
The Coach on the Touchline and in the Dressing Room

By

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**To my wife Denise and my daughters Martina and Milena,
for their strong support.**

Preface and Acknowledgements

The methodology of top football coaches has always been a subject of fascination for me, even before I became a football coach, and this dissertation for the UEFA PRO Diploma has given me the opportunity not only to explore this more thoroughly, but to interview many of the world's most respected football coaches. The study commenced with the selection of the candidates in June 2015, with a first draft completed three months later.

Eight football coaches completed bespoke questionnaires, either via correspondence or in the course of personal interviews with myself. This dissertation is (to the best of my knowledge) the first comparative study to look into the various ways different coaches' lead a team or a club.

In doing this study, my thanks go to my tutor Stephen Grima (B. Ed. (Hons), M.Ed.), Director of Coach Education within the Malta Football Association, who in addition to helping me throughout these two years in the UEFA PRO Diploma course, has also been a very motivational figure who continuously encouraged me to reach out and broaden my knowledge. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr Timmy Gambin of the University of Malta on whom I relied when I needed guidance on how to structure this thesis.

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Oliver Spiteri

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Balzan.

“I can think of some managers who could talk under water. I don’t think it helps them. There’s a reason that God gave us two ears, two eyes and one mouth. It’s so you can listen and watch twice as much as you talk. Best of all listening cost you nothing.”

Sir Alex Ferguson

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Introduction

In the past few years there have been a large and growing number of young coaches¹ emerging at all levels of football. Besides being winners, they are, as they gain more exposure, changing the style of leadership for other emerging coaches. This dissertation compares how different coaches of different football cultures, different ages and different leadership styles deal with players in the dressing room during the whole season, including competitive matches. What unites them all is their consistent achievement of success. Sir Alex Ferguson managed Manchester United for twenty-seven consecutive years, winning thirty-eight major trophies during his tenure. More recently Diego Simeone, utilising his 'Authoritarian Leadership' extracts the maximum amount of effort from his players during the whole ninety minutes. Other contrasting styles include Lars Lagerbäck and his 'Fatherly Figure Leadership', which resulted in Iceland reaching the quarter-finals of Euro 2016. Last but not least, Pep Guardiola and Carlo Ancelotti with their seemingly 'Quiet Leadership', managed Europe's top clubs and competed successfully at the very highest national and international club level. I am positive that through this dissertation I have enhanced my leadership abilities. I have improved my communication skills, and increased knowledge to better delegate and share responsibilities with my staff and team members. Furthermore, through working on this dissertation I believe I have acquired a more in-depth knowledge on how to deal with conflicts in the dressing room and on the touchline.

It is very hard to maintain the right balance in a team, and a healthy dressing room culture is the key to success. Conducting this research has contributed greatly to making me a better coach and leader. My desire is that this dissertation can help provide answers to those who need information about leadership skills and can help them in future in dealing with various situations in the dressing room.

In today's world of football the coach's role has become essential. The coach plays a prominent role in the image of the team he is representing. A team composed of great players but without a good leader will find it difficult to reach the established objectives. Club owners are becoming aware of this situation and this is the reason why the best coaches can command enormous salaries. In today's environment a coach must be an accomplished tactician, have a deep knowledge of the game and most of all *must* be a good leader. His leadership skills can propel his club to the highest levels that a team can achieve, both financially and in terms of winning silverware for the club.

¹ The terms 'manager' and 'coach' are used synonymously throughout this dissertation

The professional background of this study

The chief purpose of this study is to examine how experienced, professional coaches lead in various situations. Not all coaches are the same and not all coaches use the same methods to reach their goals.

Every coach has his own style of leadership, with the 'Fatherly Figure', the 'Quiet Figure' and the 'Authoritarian Figure' being among the most common. Every situation and every rationale behind their resultant decisions are dealt with by the various coaches using their adopted style of leadership. Each coach uses the style that suits him best.

This brings forth a number of questions. How do coaches of different cultures and mentalities deal with various situations? It would seem obvious to suggest that a Scandinavian coach that goes to coach the Nigerian national football team would have to adapt their leadership methods to the different circumstances just as his/her players have to adapt to a different philosophy. The use of translators in this situation is also very essential. How do you deal with them? Will you lead them also as part of your staff?

How do you communicate with your staff and substitutes on the bench? How do you speak to your top players if they are left out from the starting eleven? And if a player is not doing what they have been instructed to do during the game, and correcting and instructing them from the touchline has no effect, should you substitute them immediately, even if the game has only been going for fifteen minutes?

The main aim of this dissertation was to compare various methods used by many experienced, professional coaches and how they deal with various situations that occur during the season. The points mentioned above are recognised worldwide as the daily routine of a coach in the modern game. It is not easy to come to discrete conclusions as to how one leads a football team. A coach's working span with a club is becoming shorter and leadership is a very important aspect that keeps a coaching job steady and stable (Harris 2015).

