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MIDFIELD DYNAMITE

ATTACK LIKE CHELSEA'S THREE AMIGOS

SOCCER SURGERY

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KNOW YOUR STYLE OF COACHING

HOW TO CAUSE A CUP UPSET

FANTASTIC TRAINING SESSIONS



Making A Difference



Soccer Coach Weekly Issue 303



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Touchlingles

A couple of seasons ago I was asked to take over a team that the club said were underachieving - they wanted the side to get more success than they were having. So I went along to watch them.

It seemed that for the first half of matches they were very successful and were often winning at half-time, but they always seemed to capitulate in the second half. I found it slightly puzzling that it happened so often, but I soon realised exactly why.

The team had a player who was an outstanding defender. He read the game well and was the type of footballer anyone would want in their team - commanding, fearless, always in the right place at the right time and joined in with attacks. But this last point was the reason for the team's second-half horrors.

It transpired this young man had come to a deal with the old manager to play in defence for one half but attack for the second. With the player gone from defence the team were soon in trouble - and I cant for the life of me think why he wanted to play up front. He rarely saw the ball, and when he did it was usually from a panic clearance that he struggled to control. As his frustrations got the better of him, the coach took him off to calm him down.

I'm all for players moving around in different positions, but this just wasn't working and the team were throwing



"Sometimes it takes another pair of eyes to see where the coach is falling down"

away excellent first-half performances to accommodate this deal.

I spoke to the player and his parents and I gave them an idea about what I wanted. I saw him as a fantastic centre half running the game from defence, but I also accepted that he should get the chance to play in attack. However, rather than change at half-time, I explained that I would target games when he was most needed in defence, and for other games he could move up the pitch, allowing his team-mates to gain valuable experience at the back.

As a result, he was still getting to play up front but we were getting full games out of him playing in defence. I also made him captain, which gave him a

huge boost. Having him at the back for full games made a huge difference to the next few games and the team began to be much more successful, built on the shoulders of a great player who excelled at the fundamentals of defending.

The manager had been doing the right things but he needed to think more about the problems he was having and come up with a solution like mine. Sometimes it takes another pair of eyes to see where a coach is falling down and a simple solution will often fix it.



In this issue...

ONE TOUCH PLAY

Play like Chelsea's 'Three Amigos' - Mata, Oscar and Hazard

MIDFIELD DYNAMITE

Test your team with this exciting and fast-moving passing game

TRIANGLES

An exercise to help turn your midfield into an attacking machine

BOUNCE & REACT

A warm-up to get your players competing for the ball

CAUSE A CUP UPSET Have your players got what it takes to pull off a cup shock?

THE FAST BREAK

Teach players how to make a quick break and take a shock lead

ONE-NIL UP...

Make your players set their own tactics to pull off a surprise cup win

WORLD OF COACHING Stories from the wonderful world of soccer coaching

SOCCER SURGERY Your problems solved,

including advice on recommending boots to your players

THE BIG DEBATE Do you drop your teenage players for smoking - even if it means not fulfilling a fixture?

TIP OF THE WEEK

Know Your Coaching Style

Don't try to be something you're not. If you need a whistle to get attention, use it. Don't think you have to behave like Alex Ferguson and don't worry about what parents think if you keep quiet when the team is losing or not playing well.







Win The Game In Midfield

Teach your players how to receive the ball and open up the opposition with a well-crafted pass, just like Chelsea's 'Three Amigos' - Oscar, Mata and Hazard

hatever the colour of their replica shirts, football fans across the country have been impressed this season with the eye-catching midfield play of Chelsea's 'Three Amigos': Juan Mata, Oscar and Eden Hazard. Similarly, coaches at every level have been dreaming of what it would be like to have such a creative midfield trio at their disposal every weekend.

Sometimes it can take just a couple of new players to shake things up. It certainly worked for Chelsea - the arrival of Eden Hazard and Oscar during the summer has given Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich a priceless glimpse of the kind of stylish, attacking football he's always desired.

When linked with Juan Mata, the two new signings have helped form a devastating midfield trio full of flicks and invention, one capable of delivering the billionaire owner's ambition of beautiful football to Stamford Bridge.

