

THE TECHNICIAN

**Editorial:
A Precarious
Profession**

**Interview:
Valeriy
Gazzaev**

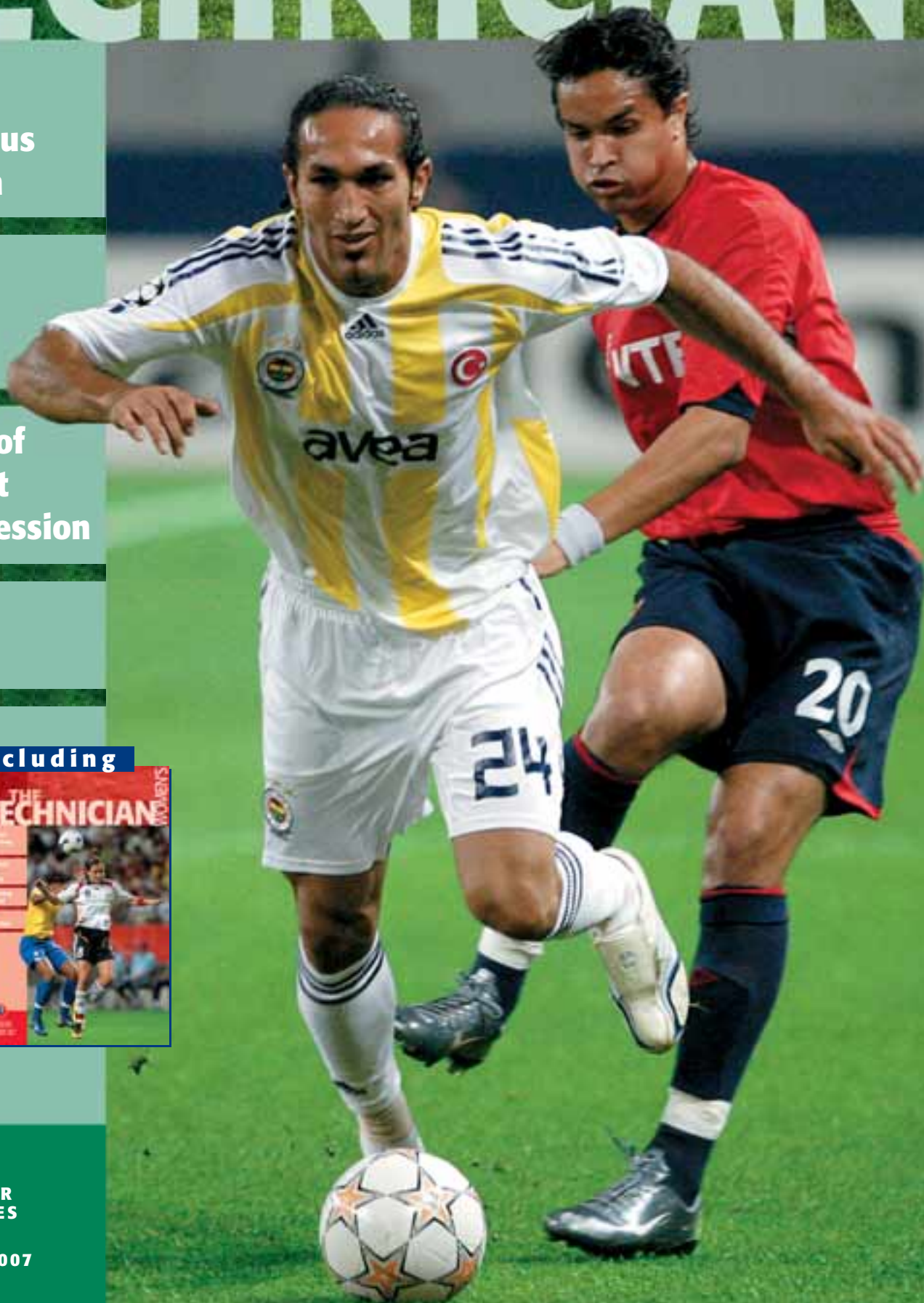
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Including



**NEWSLETTER
FOR COACHES**
No. 37
NOVEMBER 2007





**ARSÈNE WENGER,
ARSENAL'S LOYAL COACH,
IS AN EXCEPTION IN
A VERY FICKLE WORLD.**

IMPRESSUM

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Dudu (20), one of the Brazilians who plays for CSKA Moscow, coached by Valeriy Gazzaev, up against Deniz Baris in his team's UEFA Champions League match against Fenerbahce.

(Photo: Korotayev/Epsilon/Getty Images)

PA ARCHIVES/PA PHOTOS

A PRECARIOUS PROFESSION

EDITORIAL

BY ANDY ROXBURGH,
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

To say that coaching at the top level today is a precarious occupation is an understatement. Following matchday 1 in the UEFA Champions League, four clubs parted company with their head coach – José Mourinho left Chelsea FC, Gheorghe Hagi stopped working at FC Steaua Bucuresti, Anatoliy Demyanenko moved out at FC Dynamo Kyiv and Albert Emon stepped aside at Olympique de Marseille. In the case of José Mourinho, it was a major surprise as he was a previous winner of the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Cup, albeit at FC Porto. Finland's national coach Roy Hodgson summed up the current climate when he said: "With a few exceptions (e.g. Sir Alex Ferguson and Arsène Wenger), coaching at the highest level nowadays is a short-term job. People want changes and the media want new faces." In a results-driven business, someone is always under pressure, and for many professional coaches who are not living up to expectations, it seems that 'their coat is hanging precariously on a shaky nail'. What then can be done to increase stability and to minimise the risk of premature dismissal, which is sometimes unfair?