The methodology adopted for this dissertation, by questioning top coaches in Europe about their leadership style in the dressing room and on the side-lines, allowed for the comparison of each coach's own leadership style, the philosophy behind their system of play and the way they each conduct a season or a major tournament such as a European championship.

Thesis rationale

Many games are won, or lost, in the dressing room. Preparation, building up for the game, studying your opponents and making the right choice of tactics are all essential in today's football. With today's technology one can analyse opponents and show visuals to players as part of their match preparation. Two-way discussions with team staff and players are becoming increasingly frequent.

What became clear during the course of this research was that the experienced coaches questioned for this study often use feedback from members of their team when planning for an upcoming match. If conducted in a proper and professional manner, this feedback can become a very useful tool for the coach in their match preparations.

Relationships in the dressing room are of course not always smooth. Conflicts in the dressing room can originate from a variety of situations. Today, most football teams are made up of players of different nationalities who come with different cultures, religions and ethnicities. Players that are left out from the starting eleven will sometimes start to act negatively and therefore produce less. Such an attitude may spread negativity in the dressing room. A group of players coming from the same country can also unbalance dressing room dynamics. If they form cliques this can create conflicts with the other members of the team. Another potentially delicate situation to deal with is when players represent their respective national teams. They may return injured or tired from their commitments and thus not be fit to play. A minority of players can decide to live an unprofessional life outside of football. Lurid accounts of these players' behaviour may surface in the headlines of newspapers and create conflict, setting a bad example for the rest of the team. Outside pressure on the players and the dressing room may also occur when members of the club's board of directors put pressure on the coach to play certain players (even if they are off form) because of pressure from sponsors or because they want to put them on the transfer market and playing them would raise their profile. Players that are loved by the club's fans but are no longer in the coach's plans can create discord in the team. Through all of this one must also keep in mind player power. Keeping the above-mentioned aspects in mind, a coach must always seek to understand the context within which player and staff feedback is being passed onto him. Once the coach understands the feedback and its context he will be in a much stronger position to manage his squad properly.

Club expectations and finances can also have an effect on dressing room dynamics. Today, the financial aspect of a club has become extremely important. This is true for most levels of football being played at national league level. Goals established by club owners are becoming ever more demanding and competition is tougher. Club owners increasingly demand success in the quickest time possible and this inevitably creates pressure, many times leading to unpleasant situations in the team.

On match day, coaching from the touchline can at times determine whether you win or lose games. Correct decisions must be taken and in an often highly volatile situation. A number of such decisions include, but are not limited to, when and how to effect the right substitutions; when to change the game plan or tactical system; whether to be patient or take the risk before your opponent does; how to defend the lead that your team has — stay with the same system or go for a 'killer' move in order to close the game? And all to be decided in a short period of time and often under severe pressure.

It is clear from the above that in order to be a successful coach, one must to be capable of dealing with a huge variety of circumstances. A coach must ultimately be capable of leading his players to reach the club's goals. A coach's personal image and leadership skills must also provide the required assurance to his team members to remain faithful to the dressing room ethics. Dealing and taking decisions in the dressing room is the coach's duty during the entire season.

Chapter 1

1.1 Literature review and questionnaire

The longstanding popularity of football has resulted in a correspondingly large and diverse body of published literature, ranging from academic peer-reviewed journals such as *The Journal of Sports Sciences* and *Soccer and Society* (established in 1983 and 2000 respectively), to more accessible and widely-known publications e.g. articles in popular newspapers and books, among the most popular of which are autobiographies and biographies by and of well-known managers and players. The reach of all of these has been exponentially advanced by the emergence of the Internet, not only in directly disseminating these online (in the case of books, often through limited serialisation in a newspaper) and extending the reach of publicity campaigns, but by creating new forms of communication such as fan forums. In addition to the above, these data include manager's notes and comments on match programmes, TV programmes, interviews (in particular pre- and post-match), conference proceedings, coaching manuals and even simply direct observation of the manager at a match. This huge leap in the amount of data available online, whilst adding great depth, is not without its drawbacks. Publications and datasets vary in scope, content and most of all quality, and sifting through these to find data relevant to the subject at hand can often seem a daunting task.