It has been effective football too, as the three players have shown

themselves to be adept at unlocking the tightest of defences. Built on a wonderful first touch and on their effective one and two touch play, these players can change the tempo of the flattest of games in just seconds, hitting a series of rapid passes to take Chelsea through on goal in double-quick time. This is what makes them so destructive.

Their inventive combination play and passing vision has resulted in the 'Three Amigos' becoming a creative force to be reckoned with, while boosting Mata to the top of the division's assists table. They're not just providers though and have weighed in with their own share of the goals, with all three scoring almost as freely as they provide.

It seems the 'Three Amigos' have created a winning formula that has even impressed former Chelsea boss. André Villas-Boas. "The fluidity they have with those three players behind Fernando [Torres] is tremendous." he explained when asked how to counter their talents earlier this season.

How great would it be if your own midfield players could blow away the opposition in the same manner as this dynamite trio? We've got a series of drills on the following pages that will help your team to take on something of this attacking style.

Try these exercises and teach your players to work on their use of space, their awareness of pressure and their movement, while showing them how to receive and release the ball.

Words by: Harry Gilbert **Activities by:** David Clarke

"These are players who can beat their man. If you press or stay low, these are players who can beat these kinds of systems. They are playing at a tremendous level and to counter them is

- Spurs coach André Villas-Boas on trying to combat the

extremely difficult"

Midfield Dynamite

If you want your players to create goal scoring chances like the Three Amigos do at Chelsea, try this exciting and fast-moving game and you'll soon see the benefits

WHY USE IT

A session aimed at getting players to create and utilise space in midfield. With quick passing and movement, it should help open up the opposition and make goal scoring chances.

SET UP

Create a playing area 40x20 yards, with two goals back to back across the middle, but just one goalkeeper. We're using eight players and a keeper for this session, plus a server who can be the coach. You need bibs, cones, balls and two small goals.

HOW TO PLAY

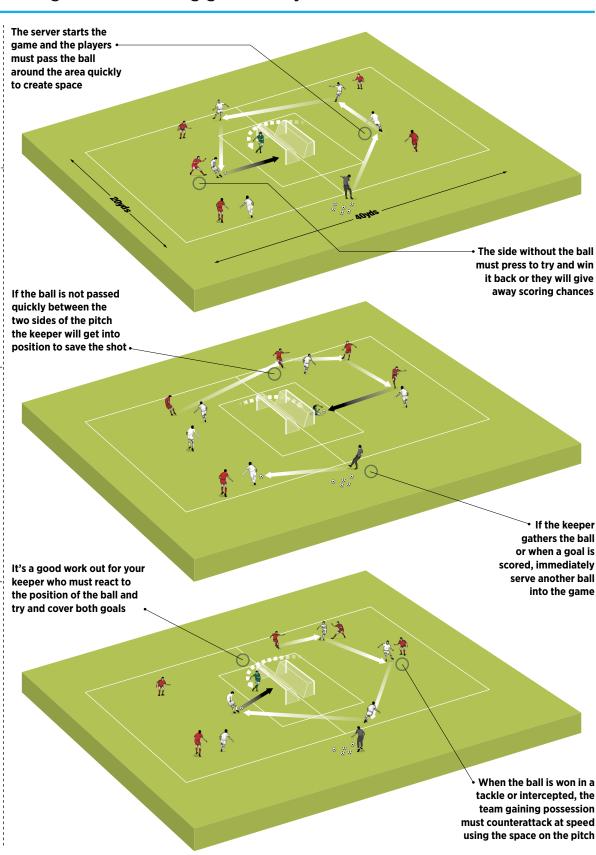
Start by serving a ball into the game. Players can score in either of the two back-to-back goals. If the keeper gains possession or the ball leaves the area, serve a new ball in. The keeper puts any balls he gathers into the net behind him. When a goal is scored, immediately serve another ball into the game.

TECHNIQUE

Creating space in a match situation with fast and accurate passing will open up the room for midfielders to exploit. In this game a quick switch of play allows players to take advantage of one of the goals being unguarded – they must be aware of the position of the keeper at all times.