The first step must be to educate coaches in a comprehensive way and to equip them for the demands of the football 'bullring'. Today, it is an environment which is heavily influenced by player power, rich owners, critical ex-players, an all-consuming media and an insatiable, demanding public. Even if these rough waters can be navigated and results can be achieved, it may not be enough. The customers, not to mention the owners, want flair and style in tandem with efficiency, and if the image of the coach and the team is perceived as dull and boring, then the

coach and his coat maybe shown the door before he has time to fully develop his style and his team.

But surely, there is some career protection for the professional coach, apart from a financial settlement? Herein lies the crux of the problem, because football coaching, particularly in some countries, has never been viewed as a regulated profession in the same way as a doctor, a teacher or a lawyer, and has lacked the official recognition, training requirements, and legal protection which a job of this public importance should be afforded. UEFA, however, through its Coaching Convention has tried to raise standards of education throughout Europe and to establish a clearly defined accreditation system. Meanwhile, the club licensing programme has been established on a European and domestic level, with specific criteria being imposed, including the qualification requirements of the technical staff. But difficulties remain, because in a number of associations a coaching licence is not compulsory in order to work at the top level, and sometimes the domestic rules are modified or bypassed for 'special cases'. Too many special cases and credibility is lost.

The training of a coach is a long, arduous process and involves organised courses and seminars (both formal training and informal exchange), work experience (assisting and observing), the use of mentors, managing players and teams at lower levels, specialised studies and analysis, and personal development (i.e. reading, travel, life challenges, etc.). José Mourinho's fairytale journey to the top provides an interesting case study. As he explained to me a few weeks ago: "My training as a coach was fully comprehensive – I came from a football family, was educated in physical education and football, gained work experience at Sporting Clube de Portugal, FC Porto and FC Barcelona, had top mentors in Bobby Robson and Louis van Gaal, committed myself to personal study, and worked at a small club before I reached FC Porto." Frontline manage-

ment in the top divisions should surely be recognised as a vocation requiring specialised training. Gianluca Vialli, a UEFA Pro licence holder, supports the argument when he states: "In Italy, coaching is seen as a profession, requiring study and an apprenticeship." Without doubt, it takes talent to manage talent. But those with an aptitude for coaching can be nurtured, encouraged and prepared by the associations to meet the demands of the professional game.

Of course, a coaching licence will not guarantee success, but it will ensure minimum standards of coaching competence and will protect the players and the game from basic mismanagement. Establishing and enforcing regulations which protect the rights of the coach will increase the credibility and the status of the profession. Football is a high-stakes, high-risk business at the elite level and coaches cannot be protected from the realities of life. But, progressive coach education and strict licensing schemes can help to prepare and protect frontline technicians – professionals who are often exposed to irrational, emotional judgements. If coaching can be universally recognised as a regulated profession, then it may become a little less precarious, and we might survive UEFA Champions League matchday 1 with fewer managerial casualties than we did this time around.



José Mourinho won the UEFA Cup and UEFA Champions League with FC Porto before moving to Chelsea.

INTERVIEW

BY ANDY ROXBURGH,
UEFA TECHNICAL DIRECTOR



HE HAS AN INFECTIOUS SMILE AND HE HAS MUCH TO SMILE ABOUT. VALERIY GAZZAEV, THE HEAD COACH OF PFC CSKA MOSKVA, WAS A TOP PROFESSIONAL PLAYER, HAS WON MANY TITLES AS A COACH, AND OWNS A SHARE IN AN OIL WELL. AS A PLAYER, HE WON THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP AT UNDER-23 (1976) AND UNDER-21 (1980) LEVELS, WAS A BRONZE MEDALLIST FOR THE USSR AT THE 1980 OLYMPIC GAMES AND LIFTED THE SOVIET CUP (1984) AS A MEMBER OF THE FC DINAMO MOSKVA SQUAD – HE SCORED 89 GOALS IN 283 APPEARANCES IN THE TOP SOVIET LEAGUE. IN HIS MANAGERIAL ROLE, THE FORMER INTERNATIONAL STRIKER (EIGHT APPEARANCES AND FOUR GOALS FOR THE USSR), HAS CAPTURED THE RUSSIAN CHAMPIONSHIP FOUR TIMES (ONCE WITH SPARTAK ALANIA-VLADIKAVKAZ AND THE OTHERS WITH CSKA MOSKVA), THE RUSSIAN CUP THREE TIMES (ALL WITH CSKA MOSKVA), AND BECAME THE FIRST RUSSIAN COACH TO LIFT THE UEFA CUP (2005), WHEN CSKA MOSKVA BEAT SPORTING CLUBE DE PORTUGAL IN THE FINAL IN LISBON. THE MAN FROM VLADIKAVKAZ WAS RUSSIA’S COACH OF THE YEAR IN 2005, COACH OF THE NATIONAL TEAM FOR A SHORT PERIOD, AND RECEIVED THE ORDER OF FRIENDSHIP AND THE ORDER OF HONOUR FROM THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT. IN HIS PLAYING DAYS, HE WAS KNOWN AS A WIZARD WITH THE BALL, AND AS A COACH HE HAS PRODUCED NUMEROUS MOMENTS OF MAGIC TO BECOME ONE OF RUSSIA’S MOST SUCCESSFUL TECHNICIANS. A PARTICIPANT IN UEFA’S ELITE CLUB COACHES FORUM FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS AND A MEMBER OF UEFA’S CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TECHNICAL STUDY GROUP IN 2006 AND 2007, HE IS THE MAN WITH THE SMILE – HE IS...

