Bata*



FULL BACK / WING BACK

#2 OR #3 FULL BACK/WING BACK

- Very good 1v1 offensively and defensively
- Good tactical positioning
- Can deflect opponent to where they want them to go
- Ability to interchange positions
- High level fitness
- Explosive speed
- Good delivery from crosses
- Comfortable playing in tight spaces (close to touchline)

PROFESSIONAL: *Trent Alexander Arnold, David Alaba*

KAYA: *Sven Dunder, Christian Young*



CENTRE BACKS

4 OR #5 CENTRE BACKS

- Good in 1v1 duels
- Reads the game very well
- Aerially dominant
- Brave
- Good timing of tackles and interceptions
- Good organizational skills
- Hates to concede goals
- Can carry the ball into midfield
- Good range of passing
- Explosive speed

PROFESSIONAL: *Virgil Van Dyk, Sergio Ramos*

KAYA: *Cian Galsim, Yota Mori*



DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER

#6 DEFENSIVE MIDFIELDER

- Reads the game very well
- Willing to accept the ball in tight situations
- Has ability to screen the defense
- High aerobic capacity
- Good organizational skills
- High level of awareness
- Can dictate the tempo in possession
- Good timing of tackles and interceptions
- Accurate passing over a range of distances

PROFESSIONAL: *Sergio Busquets, N'golo Kante*

KAYA: *Juan Camahort, Harry Domelow*



BOX TO BOX MIDFIELDER

#8 BOX TO BOX MIDFIELDER

- High level of aerobic capacity
- Good timing of tackles and interceptions
- Accurate passing over a range of distances
- Can dictate the tempo in possession and in pressing situations
- High level of awareness
- Provides the link from defense to attack
- Progressive passer
- Effective ball carrier
- Provides penetration beyond the forwards
- Looks to get into the opponents box to score goals
- Driving mentality

PROFESSIONAL: Luka Modric, Paul Pogba

KAYA: Enzo Courbet, Javier Prieto



ATTACKING MIDFIELDER

#10 ATTACKING MIDFIELDER

- Creative spark for the team
- Finds pockets of space in which to operate in
- Incisive passer
- Improvises where necessary
- Ability to go past players 1v1
- Can initiate pressing situations
- Provides penetration beyond the forwards
- Good finisher from a range of distances and angles

PROFESSIONAL: Isco, Antoine Griezmann

KAYA: Pelayo Prieto, Emil Bessadi



WINGER

#7 OR #11 WINGER

- Excellent in 1v1 situations
- Strong dribbler
- Creativity in the final third
- Can interchange positions with other players
- Willingness to track back
- Clever movement off the ball
- Provides penetration beyond the forwards
- Good finisher
- Excellent in combination play
- Can deliver into the box a variety of ways
- Explosive speed

PROFESSIONAL: *Kylian Mbappe, Raheem Sterling*

KAYA: *Benji Palacio, Kazu Saito*



STRIKER

#9 STRIKER

- Scores goals
- Can create opportunities for others
- Can defend from the front
- Good at linking the play
- Variety of ways to finish
- Explosive speed
- Clever movement in and around the box
- Good in 1v1 situations
- Brave
- Good aerially
- Improvises when necessary
- Strong ability to hold the ball up

PROFESSIONAL: *Lionel Messi, Harry Kane*

KAYA: *Lorenz Tortona, Patrick Barnes*





Building Relationships



The Importance of Building Relationships

Although the X's and O's are important, the most important thing that our coaches must be able to do is to have the capacity to build relationships with their players.

You can be the best tactician in the world, and deliver the most technically perfect practice session but if the players don't have a connection with you as a coach, then you're never going to get the best out of that group. How you build relationships with the players is very individual for each coach, however the cornerstones for this must be integrity, honesty, vulnerability and respect.

Honesty

The coach has to be honest with their players. That doesn't mean coaches have to be nice to players all the time, nor does it mean players having to know the whole truth. What it means is the coach must be sincere in their interactions and letting the players and team know that they always have the teams best interests at heart, and that any decision made is for the good of the collective.