Player movement

Ball movement



Run with ball

Triangles

Use this session to turn your midfielders into a well-oiled attacking machine and teach them the benefits of bringing strikers into the game with some exciting one touch play

WHY USE IT

A session aimed at getting midfielders to play off each other in order to bring attackers into the game and provide support in attack, taking shooting chances when they are created. It also sets up good opportunities to coach counterattacking from midfield.

SET UP

Mark out a tight playing area 30x15 yards with two mini goals at both ends of the area. We're using six players in the session and you will need balls, bibs and cones, plus the four mini goals.

HOW TO PLAY

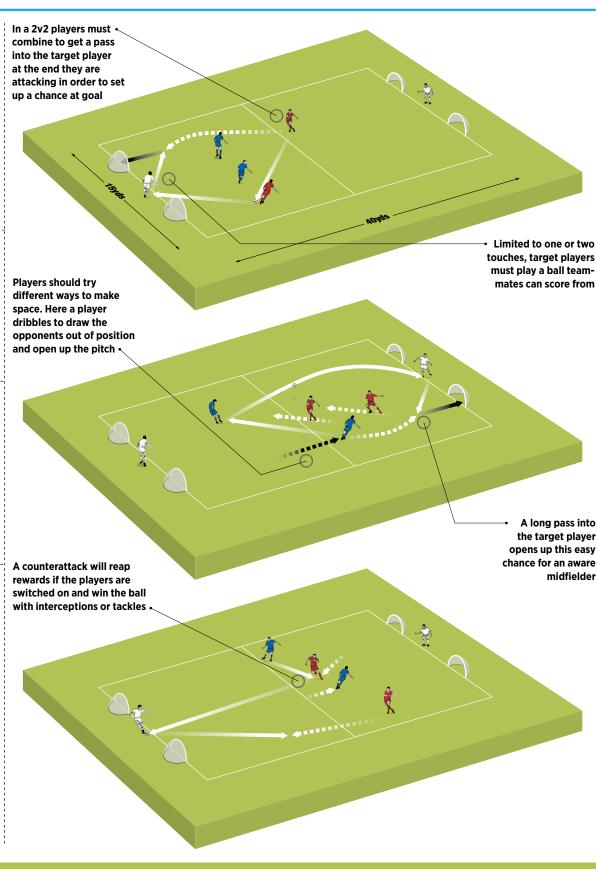
Play a 2v2 game with a target player at each end of the pitch positioned between the two goals. The midfielders attack the opposition goals but the attack must involve the target player at the attacking end of the pitch.

TECHNIQUE

One of the most attacking football formations uses a three-man midfield behind three attackers. This session shows midfielders how to make the most of the midfield by playing off each other to set up attacks and make use of counterattacks.

Player movement

Ball movement



Run with ball

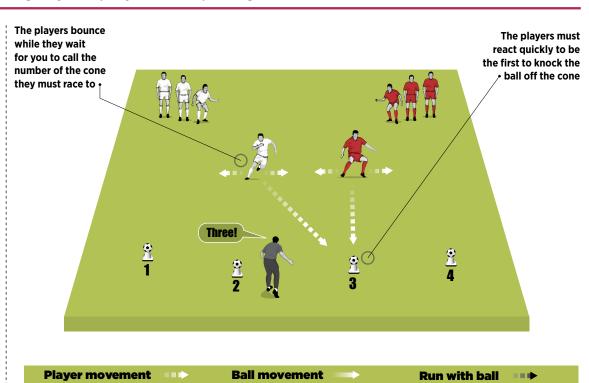
Bounce & React

Use this warm-up to get your players competing for the ball in a 1v1 situation

HOW TO PLAY

This is a great physical warmup that works on your players' speed, strength and balance.

- > Line up four cones and place a ball on the top each one.
- > Get the players in pairs. Each pair in turn has to bounce around in random directions.
- > Call out a number. The players must try to be the first to knock the ball off the relevant cone.
- > The players can use their bodies and arms to hold each other off but you must penalise any fouls.
- > Make sure you match players for both ability and size.