VALERIY GAZZAEV

1 • What was the reaction in Russia when you won the UEFA Cup?

Of course, this was a great success because never before had a Russian club won a European trophy. It was a big celebration and recognition for the whole nation. The president of the country gave us a reception in the Kremlin and the reaction from everyone was amazing. We won because we had good players, a good president and a good coach (he laughs and the smile sparkles). The commitment was total and everyone did his job professionally. The key was balance – the balance between our Brazilian and Russian

players allowed us to benefit from the qualities of each group.

2 • What system of play do you use with CSKA Moskva?

All my career at CSKA Moskva, I have used the same system – with three defenders, five midfielders and two strikers. The two wing backs have always done a great job both defensively and offensively. Since 2001, we have won many trophies playing in this way and my players like this system of play. The most important aspect for us is that we are very well

organised and responsible in our defensive work – everybody has his clearly defined job. The second key is having five in midfield, not just quantity but also quality. We can really build up the attacks, particularly with the use of our fast players on the flanks. The high level of our twin strikers completes the team unit and produces a system which I am very comfortable with. Last season in the UEFA Champions League, we scored 16 goals and only conceded four, so the system works for us. I find that three at the back is more secure because, first and foremost, they

**VALERIY GASSAEV,
CSKA MOSCOW'S "CONDUCTOR".**



Korotkiy/
Epa/Getty Images



know what to do defensively and they remain in place, while a zonal four can become stretched and imbalanced – the latter has quantity but for me the former has greater security.

3 • You have four Brazilians in your team. What are the advantages and disadvantages?

When we got our Brazilian players they were not famous – they were young boys when they came to us. During their time with us, they have matured into Brazilian national team players, and now CSKA is the only team giving four players to the Brazilian national team. These players have great technical qualities, they are very professional, and they are a big plus for us because we win many matches on account of their quality. The big disadvantage is that we lose them when they are away with Brazil.

4 • How would you describe your training methods?

Firstly, we focus on intensity because today's game is very quick and high tempo. Therefore, my training is intense and close to the match situation. Of course, we do a lot of tactical work, together with coordination and fluid movement – these elements are combined. Usually, I incorporate the tactics we will use in the game – the physical aspect is also included, so it is a combined, complex approach. We do practical exercises on pressing, which are exhausting because they require everyone to work hard. I never hold training sessions for longer than one hour and fifteen minutes, but they are very concentrated and demanding in order to push everybody up to the match level.

5 • What are the tactical trends in Russian football?

I would say that the tactical trends are similar to those in the rest of Europe. Many use 4-4-2 or 4-3-3 but the quality of the play is not as high as the top UEFA Champions League teams. The only one who is not following the



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TAKING A LOOK AT THE TECHNICIAN WITH ANDY ROXBURGH.

trends is me. Most of the clubs are playing cautiously, building from defence and playing counter-attack – the aim is mainly not to lose.

6 • The next UEFA Champions League final will be in Moscow. What can we expect?

Firstly, I hope that a Russian club will be in the final. It is a great honour for Russia to get the final and we will do everything to make it a big success. For the whole country and for the association, it is an important development. It will attract a great deal of attention to football and I am sure it will be a well-organised, spectacular final. I agree with the decision to play on real grass, although the artificial surface in Moscow is good. The level of organisation will be high and Moscow will do its utmost to welcome everybody.

7 • Do you think that a team from Russia is capable of winning the UEFA Champions League in the near future?

There has been a lot of investment in the game in Russia, including the infrastructure, and the competitive level has improved, with eight or nine top clubs of a similar standard. I believe that in the near future we are capable of having a team in the final of the UEFA Champions League. It is really only in the last six years that we have become fully professional in Russian football and we are now experiencing a rapid development in the game. I think that in five years' time we can have one of the top five championships in Europe. Now we are investing in quality players, and top coaches are coming to Russia, so the trend is towards the top European level.

8 • Who were your favourite players and coaches?

I believe every coach should have his own way. We should not copy – yes, I like Sir Alex Ferguson and I respect his work, but the key is to find your own way. Oleg Blokhin, who I played with, was a great player, as was Lev Yashin and, of course, Valerii Lobanovskiy was an outstanding coach in the former USSR.

9 • Is there still a distinctive Russian style of football?

I don't think that there is a Russian style of playing football because we have many foreign players and coaches. Of course, there is South American and European football, and we are part of the latter. Maybe there was a Soviet style, but now modern Russia does not have a distinctive way of playing.

10 • How do you handle today's top professionals?