Much of the knowledge and many of the ideas concerning this subject come from personal descriptions made available through autobiographies and biographies. These texts are unparalleled primary and secondary written sources for many of the aspects laid out under 'Results' (see below), e.g. how managers prepare for matches (Ancelotti 2016: 92); their decision-making processes and how they communicate with staff (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 238); personal styles (Neveling 2016); public player criticism and describing dressing room conflicts (albeit usually long after the manager has ceased all professional involvement with the player(s)/club and with a generous dose of hindsight) (Keane & Doyle 2014); and how they deal with injured players (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 381). However it must be borne in mind that these books are written and published to sell and make money. It is therefore important to note that while the information contained in such books is indispensable for a creditable knowledge of the subject, its subjectivity as a source brings forth a number of issues that need to be highlighted. The first of these is both a strength and a flaw — the first-person perspective. It is often this that provides the chief selling point for a forthcoming book, the chance to read what Manager A really thought of Player B or vice-versa, in their own, unvarnished words (for example see Keane & Doyle 2014), but while this earthy subjectivity provides a great tagline for a publicity campaign, it is inherently a one-sided version of events. This approach almost invariably leads to the second issue, namely the favourable re-writing, lessening or even suppression of often critical information in regards to leadership failures on the part of the subject, which is of course of great interest to the matter at

hand. Football managers are not a breed known for their lack of ego; in fact it has been argued that an element of ego is essential to achieving sporting greatness (BBC 2015) and it is therefore to be expected that in a book of which they are the subject (an ego boost in itself), they should attempt to shine as favourable a light as possible upon their own actions to the detriment of the truth in its sometimes more nuanced totality. In the case of biographies, access to the subject may be dependent upon writing a favourable assessment of them. Finally, all information is of course very subjective.

Books and newspaper articles on football have the advantage of being written by knowledgeable followers and experts of the game who are able to add valuable context to aid the reader in understanding the many facets of the modern game. They can add insight as to how the coach interacts with the team and staff, as well as providing an outlet for 'behind the scenes' information in regards to dressing room conflicts or player criticisms, with the added advantage of being up-to-date. They do, however, share some of the same flaws as autobiographies and biographies (being money-making enterprises), with the added complication (in the case of the online versions of newspapers) of needing to generate advertising revenue, for example by aiming for the maximum amount of reader 'clicks'. One of the simplest methods of doing this is by increasing the sensationalism of the headline ('clickbait'), which needless to say has a detrimental effect on the truthfulness of the content. Content and functional player management is not as newsworthy as a dressing room seething with discontent and a manager on the brink of being fired, and the media have often been accused (more often than not by managers in press conferences) of deliberately exaggerating conflict in order to generate more revenue (e.g. Daily Telegraph 2013). The tribal nature of football also means that the reader has to be wary of bias towards or against certain teams by the writer, although these are often neutered or at least ameliorated in the more established newspapers by editorial guidelines and oversight.

Interviews (in particular pre- and post-match) must be treated with a degree of caution. In the case of post-match interviews the coaches are often still under the emotional effect of the game and what they say will be very much determined by the result obtained on the day as well as by outside factors such as club politics. Comments given prior to a match, during the midweek conference, are organized in a way to hide certain factors from the opponents. It is therefore nearly impossible to get a true picture of a coach's leadership qualities solely through this kind of information. They do however often provide excellent primary evidence of the image the coach is attempting to project.

How to motivate people is a subject that crosses many disciplines, and thus it is perhaps in this area that the need to narrow the focus is most acute. Academic studies such as that conducted by Mageau and Vallerand in 2003 on the coach-athlete relationship, and coaching manuals such as Lyle (2002) and Potrac *et al.*, (2013) are key texts in the literature, combining original research with cross-disciplinary meta-analyses. However, as the authors sometimes acknowledged, how much

of what applies in disciplines such as teaching are applicable for coaching in such a variable field as sports is an area in need of greater research (Mageau & Vallerand 2003: 899), a caveat also acknowledged by Lyle (2002: 125). Additionally, the broad brushstrokes necessary in such studies (for example coaching efficacy theories in Chase and Martin (2013) or maintaining momentum in soccer matches in Higham *et al.*, (2005)) means that the focused questions that form the heart of this study (see below) were often too specific to be satisfactorily addressed. When looking at studies which superficially have the most in common with this thesis, i.e. those that interviewed successful coaches with a view to finding out what made them successful (e.g. Salmela *et al.*, (1994) and Saury & Durand (1998)), some of the same issues came into play, namely non-transference of findings, in this case because they were too specific to the sport (gymnastics and sailing respectively).

In summary, it was clear that when examining how a soccer manager deals with the issues for which answers were being sought, much of the available literature was either too broad or too specific to a different area. Unsurprisingly, the actual words and opinions of football managers as expressed in autobiographies and biographies were clearly found to be the best sources, although other sources were often able to provide some context and corroboration. With these strengths and weaknesses of the available sources in mind it was imperative to approach these sources with as open a mind as possible, whilst also acknowledging that my own preferences and background as a hand-on coach may also influence which sources I would rely on the most. My hope is that doing so has enabled me to form my own opinion on the various styles of leadership described in the sources and their effectiveness in achieving the desired results.