Pull Off A Cup Shock

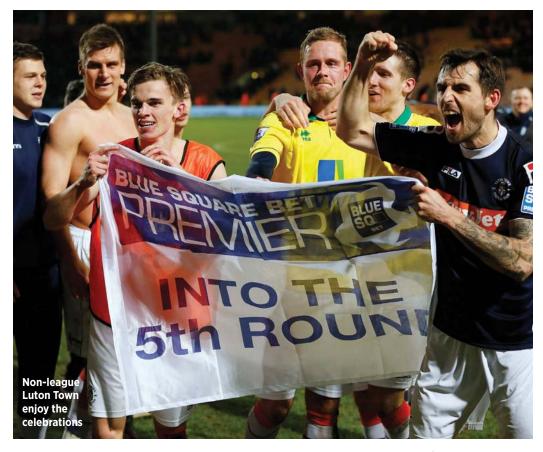
As the results of the last round of the FA Cup proved, a team should always try and hang on for a result because anything can happen when it comes to knockout football

he last round of the FA Cup reminded soccer coaches that when it comes to the sudden death nature of knockout football. anything is possible - no matter the size and reputation of the club you are playing. On a weekend of shocks that saw Liverpool slain by League One side Oldham and Milton Keynes of League Two beating QPR, the biggest upset of all came when Luton Town defeated Norwich City.

Beating the team 85 places above them in the football pyramid, Luton became the first non-league club to knock a top-flight side out of the FA Cup since Sutton United beat Coventry in 1989. And they did it in classic giant-killing style too, scoring late with a lightning fast counterattacking goal from Scott Rendell and then hanging on for the final ten minutes. Norwich pumped the ball desperately into the Luton box in search of an equaliser, but the Hatters stood firm and pulled off a glorious result.

As cup upsets don't just occur in the professional game, it's important for coaches to make players understand that a football team should never be intimidated by the reputation of the opposition. Every coach has faced bigger and stronger sides in the cup at some point - and that means there's always the opportunity for some giant killing, even in grassroots football.

As long as your players have the



ability to play as a strong unit, a backsto-the-wall display can pay dividends, even against a side that the form book rates as much better. If your players are able to soak up the pressure and hang on without conceding a goal, sooner or later the attacking side

will get frustrated and overstretch themselves going forward. That will leave your team the opportunity to snatch a surprise breakaway goal.

Obviously, it's important to remember that although cup giant killing may bring one moment of football ecstasy and fill your players with some much needed confidence. it isn't any kind of substitute for the graft needed on the training ground to build a team of consistent quality. Just ask Oldham manager Paul Dickov. who left his role at the club just six days after pulling off that amazing defeat of Liverpool last month.

However, if you approach a cup game with the right attitude, pulling off an upset can also be a tremendous reward for lots of hard work spent improving your team.

On the following pages we have two exercises, one to help you score a classic counterattacking goal and one to assist your players in choosing the right tactics to employ against a stronger side. Try them out and see if your team can cause a cup upset!

Words by: Harry Gilbert Activities by: Michael Beale & David Clarke

5 GREAT FA CUP SHOCKS

> Oxford United 3-1 Blackburn Rovers 1964: It was only Fourth Division Oxford's second season in the Football League when captain Ron Atkinson led them to victory over a club sitting second in the top flight.

> Colchester 3-1 Leeds United

1971: Don Revie fielded all of Leeds United's international stars but they were still soundly beaten by the ageing team of Fourth Division Colchester.

> Hereford 2-1 Newcastle United

1972: In one of the most famous cup shocks, non-league Hereford beat topflight Newcastle thanks to cracking goals from Ronnie Radford and Ricky George.



> Sutton United 2-1 Coventry City

1989: With victory over Coventry, Sutton (pictured above) were the last nonleague side to beat a top-flight team in the FA Cup until Luton's win this year.

> Wrexham 2-1 Arsenal

1992: Fourth Division Wrexham turned over the reigning champions with a memorable equaliser from Mickey Thomas and a winner from Steve Watkins.