It is a big problem to handle top professionals nowadays, but I can deal with that. I am constantly working on psychology and I have intense discussions with the players, trying to make them understand that money is only part of the equation. They need to work for their name – their reputation. It is not an easy task, but I feel that I can cope. I am always touching the human aspect – they are football players, but their behaviour is also important. They need to learn from their experiences because it will benefit them later in life, and I communicate regularly with the players on a one-to-one basis. Strict discipline in the team is a priority for us – it is the base. Then come the individual discussions and the personal development. Of course, you cannot make players from the outside (such as the Brazilians) love Russia, but you can get them to respect the traditions here and to do their job as professionals. The Brazilians love Brazil, naturally, so we experience a difference in mentality between our Russian players and those who have come from South America.



The Brazilians show off their agility as CSKA warm up before a UEFA Champions League match.

**BY WINNING THE UEFA CUP IN LISBON,
VALERIY GASSAEV EARNED HIS CLUB THE HONOUR
OF BEING THE FIRST RUSSIAN SIDE TO WIN
A UEFA CLUB COMPETITION.**



Getty Images



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have just started with a professional life, including the contractual duties of a player, dealing with the owner/president, etc. All of this is new to our people and the mentality is different in the East. But I see things changing and gradually we are moving towards the same standards as those in the leading Western countries. However, I must admit that there is a difference today, although respect for the players and the coaches is going up and up.

13 • For you, what are the best and the worst aspects of football today?

For the last 100 years, football has been the most popular game and I love it. However, some developments have disappointed me. I do not agree with the current interpretation of the offside law because many are afraid and therefore play cautiously. This is a negative trend in the game. Also, football is so popular that it can create jealousy when some get too much money or too much fame. From a positive perspective, I will never forget the emotion of winning the UEFA Cup. Winning and collecting trophies is always a wonderful experience in football, and the game's appeal continues to grow throughout the world.

14 • What does the future hold for Russian football and for Valeriy Gassaev?

I think that the future of Russian football is bright and I see myself coming back to the national team one day – I would like to do something for my country. There is a boom in Russian football, with five new stadiums being built, and support coming from the government and the private sector. People now understand the role of football in our society, so we see growth, also at grassroots level. Many of the stadiums are full and the management around the clubs is improving. Our victory in the UEFA Cup even gave a boost to the activities of the football schools – the kids want to play and they know after our success that Russian clubs are capable of winning.

11 • What do you think are the most important qualities of a modern coach?

As a coach you need to be aware of the culture where the players come from and react accordingly. There needs to be a very good relationship between the coach and the player, no matter their place of origin. The coach needs to be a strong character and a good psychologist. I read a lot and I prepare myself to deal with the various psycho-

logical problems. When the players think that the coach is not a strong character, then everything can be lost, even if he has all the tactical knowledge and an outstanding ability to read the game.

12 • Do you see a difference between Eastern Europe and the West in the approach to the game?

I think there is a difference between the East and the West. We in Russia



**AN OPPORTUNITY FOR
THE COACHES TO SHARE THEIR
VIEWS WITH UEFA.**

MESSAGES FROM THE TECHNICAL AREA

THE TEAM PHOTO BEARS WITNESS TO THE STRENGTH IN DEPTH OF THE 9TH ELITE CLUB COACHES FORUM WHICH WAS STAGED AT UEFA'S HEADQUARTERS EARLY IN SEPTEMBER. EVEN THOUGH THERE WERE ILLUSTRIOUS ABSENTEES SUCH AS SIR ALEX FERGUSON (SADLY OBLIGED TO ATTEND A FUNERAL), CARLO ANCELOTTI (LEADING AC IN A MATCH IN KIEV TO COMMEMORATE FC DYNAMO'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY) AND FRANK RIJKAARD (FAMILY REASONS), THE LINE-UP WAS IMPRESSIVE AS IT GAVE UNPRECEDENTED GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE OF THE CONTINENT.

In any case, the participants would be the first to insist that the important thing was not the star-studded line-up but rather the views they expressed. Since the forum was launched in 1999, many of the coaches' proposals have been converted into reality and many of their current concerns will also be the object of high-level debate in forthcoming months – as will the proposed reforms to the UEFA Champions League and the UEFA Cup

which were outlined to the participants by UEFA's president, Michel Platini.

But, like technicians the world over, the favourite pastime at the forum was simply to 'talk football'. The result was a mixture of suggestions and observations which, due to lack of space to do full justice to them, will have to be summarised in more or less telegraphic form.

Among the main concerns was a topic which had also emerged as a talking point during the compilation of the technical report on the 2006/07 UEFA Champions League, namely...

The State of the Pitch

The coaches commented that, in a UEFA Champions League which is universally accepted as the benchmark for other club competitions, the importance of the playing surface is underrated. A fast and true surface can contribute to the match as a spectacle – which is what the public expects when they watch UEFA Champions League football. There is a risk that the stars may be eclipsed if the playing surface is not conducive to one-touch combinations and passes take an extra fraction of a second – or even a second touch – to control. In a competition where space is at a premium, the speed of combination play can be a critical factor and, as Arsène Wenger stated in the technical report and in Nyon, "if the pitch is not perfect, the athletes are rewarded, not the artists".

The Last Word

One of the trends to emerge strongly from the 2006/07 campaign was for



A star-studded team.