Building a good rapport with the players in order to motivate them to achieve success is an essential first step to successful management, and how that is done i.e. the personal style of the manager, lies at the heart of this study. What motivates a player, or indeed any athlete, can be divided (for the purposes of this study) into three groups: intrinsic, self-determined extrinsic motivation and non-self-determined motivation (which can be both external and internal) (after Deci & Ryan 1985; 2000)². Intrinsic motivation is self-evident — character traits within that athletes that make them do what they do, which explains why they gain pleasure from the activity. Self-determined extrinsic motivation is when the athlete wholeheartedly accepts the underlying values of the sport and associated activities (e.g. training regimens) they are participating in; they may even be why the athlete has chosen to do that particular sport, play in a particular team or be coached by a particular individual. Non-self-determined extrinsic motivation is when the athlete feels obligated to participate in some manner, but does not 'buy-in'; in other words, they are going through the motions. How effective a coach is, the status of the coach–athlete relationship “*is one*

² Whilst Deci & Ryan proposed a total of four types of extrinsic motivation, for the purposes of this brief study, only one broad category of extrinsic motivation will be looked at any real detail i.e. self-determined extrinsic motivation.

of the most important influences on athletes' motivation and subsequent performance" (Mageau & Vallerand 2003: 884), a key variable in all these groups, but most especially the second, and the reason why the role of coach is almost invariably regarded as the most important role in a club, regardless of sport. We see examples of this in football when a player moves or stays at a certain club because of its longstanding footballing philosophy or history (e.g. Steven Gerrard at Liverpool, Alessandro Del Piero at Juventus or Francesco Totti at Roma), or because they wish to be managed by a certain coach (arguably the current crop of young players under Mauricio Pochettino at Tottenham Hotspur). The set of behaviours (titled autonomy-supportive interpersonal style) that underpin maximising self-determined extrinsic motivation are summarised below and are taken directly from Mageau and Vallerand (2003: 886):

- (1) provide as much choice as possible within specific limits and rules;
- (2) provide a rationale for tasks, limits and rules;
- (3) inquire about and acknowledge others' feelings;
- (4) allow opportunities to take initiatives and do independent work;
- (5) provide non-controlling competence feedback;
- (6) avoid overt control, guilt-inducing criticisms, controlling statements and tangible rewards; and
- (7) prevent ego-involvement from taking place.

The key is to ensure that as much of the external motivation falls within the self-determined group as possible i.e. I'm doing this because *I believe in it (and I believe in the person telling me to do it)*, and not within the non-self-determined group i.e. I'm doing this because *I've been told to (and I don't believe or understand the underlining reasons)*. It is important also to note that there is no set method to achieve this, or a perfect personality type. The leadership styles of the aforementioned managers are very different, but even if the manager is, for example, extremely controlling to the point of being invasive (e.g. Sir Alex Ferguson at Aberdeen and Manchester United), if the player chooses and believes in that philosophy, they are making an autonomous *choice* to relinquish control to a person who they believe in, and that it is self-determined extrinsic motivation.

There are clear parallels here to how one raises and instils values in children, and in fact this style of coaching has been compared to an authoritative style of parenting (Baurind 1991 from Mageau and Vallerand 2003:893). Carlo Ancelotti, one of the most widely respected and successful managers in the modern era, underlined the importance of building and maintaining good relationships with his players in order to achieve results: *"First you have to build good*

relationships, good chemistry, with the group you're working with. After that, you can add the strategy," (Hulse 2016). For Ancelotti, it is clear that building a good relationship with his players is not a corollary of good management or the result of previous actions; it is the foundation upon which a successful team must be built, without which all the other aspects of being a manager cannot come into play. That Ancelotti follows through with this mission statement can be corroborated by the laudatory terms in which he is described by some of those players who were managed by him (e.g. see Cristiano Ronaldo and Zlatan Ibrahimović in Ancelotti (2016) pp. 51–58 and pp. 84–98 respectively). Similarly, Jürgen Klopp is known for his motivational approach, his ability to construct positive self-determined types of extrinsic motivation that can motivate his players, the fans and even sometimes the club president. After his first meeting with his new team in 2001 (FSV Mainz 05), Christian Hiedel (the club president) was also present and said *"If they'd have given me boots, I was ready to run out onto the pitch, and I'd have fought like a lion"* (Neveling 2016: 50). This shows that Klopp was already a leader and that the players immediately bonded with his philosophy and his leadership style. By contrast, Sir Alex Ferguson found more virtue in patiently working towards the right decision as he got older. In his early days as a manager he states he was always in a hurry to get things done. He thinks that enthusiasm causes this and as you get older you temper your enthusiasm with experience (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 23).