The Fast Break

It's O-O in the cup and your team is holding on for dear life. Suddenly your players make a quick break out of defence and set up a chance to take a shock lead...

WHY USE IT

Perfect to create a cup shock, this game improves quick attacking and combination play. The attackers must break forward in order to utilise the extra player and create a chance to score.

SET UP

Mark out an area of 50x30 yards split into two sections. You need at least six players for the session – we have used 13 players. You will need balls, bibs, cones and a goal.

HOW TO PLAY

Start by playing the ball to the defenders. They pass back into the three attackers, who run forward creating a 3v2 overload. The first three attackers take on two defenders. Once that ball has been played, the second wave of attackers takes on two new defenders from the sidelines. Each attack has a different set of attackers and defenders until six balls are used up. Then attackers swap with defenders.

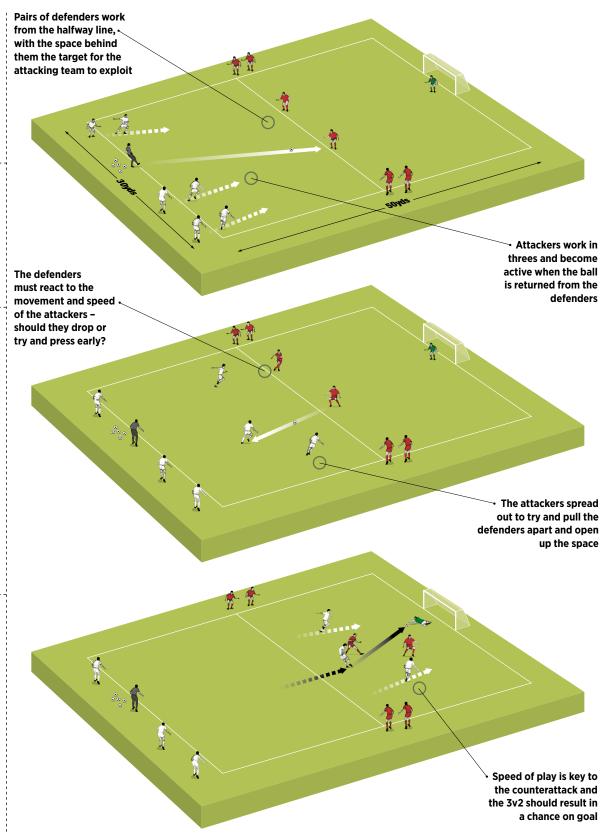
TECHNIQUE

Counterattacking is a great way for defending teams to break out of their own half, releasing the pressure on the defenders and creating chances to score and kill a game off. Often in cup games teams will defend deep against a better team, then try and counter when they win the ball.

Activity by: Michael Beale

Player movement

Ball movement



Run with ball

One-Nil Up, Two Men Down

Your team is 1-0 up in the cup but your opponents have a two-man advantage. A game to teach each team the importance of setting out the tactics to pull off a cup shocker!

WHY USE IT

This is a great scenario to challenge your players. One team is 1-0 up but loses a man and the other team is 1-0 down and you've given them the extra man, so they have a two-man overload. How will the two teams react to the situation?

SET UP

Mark out a playing area of 50x30 yards but you should adjust the size depending on the number of players you use. We're using 12 players including keepers. You need balls, bibs, cones and goals.

HOW TO PLAY

Start the game as a 6v6 with normal rules. After a few minutes stop the game and tell one team they are now winning 1-0. The losing team is trailing 1-0 but they get a player from the winning team. Tell them there is 10 minutes left of the sudden death cup game and give them a couple of minutes to sort out their own tactics.