**JUANDE RAMOS,
TWO-TIME WINNER OF
THE UEFA CUP.**



UEFA-pjwoods.ch

technicians to play their cards in the closing stages of games where there are results to chase or to preserve. In the semi-finals and finals of last season's UEFA Champions League, 23 of the possible 30 substitutions were made (Sir Alex Ferguson didn't make any during the home leg against AC Milan). And the striking fact is that 18 of those changes were rung in the last 15 minutes. "This is when fatigue kicks in," 'Gica' Hagi commented, "and there are greater opportunities to cash in on lapses of concentration and individual errors." Ottmar Hitzfeld added "patience is a virtue and, in the crucial closing stages, factors like mental strength and will to win can be decisive." Arsène Wenger reflected "the speed of transition is one of the key factors and this can fade in the last ten minutes or so. In this respect it's understandable that coaches keep some cards up their sleeves and go for the result in the phase when fatigue is an important element"

Transition

Arsène's views on the speed and efficiency of transition from attack to defence and vice versa were endorsed by his colleagues, many of whom now employ the noun as a training ground command. José Mourinho's players, for instance, know that the shout 'transition' is a galvanising cue to change instantaneously from one mode to the other. Shouting, of course, is not enough. A good deal of training-ground work needs to focus on rehearsing positional reactions to ensure that transitions are made as efficiently and as rapidly as possible – and in accordance with attack-to-defence policies which may vary from aggressive forechecking to a retreat-and-counter philosophy.

Set-Play Specialists

Set plays accounted for just over a quarter of the 309 goals scored during the 2006/07 UEFA Champions League, with

just over 10% stemming from free kicks. However, the figures aren't an entirely accurate reflection of the full picture, as a higher percentage of the crucial goals in knockout ties came from free kicks, including Liverpool FC's 'equaliser' in the semi-final against Chelsea FC and AC Milan's opener in the final. Modern-day standards of 'espionage' work against the repeated use of rehearsed set plays with the result that, as 'Gica' Hagi remarked at the forum, each team needs to have at least one dead-ball specialist in the line-up – or, to put it another way, the lack of one creates an empty space in the side's attacking armoury.

Holding Patterns

At the forum, the technicians turned sympathetic ears towards Hugh Dallas when, representing UEFA's Referees Committee, he announced a tougher stance against the off-the-ball pushing and holding in the penalty box which has become almost 'standard practice' at set plays. As Roberto Mancini remarked, "it's not usually violent – it's just a bad habit". Unfortunately, the bad

habits are often the ones that are most difficult to kick (in the figurative sense, of course) and Hugh Dallas admitted that it could be a painful and controversial process. Indeed, there may have been controversy by the time these lines reach the printed page. Why?

Coaches are well aware that blocking techniques at set plays are as old as the hills. But there is a tendency for them to escalate into all-in wrestling. Roberto Mancini hit the nail on the head when he commented that, in Italy, at least seven out ten cases of wrestling result in a free kick for the defending team. Hugh Dallas added that it was time for referees to take a look in the mirror and ask themselves if they were 'taking the easy option' – in other words, awarding an innocuous free kick instead of a nocuous penalty.



PA Wire / PA Photos

Following a free kick, Filippo Inzaghi opens the scoring for AC Milan against Liverpool in the 2007 UEFA Champions League final.



OTTMAR HITZFELD, COACH OF BAYERN MUNICH.

The technicians welcomed the tougher stance – but with two provisos. Firstly, that it should be consistently adopted. In other words, punishment on a uniform ‘always or never’ basis is more acceptable than ‘sometimes’. Secondly, that the referees should persevere with the tougher criteria and not allow them to become diluted as the season wears on. “The guidelines are clear and have been publicised,” Hugh Dallas commented. “What we can’t predict is exactly how long it will take the players to get the message.” What role should the technicians play in the campaign to break holding patterns?

League and Cup

The coaches in Nyon acknowledged that there are significant variations between domestic league games and UEFA Champions League fixtures. Takis Lemonis highlighted the differences in transition speeds between the Greek championship and UEFA competitions, while the technicians operating in England’s Premier League commented that the use of professional fouls to abort counter-attacks is more consistently punished in Europe than in a domestic league where the emphasis tends to be on allowing the play to flow. In the UEFA Champions League, they remarked, it is easier to build from the back but, on the other hand, the challenge is then to break down physically well-prepared, tactically well-organised, well-coached opponents who set up a low defensive block.

As Ottmar Hitzfeld remarked, this means that technicians have to be prepared to change team structures in midstream and implement tactical variations. Gérard Houllier followed up by stressing the need for players who are strong enough in dribbling skills to emerge successfully from 1v1 situations and distort opposition structures. “At the same time,” he added, “you must

be prepared to distort your own structure from time to time, so as to add an element of unpredictability to your play. In a competition of such uniformly high standards, you have to be prepared to momentarily take risks.” Gérard was one of many participants who underlined the differences in parameters during a single campaign in the UEFA Champions League – a competition which, like the UEFA Cup in more recent times, features a fascinating combination of league and knockout formats. “In the group phase,” he said, “it’s a question of accumulating points, sometimes

against teams who, rightly or wrongly, consider themselves inferior and set up a solid defensive block. The knockout rounds, especially when you get to the last eight, tend to be more open games in which strength, power and resilience have greater relevance. A prime example of this was AC Milan’s performance in Munich, where they were able to defend under enormous pressure and still come away and score.” Arsène Wenger summed things up very nicely by adding, “the best sides in the UEFA Champions League are, quite simply, the ones who are good at everything.”