For example, you have a big game on the weekend and you want to leave a player out of the line up who has a hard time against a particular opponent. If you wait until the day of the game to drop the player from the line-up, how will they feel when the team is announced? Most likely, dejected, confused and angry. If at Monday's practice you instead take the player aside and tell the player "you have had a great season so far, but for this game I'm thinking about giving player X a chance as he may be able to neutralize the opponents speed. I will work with the two of you this week in training and then make my decision on who will start after Friday's practice. I'm coming to you now so during practice you're not wondering why you're out the rotation because I think you're a terrific player and I don't want you to feel disappointed." Which approach will get a better response from the player?

As a coach, you may have already decided that you will play the other player, but you don't give the whole truth as you want to see how that player will react. However, in showing that you have taken the players feelings into account, you have dealt with a tricky situation in a sincere way, that is what you as the coach think is best for the team. The player understands the rationale behind the decision, the team see's that you have put the team first, and that in turn builds trust with both the player and the group as a whole.

Integrity

If coaches expect their players to have high standards, the coaches themselves need to adhere to those standards. If you as the coach expect your players to be on time for practice, make sure that you're the first one on the training field to greet them when they arrive. If in training you say that you want the team to play out from the back, then in the game you lose the ball in the first possession and you tell the players to kick the ball long, you will lose integrity with the team.

If the coach can live the life he or she expects from their players, then they will demonstrate their integrity. If a coach does not practice what they preach, then they will lose the impact they have on the team. It is important therefore that you have strong morals, are authentic in what you say and are prepared to set the standards for the team to follow.

Vulnerability

For a coach, showing one's vulnerability isn't something that is often associated with a leader, but it is integral when building player relationships. If you consider a coach that asks the players for feedback from their players after a training session, this is an example of coaches opening themselves up for scrutiny but does so because they value the opinion of the group.

If the coach after a defeat opens up and says they got the tactics wrong, this demonstrates that a coach is willing to take the blame themselves and not lay blame with the players. In taking ownership of this, players recognize that the coach is only human, and is prepared to be open with them, and they in turn should feel comfortable being open with the coach.

The coach must be mindful if they show their vulnerable side, that they allow the players to express themselves fully. For example, if you open up the group for feedback and you bite back at every response, you won't be getting much feedback in the future! The coach must provide a safe environment where everyone feels comfortable to share their opinions. This leads to a more dynamic team environment where everyone can feel part of the process and can take more ownership of the teams' progress. This ties in with our overall philosophy of creating more autonomous and freethinking footballers as outlined earlier.

Respect

To underpin everything, respect is at the bedrock of what the coach must show to the players, and ensure that their players do the same to each other. The coach must set the example by showing respect to the players and this can be done in a variety of different ways. Simple things such as learning all the players names and getting to know their family members are easy ways to show respect for their players. Greeting the players by shaking hands with one another when they arrive is another way to show respect to each other.

The coach is also responsible on gamedays to show respect to the opposition and to the officials. Making sure the game is played in the correct spirit and that fairplay is shown is extremely important. They must also ensure that the parents respect the game by allowing the kids to play free from shouting and screaming instructions from the sidelines.


Finally, respect must be shown in the community. Things like ensuring the field is cleaned up after a practice or game is crucial in showing respect to the community we live in. If you have a locker room, tidy the locker after you're done and leave it as you found it. With some teams, you can give this responsibility to players to monitor, so once again you enable the group to self-regulate. Just like the New Zealand All-Blacks rugby team, "Don't let anyone else do your dirty work for you, we clean up our own mess".

Being a coach is a huge responsibility.

In John O'Sullivan and Jerry Lynch's 'Changing the Game Project', they talk a lot about the Rule of One: one coach, one player, one comment, one time can change a players life. This can be for the better, or for worse. We can all remember comments coaches have made which has inspired them to do great things, as well as comments that have stayed with a player in a negative way. It is imperative that as a coach, you consider the way in which you deliver your messages because although most of what you say as a coach you probably can't remember, you can be sure that the players do remember what you say about them, both positively and negatively.

One the phrases O'Sullivan and Lynch's use on their podcast "Way of Champions" is '**your influence is never neutral**' and as a coach, you are always influencing the team in either a positive or negative way. It is your responsibility as the coach to ensure that you interact with the team in a positive way and provides the best possible environment for the players.

If the environment is positive, and the players love and respect you because of the relationship that you have built with them, then this will be the place where great things can happen.



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