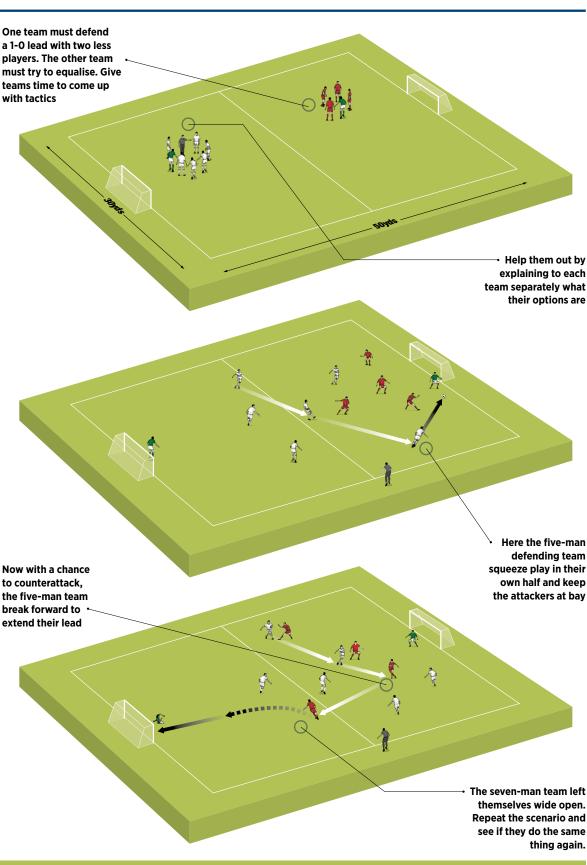
TECHNIQUE

A great exercise to see how the teams sort themselves out. Will the winning team try and defend with two men less or will they try and kill the game off on the counterattack?

Activity by: David Clarke

Player movement

Ball movement



Run with ball

TOUCHLINE **TWEETS**

We asked you to name the best coach in world soccer and your answers came tweeting in...

- > "Sir Alex. Wouldn't have lasted at the greatest club in the world if he wasn't the best." Laurence Dooley @nandoo1974
- > "Japan ladies manager Norio Sasaki. Inspirational. seems a great motivator and encourages great passing football." Pretty Jay @Pretty_Jay_4
- > "Mourinho tactically astute and good with press, plus very good man manager. His players seem to love him." Spokescycles @Spokescycles
- > "Sir Alex for his longevity, ability to change styles and management of players." Steve Rollins @Softtop67
- > "Best coach in world football? Dave Jones at #swfc. Just kidding. I don't think there are many that rival Alex Ferguson." Wes Key @wesleykey
- > "David Moves vear after year with less money than contemporaries he keeps Everton challenging for European places."

Andrew Hill @andrewhill8

- "Mourinho does it all. Top training, tactics, man management and can manipulate media." Gary Curneen @GaryCurneen
- "Sir Alex Ferguson, for his success, motivational qualities and commitment to youth." Steward Coggin @StewartCoggin



> "My friend told me a coach said 'don't play it out wide, the goal's not there, get it up the field into the box'. I wish I was lying."

DPY@JustD_11 **AC Paulista Lead Development Coach**

A Victory For Sportsmanship

At a recent tournament in Arizona, a girl's high school soccer coach made a controversial decision to teach his team a lesson about sportsmanship.

With Mountain View High leading Marcos de Niza 6-0 in the first 15 minutes, rather than let his team rack up a mammoth score and humiliate their opponents, coach Brian Ronan ordered his players to keep possession: two touches maximum, he instructed, and at least 10 passes before attempting to shoot.

What made this decision noteworthy was that Mountain View needed to win 16-0 to make it through to semi-finals of the Tempe Diablos Soccer Tournament. As their opponents had scored just once all season and had conceded 25 goals in the two previous games, it seemed like an achievable result. However, the Mountain View coach decided to bring sportsmanship into the equation.

"We could have just tried to put the ball in the net as many times as possible but we feel strongly about competing with honour and integrity," said Ronan. "We play teams each season that we are able to beat soundly by 20 to nothing but we never attempt to run up the score. We choose to approach games like these as an opportunity to get better at aspects of the game that do not involve putting the ball in the back of the net.

"Once it becomes obvious the other



team cannot stop us from making runs at goal, then we have to find a different way to challenge ourselves," he explains. "Sometimes it's by having to score after connecting 20 passes in a row, or scoring only from a cross or from a set piece.