Fair Play = Fighting and Sanctions? Crazy!

Scenario: the red team is losing 1-0 with a quarter of an hour to play. The white team breaks fast down the right and, as their player cuts in, a defender slips to the ground near the byline. The ball is crossed; the shot flies narrowly wide. The red team takes the goal kick, which is intercepted in midfield. A through pass is immediately played into the inside-right channel. By this time, the red player who had fallen near the byline has made his way upfield – rather than going to the byline for treatment – and is sitting on the grass outside the penalty area. The white attacker, played onside by the seated opponent, runs through and scores.

As the referee points to the centre circle, the goalscorer is surrounded by red shirts and there are tussles involving players from both teams. Ill feeling extends beyond the final whistle and there are confrontations as the players make their way along the dressing-room tunnel. The incidents are recorded in the UEFA delegate’s report and sanctions are subsequently issued by UEFA’s Control and Disciplinary Body.

This is not one of those fictitious situations dreamt up to challenge students in an examination room. It is a real-case scenario from a match in one of last season’s UEFA competitions.



Hugh Dallas represented the referees at the forum.

ZICO'S EXPERIENCE IS NOW BENEFITING FENERBAHÇE.



The sequence of events obviously raises several questions. However, the relevance of the incident is not about the rights and wrongs of the particular situation. A fundamental issue has to be addressed.

The red team's irritation stemmed from a belief that the white team should have kicked the ball out of play. The white team's refusal to do so was based on the fact that the red team had restarted play and that the calls for the 'sporting gesture' had started only when the whites had intercepted and launched a counter-attack. The bottom line is that a so-called fair play gesture had become the cause of bad feeling, scuffling and incidents which obliged UEFA to mete out punishments. Crazy.

In a way, it was the straw that broke the camel's back. If a fair play gesture can be distorted and taken to so many negative extremes, the time has come to call a timeout and take stock of the situation.

As Hugh Dallas explained to the technicians at the Elite Coaches Forum, the issue is of considerable concern to match officials, who are becoming increasingly obliged to handle complicated situations where, in a way, control has been taken out of their hands. It is also of concern to the coaches who, from the technical area, can only look on as fair play gestures develop into tactical issues.

The problem is that the 'sporting gesture' has taken root among players and supporters – meaning that uprooting it entails an educational process. But the coaches at the forum agreed that the time has come to revert to the old situation, whereby the referee is the only one entitled to decide whether play is to be halted or not.

The Fourth Degree

Since the game was born, millions of words have been said and written about the relationships between technicians and referees.

Traditionally, the most publicised disagreements have stemmed from discrepancies with decisions – and it is a tradition that is not easy to break. But are we missing the point? In modern times, the technician's most relevant relationship on the field of play is not with the referee but with the fourth official. And with Hugh Dallas listening attentively at the Elite Coaches Forum, the participants felt it was an ideal moment to address an issue which, in fairness, need not be an issue at all.

It has to be admitted that, for 90 minutes, it's a professional relationship where human qualities have their importance. Cultural differences can play a part; so can language limitations. If the fourth official's approach is to shout "back!" and point a finger towards the dug-out, it might be understandable for the coach to feel that this is how he trains his dog. More than one has admitted to feeling "hounded and humiliated" by an overzealous fourth official. Hugh Dallas agreed that the brief of the fourth official was not to 'police' the technical area but the forum also highlighted a certain lack of consistency with regard to sitting/standing/coaching/patrolling the technical area, with Zico – the Brazilian coach of Turkish club Fenerbahçe SK – also highlighting the difficulties of needing to transmit instructions via an interpreter.

The net result was a call for clear guidelines – and for them to be applied as politely as possible!



Clear guidelines would improve relations between the coach and the fourth official.

PA Wire/PA Photos



**UEFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER
PER OMDAL FROM NORWAY.**

IN SEARCH OF THE PERFECT TRAINING SESSION

“IF I WAS ASKED TO FIND ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE ONE OF THE MAIN DIFFERENCES I HAVE NOTICED IN 25 YEARS OF COACHING,” GÉRARD HOULLIER REMARKED AT THIS YEAR’S ELITE CLUB COACHES FORUM, “THE WORD WOULD PROBABLY BE ‘WHY’? TODAY’S PLAYERS WANT TO KNOW THE REASONS BEHIND EACH SESSION ON THE TRAINING GROUND – AND, OF COURSE, YOU HAVE TO BE READY TO GIVE THEM A GOOD ANSWER.”

At today’s multilingual professional club, this can become even more demanding – which is why some technicians, ‘Takis’ Lemonis among them, now open the proceedings with an explanatory talk, either on the training pitch or in the dressing room. Pragmatism apart, the coaches at the forum emphasised that modern footballers tend to be top-level students of the game and, in order to attain maximum levels of motivation, need to feel involved and, to a degree, responsible for the shape of training exercises. José Mourinho voiced the opinion of many coaches when he said he encourages feedback from his players and prefers to implement

a ‘guided discovery’ strategy on the training ground. “Sometimes an exercise starts in one way and finishes in a totally different way,” he commented.