How to prepare your team immediately before competition is an area that has undergone and continues to undergo great changes. The advent of technology such as Prozone and the use of sports analysts skilled in their use are now commonplace in the top leagues worldwide, while the explosion in availability of high-resolution video in smart phones mean that the use of video-based performance analysis as described in Groom and Nelsson (2013) can now be performed almost anywhere. Of course, ever since the advent of video recording, coaches have used recordings of matches to conduct their own analyses of both their own team's performance and that of their opponents; Jürgen Klopp for example sometimes watches up to thirty DVDs per week (Neveling 2016: 85). Part of Sir Alex Ferguson's pre-match preparations involved compiling short condensed videos of the opponents which were sent to the players before training, followed by another video in the evening showing their opponent's weaknesses (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 68). Players were prepared with every little detail — if an opponent player was appearing for the first time at Old Trafford for example, then the team were instructed to put extra pressure on such players. (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 68).

Projecting the right image, one consistent with the atmosphere one is attempting to generate, is an essential skill for the modern coach. Ancelotti consistently projects a calm and in control image to his players, wherever he coaches. It is clear that for Ancelotti players come first. He also mentions that he had situations where he felt enormous pressure coming from the club owners, press and supporters. *"But I never feel stressed. And I think the only reason is because I love my job"* (Hulse

2016). He ensures that all the pressure falls on him and not on his players. Ancelotti admits that diplomacy can be a key part of his job. *“Presidents most of them, are focused on the results. Maybe they don’t have the knowledge to understand how I prepare my training sessions and the strategy of the game, and so they judge me only on if I win or if I lose. I don’t consider this kind of relationship too important. I’m more focused on what I have to do day by day with my players and staff”* (Hulse 2016). It is clear from this statement that he is focused only on absorbing all the pressure, leaving the players to concentrate on their work, and with his staff prepare them for the upcoming match. Indeed, and to further evidence the link between coaching and teaching/parenting, research studies undertaken in education (Deci *et al.*, 1982; Flink *et al.*, 1990) shows that as pressure increases, so do controlling behaviours, potentially leading to non-self-determining external motivation. This ability, to absorb and deflect that pressure whilst sticking to one’s methods is one of the hallmarks of a great coach.

Jürgen Klopp is another coach known for the image he projects, albeit a rather different one to Ancelotti, in particular using his excellent rapport with the press in post-match interviews to good effect (Neveling 2016: 50). He shows an outstanding ability to communicate and transmit clear messages to the journalists without seeking any provocation or building pressure on his team. He passes his players the training schedule before they leave on holiday and requires them to text him with how well they are keeping up with the program. He seeks to be a perfectionist and when it goes to plan, the results feel extremely rewarding (Neveling 2016: 85).

The role of the coach has been summarised as being to *“manage a process...that involves the integration of the performer’s aspirations and abilities, the goals identified, the external environment and the necessary intervention programme”* (Lyle 2002:38), and a key part of managing this process is how the coach takes his/her decisions and the involvement of staff in this.

Sir Alex Ferguson describes in detail (Ferguson & Moritz 2015) that during his time with United he removed several people who could not make speedy and correct decisions (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 243). *“Some characters are more suited to being second in command rather than the leader...there is also the question of when you should make a decision. There are always two times to do so – too early and too late”* (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 244). Sir Alex Ferguson preferred to make the decision earlier rather than later. Antonio Conte is another coach that values his staff, working closely with them and ensuring a two-way flow of ideas. In fact, much of the wrangling in negotiations centred on the recruiting of his staff (Lewis 2016). Klopp also involves a lot his staff in decision-making and also in the work that they do with players on the pitch. His first assistant coach Zejko Buvac has been working with him since the day he joined FSV Mainz 05 back in 2001. Inseparable since they played alongside each other at Mainz, Buvac is the Peter Taylor to Klopp's Brian Clough. *“We have an identical understanding of football. We’ve got 200, 300 special drills, training exercises; 200 of them are his”* (Neveling 2016: 16).

The adaptation by the coach of his personal style is often necessary for a number of reasons, which are highly variable depending on the situation. These reasons include his own cultural background vis-à-vis the country he is in, the level of the league, the composition of his players, and the wider context of the situation of the club i.e. its finances, fan expectations, the threat or promise of relegation or promotion respectively to name just a few. In addition, some players are easier to manage than others, and a coach must be prepared to adopt a number of different approaches if he/she is to ensure that his/her players achieve their full potential (Mageau & Vallerand 2003: 898–99), and it must be borne in mind that many of the same pressures worrying the coach are also having an effect on the player.

Ancelotti was not afraid to adapt his personal style to suit. When he was appointed as the Real Madrid coach, he knew that he had some players who went out partying until four o'clock in the morning. In order to maintain good relationships with the players, the club had to use the authority, if to fine or to suspend the players in question (Ancelotti 2016: 104). When Ancelotti was manager at AC Milan, the owner Silvio Berlusconi wanted him to play certain players, even going as far as to tell him whom to play as strikers, though Ancelotti stated that only he picked the starting eleven. He also used to allow Berlusconi to enter the dressing room, as he did before they played the Champions League Final against Juventus. He was the club owner and therefore Ancelotti had to understand that it was his dressing room too (Ancelotti 2016: 101), Whilst with Bayern Munich he had to adapt again his style as the players wanted to play a completely different way from the way they used to do with Pep Guardiola – “*When my players would rather play in a 4-2-3-1 than a 4-3-3, then they should do that*” (Dillon 2016).