"The girls get upset at times because their friends on other teams are allowed to score eight or nine goals, but we try to get them to understand that goals scored that easily aren't really earned the same as if it was against truly competitive opponents.

"It's not the number of goals you score - it's how you score them and when that's important. And we decided to stick to our philosophy

even though it cost us our first semifinal berth in four years."

The main beneficiaries of this decision were Corona del Sol High, who progressed to the next round of the competition with a superior goal difference. Their coach, Matt Smith, isn't certain what he would done if faced with the same dilemma.

"I can't say that if I was in Brian's situation that I would have done the same," he said. "Maybe, but probably not. I'm not in this to destroy teams but I am in it for my team and if I thought them advancing would benefit us, I probably would have gone for it, so I give Brian and the girls a ton of credit."

Pull Your Socks Down, Lads!

Rather than humiliate teams when we were already well in front, I used to make my players pull the sock 'half down' on their strongest foot and instruct them they could only shoot/ pass with the pulled up sock. If the other team got within two goals of our score I could shout "come on lads, pull your socks up". Nobody noticed for two years! Parents didn't realise I'd turn the game into a competitive practice session using only each player's weaker foot. Also, the opposing team thought they were having a better half and we haven't been disrespectful to them. Perfect. Phil Evans, Failsworth Dynamos FC

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Training sessions are for the coaches, the games are for the players"

- Former Ajax youth coach Bob de Klerk

Some Apology!

The team I coach played a game earlier this season where the behaviour of one of our opponents was truly appalling and the referee didn't do anything to bring the lad into line. The verbal and physical abuse he inflicted on our team was so bad that at half-time his coach brought him over to apologize. He shook hands with the player from our team who was marking him and as instructed he said sorry. But while he was apologizing he held our player's hand in a vice-like grip and refused to let go. It was a nice gesture from the coach but I'm not certain that the player learned his lesson.

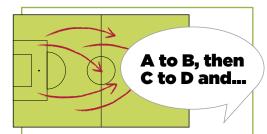
AP Phillips, Honington Foxes



Why not share your touchline tales from the world of soccer coaching. Email editor@soccercoachweekly.net or Tweet @SoccerCoachWeek

Answering Your Problems

THIS WEEK: Advice for a coach not used to public speaking and an expert opinion on what boots to recommend to your players



My club asked me to present some football training plans at an awards evening. I'm terrified. How best can I go about this? "

I always tell people to approach something like this with a 'team' mindset. Yes, you'll be the one giving the speech, but consider for a second who you are addressing and why they are there. In short, you are all passionate devotees of the game of soccer, you all have commitment to the sport and you all want to share and enjoy each other's experiences. So go in with the mindset that you are all in it together.

Reinforce this by reaching out to the audience within the first couple of sentences by asking for answers to questions. And break the ice by saying something funny.

You might want to visit the venue beforehand to aid your preparation. Most people don't find this necessary but preparing well can be something as simple as going with content that's innovative or exciting. That will spike your audience's interest. And let the tools that you use (an overhead projector, for instance) do the work for you - deflect attention away from yourself and onto the screen.

As a final thought, remember that perception is often worse than reality. People dread speaking in public until the second they stand up. That's when adrenalin takes over, the 'performance' begins, and they actually enjoy the experience, particularly if, like you, they are imparting expertise and knowledge. Good luck - you will be fine.

Answered by Susan Smith, a public speaking instructor from Chicago



🔼 纤 A couple of my Under-8s have asked for advice on which boots they should buy. Is it safe to assume you get what you pay for? ""

Not exactly. The problem with boots and kids is that they combine two conflicting elements. On one hand, the positive - kids wanting to get exercise, learning about teamwork, enjoying a great project that will last for years. On the other hand - peer pressure beyond belief. And peer pressure, for parents at least, often ends in one thing, and that's expense!

Tell players (and parents) that rather than spending a lot of money on a pair of boots, it's more sensible to ensure they pick up a boot that is appropriate for their game. So blades on kids, for instance, are generally considered unnecessary and dangerous. They can harm an opponent (through sliding) or even the player wearing the boot should the blade get caught in bumpy or muddy turf.