Everybody has his or her *modus operandi* but the clear message was that the days of “just do what I say” are past history.

It was a theme which cropped up again at the UEFA Coach Education Symposium in London, attended by representatives from all 53 member associations and, in addition, colleagues from FIFA and the other confederations. There was a clear consensus that, in today’s

dressing-room climate, the technician is required to devise training exercises which are motivating, interesting and totally relevant to matchplay.

“The important thing is to start with clear objectives that you can explain to the players,” José Mourinho commented in Nyon. “And then you design the exercise to attain those objectives. But you want input from the players and, like matches, exercises can start in one way and end in a different way. But everything must be game-related. The game is the end, so it should also be the beginning.”

“I use a global method,” he told Andy Roxburgh during a recent interview. “I use direct methods when preparing our organisation but I also use guided discovery where I create the practice, dictate the aim and then invite the players to come up with different solutions. My practices are aimed at developing an aspect of my team’s play – they are specific for my style of football. Sometimes I decide I won’t use a certain practice again because I am sure I can devise a better one with this specific outcome in mind.”

During his time at Chelsea FC, José enjoyed the luxury of brand-new training facilities at Cobham – and one of the features he regarded as basic was the ability to conduct training sessions



Howard Wilkinson, Sir Trevor Brooking, Gérard Houllier and Andy Roxburgh at the London press conference.

**UEFA VICE-PRESIDENT, GEOFFREY THOMPSON,
CHAIRMAN OF THE FA.**



on two adjacent pitches. "This allows you to prepare exercises in advance without having to stop working to move cones or change goals. Players can simply switch from one pitch to the other, taking some fluid in the meantime, and that allows you to conduct a 95-minute session with match-like intensity. That has a big influence on the players' levels of concentration."

Some would argue that a peak-of-the-pyramid club like Chelsea are not the perfect example in that many of the players have been acquired rather than developed. Zico, who was poised to make his UEFA Champions League debut with Fenerbahçe SK, admitted that his training programme focuses as much on the development of the individual as on the construction of a winning team. "It's important to go back regularly to basics and to make the player feel responsible for his actions," he said. Claude Puel endorsed his viewpoint. "When you have a young squad like we have at Lille," he explained, "there is a need to develop players. Training therefore becomes an educational process as well as the means of preparing for a specific game. This is why competing in the Champions League was important. It helped us to raise standards."

"I think this is why many of us complain that we don't have enough time," FC Porto's Jesualdo Ferreira added. "Today's fixture list barely leaves us enough training time to prepare for matches, let alone work on player development. In my average week, the emphasis is firmly on team tactical work rather than anything else."

"The objectives are usually tactical variations for a specific game," Ottmar Hitzfeld agreed. "If you have time, you work on attacking and defensive patterns, passing options and transition. And to make training sessions successful, you need a fitness trainer who has hundreds and thousands of exercises!"

The role of the fitness coach was a theme which cropped up again in London. "Top-level football is so important," Gérard Houllier commented with a smile, "that we have to be careful about how much we leave to the fitness coach..."

For Gérard, the training ground is one of the places where the personality of the coach – as well as his methods – become highly relevant. "Today's players are usually top-level students of the game. They want to ask questions about what happens when we meet opponents who do this or do that. And the training ground is where the coach's philosophy and enthusiasm are passed on to the players."

At the symposium in London, Gérard stressed the importance of building your entire season as a coherent training project aimed at raising the level of competence, building confidence and mutual trust among the players and establishing a culture of constant progress and improvement. Both he

and Ottmar Hitzfeld also highlighted the need for training sessions to combine fun and efficiency.

But what is efficiency? Is it simply measured by the next result? These are two of the many questions posed in Nyon by Arsène Wenger, a restless mind if ever there was one. "It's correct to say that we have limited time in comparison with other sports. So what is the most efficient way of using, for example, a one-hour session? Sometimes I think that a training session has been good. But that's a subjective assessment. How can we objectively measure the effectiveness of a session? What is the best way for us, as coaches, to work on aspects such as vision or reading the game? I still cannot unravel the mystery of exactly what makes a player suddenly improve and develop."

Sir Alex Ferguson maintains "a top coach needs an imagination – we all want to be the coach that created the perfect goal". Arsène would surely love to be the coach who created the perfect training session...



Putting the theory into practice.

Photos: Sportsfile



Sportsfile

A SUCCESSFUL SUMMER FOR JUAN SANTISTEBAN, WHO WON THE EUROPEAN U17 AND U19 TITLES WITH SPAIN.

JUAN, TWO, THREE

IN THE OLD DAYS, AN ODD-NUMBERED SUMMER WAS A GOOD CHANCE TO TAKE A BREATHER. BUT NOT ANY MORE – TO THE EXTENT THAT SOME COACHING STAFFS WERE STRETCHED TO THE LIMIT.

The Spanish national association, for instance, had to cope with the highly agreeable problem of having teams at the Under-17, Under-19 and Women's Under-19 European Championship finals along with the FIFA Under-20 and Under-17 World Cups. The workload meant that, with Ginés Meléndez away in Canada with the Under-20s, Juan Santisteban took the Under-19s to Austria a couple of months after leading the Under-17s to victory in Belgium. He did Ginés proud by completing an age-limit 'double' which had only previously been achieved by the Republic of Ireland's Brian Kerr in 1998, back in the Under-16/Under-18 days. Juan then took the Under-17s to Korea and reached his third final in four months, only to be beaten in a penalty shoot-out by Nigeria. Hats off to Juan and to the Spanish federation for a magnificent achievement – especially as Juan, after the final in Korea, announced his intention to retire at the tender age of 70.