Criticism of players by the coach is very rarely done in public by active managers regarding players in their team, and when it does happen, it is invariably a sign that the manager has ‘lost the dressing room’ and will shortly be ‘seeking new opportunities’. This can extend to almost ludicrous levels when managers refuse to comment on less-than-perfect behaviour during the course of a match, even when it was clear to all; Arsène Wenger’s standard answer of ‘I did not see it’ is an example of this, but it shows the depth of reluctance of making criticisms of players in such a public manner. This reluctance to publicly air grievances or criticisms of players also largely extends to books written by managers now retired from the game; Ferguson for example refuses to criticise any of the players he managed in his latest book (Ferguson & Moritz 2015), and in fact used the opportunity to admit his mistakes in regards to certain actions in his past e.g. the transfer of Jaap Stam (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 90).

Being involved in the wider aspects of players’ lives, making them feel valued if they buy-in to the team philosophy, regardless of their playing status, is a key part in achieving success. This can even extend to such cases as when a player leaves a club; the hospital visit by Pochettino to the injured Hull (and ex-Tottenham Hotspurs FC) player Ryan Mason after his recent head injury sent a clear message to his players that he takes a keen interest in the welfare of those he has

coached, even after they leave his charge (Hytner 2017). That this has a real effect on athletes' performance has been demonstrated in research studies (e.g. Pelletier *et al.* 1995), which indicated a clear link between an increase in motivation and their perception of being cared for.

An unhappy dressing room is a classic symptom of dysfunctional player management, and how a manager resolves them is a key test of his player management skills. It is one area where hard data is especially hard to come by (occasional leaks to newspapers notwithstanding), as they take place behind literally closed doors and involve blunt criticism from coach to player, player to player and player to coach, and are therefore not something that it is in the interests of the club to be made public. When it came to conflicts in the dressing room. Sir Alex Ferguson used the motto 'Let the punishment fit the crime' and he was the judge, the jury and the chief executioner (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 32). Discipline in the dressing room ensured that players were more focused on the team's success. Players knew that if they broke the rules or behaved inappropriately they would be fined, left out of the squad or even worse, suspended or transfer listed. Rules were the same for everybody and Ferguson never let sentiment interfere with his team selections (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 23).

The decision of who to pick as team captain is of some consequence for a manager, but this is a role with a dual aspect. On the one hand, they are the manager's voice on the pitch, the person on whom they rely on more than any other to ensure that their instructions are carried out. However, they are also the voice of the players to the manager, an accepted channel through which to voice their opinion in a respectful manner. The overriding quality required is that of leadership. "*I only ever wanted a leader. He has to be the person responsible for making sure the agenda of the organization is pursued*" (Ferguson & Moritz 2015: 102). Whilst what constitutes 'good leadership' is an area outside the purview of this thesis, this view (i.e. that a team captain must be above all a leader) is one area where football is in firm agreement with all sports. The Janssen Sports Leadership Centre in the USA for example, which works with American college and high school to develop leadership skills across a wide range of varsity sports, defines six aspects to what makes a good captain, a term that is used synonymously with 'leader' (Janssen Sports Leadership Centre 2017). The six characteristics for a good captain/leader, namely relentless competitiveness, passion, respect, trustworthiness, supportiveness of team mates, and being a hard worker, are qualities any coach in any sport would want from their captain.

Best practice regarding good pitch-side coaching (as put forth in Higham *et al.*, 2005: 143–145) states that "*[it] is about sending information that players will receive in a manner that drives their energy positively, not negatively*". How this is imparted is of course a highly personal affair. Some managers such as Antonio Conte and Jürgen Klopp are famous for the abundance of energy which they inject into their touchline style, while others such as Louis van Gaal take a more sedentary approach. In an interview Frank Dophiede, an expert on marketing and brand formation and managing director of Deutsche Markenarbeit GmbH, has described Jürgen Klopp as very impulsive

when he's in on the touchline. *"One often has the feeling that he is not always 100% content, after the event, with what he did on the touchline. But somehow he just has to let it out"* (Neveling 2016: 254). Similarly, Diego Simeone is someone who despite having retired from playing to become a manager still appears to be playing. He matches every kick and tackle with his own, and it cannot help but reach those who actually are playing. This has the effect of motivating his players, staff and fans in the stadium. He has a particular style on the touchline. *"As he sees it, everyone can play a part in the process of winning. That's why he regularly turns away from the pitch to face the supporters waving his arms urging them to raise the volume. Even the quietest voice – if it can be raised in support of the team – it can make a difference"* (Jenson 2016).