Around 70 per cent of boots possess

interchangeable studs that allow for some flexibility depending upon the playing surface, while moulded boots are for firmer, harder surfaces and offer more comfort.

That information should be the main focus for players, not whether they're buying a top-ofthe-range pair or something a little cheaper. But whilst on the subject of price, it's worth noting that any pair of boots above mid-range price (£30) should comfortably do a job, and maybe below that level will still protect players.

Kids will undoubtedly want to emulate their heroes, but what parent is going to spend a three-figure sum on a boot and really expect their son to play like Cristiano Ronaldo?

Answered by Carl Austin, an FA Level 2 coach and footwear retail expert from Cardiff

GET YOUR SOCCER PROBLEMS SOLVED

If you have a coaching problem or a training dilemma that you want the experts at Soccer Surgery to cure, send your queries to Soccer Coach Weekly... editor@soccercoachweekly.net

Do You Drop Your **Players For Smoking?**

THIS WEEK'S DEBATE: You warned your Under-16s that anyone caught smoking would lose their place on the team. Six players ignored the warning - should you remove them even if it means not fulfilling a fixture?

YES, DROP THEM



Steve Phythian Patcham Under-12s

"If you don't drop them it gives the players the impression that rules aren't important and if they flout them now, they will be able to flout them again in future'

This is a very difficult situation but I strongly believe that you simply have to enforce the rules you imposed.

True, the consequences of forfeiting the match will be a loss of points or progression to the next round of a cup, almost certainly a financial fine from the league and, most importantly, the loss of a development opportunity for the players. But if you don't enforce the sanction it gives the players the impression that the rules aren't that important and if they flout them now, they will be able to flout them again in future?

You must, of course, explain your rationale, making reference to the previously imposed rules. Explain the reasons they were created and, in order to manage the situation, I would recommend speaking to the players on

an individual basis at first.

But address the matter later on in front of everyone. This kind of unity in solving problems can be a huge positive for your team, even if you may get a browbeating when, as is likely, team-mates plead for the banned kids to be allowed to play.

This situation also enables you to cement ownership of enforcement of the rules, and that's really important in terms of everyone taking responsibilities for their actions... now, and in future. And this means responsibility over their health as well as their behaviour. If you can get them to do this and have them all sign the same set of rules as their individual and collective commitment to their team, it may save the scenario arising in the first place.

NO, DON'T DROP THEM



Asa Brown

Preston Junior Soccer Association

"You need adaptability, flexibility and the ability to show a human side in vour coaching. or vou will end up a dictatorial coach, and no player likes that"

I think a common fear in coaches is that once they back down they will be seen as a soft target, but it doesn't necessarily have to be like that. You can still reinforce your authority on other calls, but seeing your situation as black and white doesn't work in everyday life and it shouldn't work like that in soccer either.

Whether this is an issue over smoking or anything else, you need adaptability, flexibility and the ability to show a human side in your coaching, or you will end up a dictatorial coach, and no player likes that.

The embarrassment of the kids in question is probably going to be punishment enough. Word will get back to their parents too and that's likely to have more impact in ensuring they

don't do it again, rather than the threat of not playing soccer.

Always remember that you are dealing with kids. At the age in question some may be masquerading as young adults, but for the most part they're still children. At this age, the temptations are great but the learning curve is even greater. Everyone makes mistakes and children will respond best by being treated like an adult and from being offered a second chance.

What's the alternative? If you come down hard you may build up resentment from the players and potentially from some of their team-mates, particularly if non-appearance means forfeiting a game. Who will those team-mates really blame - their peers, or you? The answer to that may not be the one you want!

HAVE YOUR SAY



DO YOU DROP YOUR PLAYERS FOR **SMOKING?**

Visit our Facebook page and log your vote at www.facebook.com/SoccerCoachWeekly or email your thoughts to editor@soccercoachweekly.net

HOW YOU VOTED

Here are the results of a poll we ran in issue 301 of Soccer Coach Weekly, when we asked the question: Should players tuck their shirts in when they play?

31% said yes 69% said no