Congratulations on a magnificent final season, Juan. You will be missed.

The summer of European football is now on permanent record in the technical reports published – in English, French and German – after the UEFA Champions League, European Under-21, European Under-19, European Under-17 and European Women's Under-19 finals played during a spell of hectic activity. As usual, The Technician is happy to salute the coaches who have stepped on to the international podium in recent months:

CLUB COMPETITIONS

UEFA Champions League

in Athens
AC Milan v Liverpool FC 2-1
Champion: Carlo Ancelotti
Runner-up: Rafael Benítez

UEFA Cup

in Glasgow
Sevilla FC v RCD Espanyol 2-2
(3-1 in penalty shoot-out)
Champion: Juande Ramos
Runner-up: Ernesto Valverde

UEFA Super Cup

in Monaco
AC Milan – Sevilla FC 3-1
Champion: Carlo Ancelotti
Runner-up: Juande Ramos

UEFA Women's Cup

in Umeå, Sweden, and Borehamwood, England
Arsenal LFC v Umeå IK 1-0 / 0-0
Champion: Vic Akers
Runner-up: Andrée Jeglertz

UEFA Futsal Cup

in Murcia, Spain
MFK Dinamo Moskva v Boomerang Interviu 2-1
Champion: Yury Rudnev
Runner-up: Jesús Candelas

NATIONAL TEAM COMPETITIONS

European Under-21 Championship

in the Netherlands
Netherlands v Serbia 4-1
Champion: Foppe de Haan
Runner-up: Miroslav Djukic

European Under-19 Championship

in Austria
Spain v Greece 1-0
Champion: Juan Santisteban
Runner-up: Nikolaos Nioplias

European Under-17 Championship

in Belgium
Spain v England 1-0
Champion: Juan Santisteban
Runner-up: John Peacock

FIFA Under-20 World Cup

in Canada
Argentina v Czech Republic 2-1
Champion: Hugo Tocalli
Runner-up: Miroslav Soukup

FIFA Under-17 World Cup

in Korea Republic
Nigeria v Spain 0-0 (3-0 in penalty shoot-out)
Champion: Yemi Tella
Runner-up: Juan Santisteban

European Women's Under-19 Championship

in Iceland
Germany v England 2-0 (after extra time)
Champion: Maren Meinert
Runner-up: 'Mo' Marley

FIFA Women's World Cup

in China
Germany v Brazil 2-0
Champion: Silvia Neid
Runner-up: Jorge Barcellos

UEFA Regions' Cup

in Bulgaria
South-East Region Bulgaria – Dolnoslaski
ZPN 1-2 (after extra time)
Champion: Janusz Kudyba
Runner-up: Angel Stankov



Messinis/AFP/Getty Images

Carlo Ancelotti celebrates AC Milan's UEFA Champions League victory.

**ON COMPLETION OF THE QUALIFIERS,
THE EURO 2008 FINAL ROUND DRAW TAKES PLACE
IN LUCERNE ON 2 DECEMBER.**



TRAINING ROUTINE



BY FOPPE DE HAAN

Under-21 Coach / Youth Football Technical Coordinator, KNVB

AND REMY REYNIERSE

Assistant Under-21 Coach, KNVB



Aim

To develop players' ability (midfielders) to support the striker after a pass (long ball).

Rules

The training is divided into two parts.

First part:

- 3 teams of 3 players (9 players in total).
- Blue versus red and yellow to start.
- This part of the game will take place in an area of 20 x 10 metres divided into two squares of 10 x 10 metres each.
- Both teams play from square to square.
- Each player can only touch the ball once.
- The player is only allowed to run in the other square when the ball is played to the striker.
- Teams change roles after a rest period of one minute.

Second part:

- 3 teams of 3 players and 2 goalkeepers (11 players in total).
- The team in possession can use the yellow players for support – one beside each goal and one in midfield.
- This part of the training will be situated in an area between the touchline and the halfway line. The exact size of the field depends on the requested intensity.
- Each player can only touch the ball once.
- Teams change roles after a rest period of one minute.

Time

First part:

- About 20 minutes overall. 4 or 5 sessions of 3-4 minutes with 1 minute rest (depending on the fitness of the players). The players train with heart rate monitors.

Second part:

- About 20 minutes overall with the same time sequence.

Development

- Positioning of the players in a 5 against 3 situation in one square.
- Choosing the right moment to play the ball to the other square.
- Running action from midfielders.
- Positioning of the player receiving the ball.
- Keeping possession of the ball.

AGENDA

2007

November 5

Medical Committee (Nyon)

November 9

Development and Technical Assistance Committee (Nyon)

November 16 – 25

5th European Futsal Championship (Portugal)

November 27

3rd UEFA Elite Club Youth Coaches Forum (Cannes)

November 27 – 29

9th UEFA Elite Youth Football Conference (Cannes)

December 2

EURO 2008 final round draw (Lucerne)

December 11

3rd UEFA Elite Women's Coaches Forum (Nyon)

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