By contrast Pep Guardiola in a recent interview to ESPN declared *"I don't think it will help a lot to speak with the players: they play, not me. Sometimes you have to take decisions quickly, sometimes you are involved in the game. You want to help them to make it better, you want to see them, correct something, but you have ten minutes at half-time"* (Smith 2016). This belief is echoed by Sir Alex Ferguson. Players most of the time are fully concentrated on what is happening during the game rather than taking notice of the corrections that the coach is trying to implement from the touchline. Correcting during the half time team talk is more effective. *"You have maybe eight minutes to deliver your message, so it is vital to use the time well...I liked to focus on our own team and our own strengths, but you have to correct why you are losing"* (Elberse 2013).

The use of substitutes is a key part of the coach's 'toolkit' to influence the outcome of the game, and the use (or misuse) of them can have profound effects on the outcome of the match. One of the more famous examples is the substitution of Bobby Charlton in the last 20 minutes of the World Cup Finals quarter-final match between England and Germany when England were leading 2-0. Doing this freed Franz Beckenbauer from his role of man-marking Charlton, and he then went on to inspire a comeback that saw Germany knock England out (Higham *et al.*, 2005: 23–24). There are a number of factors that determine whether and when a coach decides to make changes, the quality of substitutes available for instance. Timing is also crucial — making an early change, or using all three substitutes, might be seen by some managers as an admission of failure, that they got their original starting line-up wrong (Liew 2014). There are however no hard and fast rules. Sir Alex Ferguson and Louis Van Gaal are seen as gamblers, whilst Arsène Wenger and Brendan Rodgers are seen as more conservative (Liew 2014).

It is of the utmost importance for a coach to have the knowledge and authority to ensure that they effectively pass the right approach to their players, and in this area, success is no guarantee of job security — both Roberto Mancini and Jose Mourinho have been sacked the season after winning the English Premier League. In the case of Mancini, it was his inability to pass on his approach to the game effectively, a result of ineffectual man management skills that resulted in this dismissal. His treatment of Carlos Tevez (resulting in that player's self-imposed exile) and constant quarrels with players such as Samir Nasri and Joe Hart gave the impression that he was confused about

how to approach his relationship with players (Smyth 2013). Additionally, his signing of the controversial Mario Balotelli proved to be unwise. Balotelli already had the reputation of being arrogant and a 'trouble maker', but Mancini disregarded these claims, stating that *'he will settle down'* (Smyth 2013). But the striker never did settle down and was frequently in the media for his antics, most notably for setting off fireworks in his bathroom and fighting with Mancini on the training pitch, resulting in his return to AC Milan (Smyth 2013).

Claudio Ranieri, after winning the Premier League last season as manager of Leicester City, at the dawn of the current season (2016/2017) stated how unity was the key to their success last season, Ranieri expects the players to buy into his holistic approach. *"They must understand the leader is the team – that's why we won last season... You saw how they played, maybe just for the last four minutes [sometimes], but who played went on the pitch and played so hard. I want to see the same spirit. Our strength is our spirit... The players must understand that the leader is the team"* (James 2016).

Antonio Conte, manager of Chelsea, is another manager who values the importance of good communication. The results that he obtained with Juventus and with the Italian national team bear witness this fact. With Chelsea this season (2016/2017) he has proven to be an effective communicator and his approach to the players is clear each time Chelsea play. *"I am trying to bring my principles and I know the players are the same as the last season, but I know two years ago they won the title... So it is important to find the right balance. This team lost their confidence in the last year. The atmosphere can change, but my experience as a former player helps me understand the right way. Understanding. You know if you go strong or soft. It is important that every manager must try to improve the player and the different aspects. Not just technical, to improve the performance and, for example, the recovery after a game, to prepare to avoid injuries. My experience as a former player is important."* (Law 2016).

Chapter 2

2.1 Coaches interviewed

With the limitations inherent in the available literature, it was clear that in order to satisfy the aims of this study a new approach was required, one which invited coaches to state what they thought whilst avoiding as many of the negative factors listed above as was feasible. In order to get as true a picture as possible of what coaches think of leadership (in the categories listed below), a questionnaire was prepared by the author that was sent out to a number of coaches, almost all of whom work abroad. All of the coaches used in this study either have long and varied experience in football coaching, have worked at the highest level (top national divisions or as national team coaches) or both, thus ensuring that the data was not skewed by novice coaches who have yet to fully develop their own styles. The merits of this approach are that this questionnaire was tailored to the needs of this study, and by appearing in this format (a thesis), is exempt from the pressures that limit the veracity of the sources listed above, in particular autobiographies. This is not to mean this methodology is without its own caveats. What a coach may think of the worth of their methods, or how they are perceived, does not necessarily coincide with the reality (Smith & Smoll 1996). Other weaknesses were the small size of the data set (eight coaches); that some were interviewed (thus enabling the author to seek on-the-spot clarifications and to ask follow-up questions, and so partially-enriching the data) whilst others completed the questionnaire only; and the limits placed by the financial and temporal resources of the author. Whilst the interviewees cover a range including different nationalities, national leagues and management of both league and national sides, it is of course not possible to interview every coach, and additional interviews would have undoubtedly enhanced the data set.

Due to the variety of the nationalities of the coaches interviewed, replies were received in two different languages (English and Italian). It is therefore important to note that a small degree of personal interpretation had to be made. The results of this research will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Table 1: List of coaches interviewed by nationality and coaching experience

Name	Nationality	Teams	Coaching Experience	Questionnaire / Interview
Lars Lagerbäck	Swedish	Kilafors IF Arbrå BK Hudiksvalls ABK Sweden Under 21 Sweden 'B' Team Sweden (Assistant) Sweden Nigeria Iceland	39 years	Questionnaire
Roberto Donadoni	Italian	Lecco Livorno Genoa Italy Napoli Cagliari Parma Bologna	15 years	Questionnaire
Pavel Vrba	Czech Republic	FC Prerov Baník Ostrava (Assistant) Baník Ostrava Puchov Zilina Slovakia (Assistant) Viktoria Plzeň Czech Republic Anzhi Makhachkala	22 years	Questionnaire
Dušan Fitzel	Czech Republic	SK Slavia Prague (Youths) Czech Republic – Youth teams Malta Anzhi Makhachkala (Assistant)	21 years	Questionnaire
Marco Baroni	Italian	Rondinella Montevarchi Carrarese Sud Tirol Ancona Siena (Youths) Cremonese Juventus (Youths) Virtus Lanciano Pescara Novara Benevento	16 years	Questionnaire and Interview
Roberto Martinez	Spanish	Swansea City Wigan Athletic Everton Belgium FA	9 years	Questionnaire and Interview
Pietro Ghedin	Italian	Malta Malta Under 21 Italy (Assistant) Italy (Women) Malta FA	16 years	Questionnaire and Interview
Kris Van der Haegen	Belgian	Grassroots youth coach KRC Waregem Weatheren FC Belgium FA Women H/coach Member of Uefa Jira Panel	15 years	Questionnaire and Interview

2.2 Results

On completion of the questionnaires and interviews, the data was evaluated and analysed in order to build a picture of how a coach deals with the various situations that he must face on a day-to-day basis. A complete text of all the answers received can be found in the Appendix. It is important to note that some questions asked to the coaches varied from one another. There were minor differences in phrasing, and dependent upon if the coach was working with a club team or an international side. Variations in the questions were designed to take into account the particular contexts within which the coach had worked. This approach permitted the observation of different approaches to divergent scenarios that these coaches faced during their careers.

In order to extract the maximum amount of information as possible, the answers received were divided into a number of analytical categories. Each analytical category was further expanded in order to deduce the various aspects that will in turn help me reach my conclusions on the subject.

The key areas of interest were:

(i) **Pre-match preparation and the coaches' projected image**

In the build up to a competitive match at professional level there is always a varying degree of pressure. How a coach and his team handle such pressure often has serious consequences on match day. All coaches seemed to agree that they prefer to absorb the pressure themselves in the build up to a match. By doing this the players will find themselves more focused because of the resultant calm atmosphere. Such a situation enables the players to perform to the best of their abilities and to deliver what is ultimately expected of them on the pitch. Another crucial approach expressed by all coaches surveyed is that of remaining calm and in control at all times. This is an important message that coaches need to portray to their players. This is especially so when dealing with the media before a game for which a coach may have many players unavailable due to injury or suspension.

(ii) **Decision taking and staff**

The club's staff were clearly very important to all the interviewees. Every single one confirmed that they all communicate well with their staff. Some refer to their assistant coach only, whilst others will refer to all coaches involved in their staff team. In some cases, coaches also confirmed that they include their staff in every aspect of the team's preparation including game plans, modifications to game plans (before and during matches) as well as asking advice regarding substitutions during the game. Other coaches prefer to use their staff more on match day — receiving feedback about situations that can occur on the pitch. However all of them confirmed that they assume full responsibility for all key decisions taken.

(iii) **Adapting personal style**

All coaches have their own style of play and the majority of answers clearly indicated that most coaches stick by their style. Some individuals maintained the same approach regardless of which team or country they are in. Others adapt their style of play and leadership according to the players they have and the culture of the nation or team that they are managing. Most of them agreed that experience has taught them how to adapt to various situations and how to best utilize their leadership styles. Another aspect mentioned was that there is a fundamental difference between a coach starting at the beginning of the season and one that takes over the job any time throughout the season. It was clear that a cautious approach was required when introducing a new leadership style and system of play during an initiated season to a new squad as this, if introduced carelessly, could unbalance the team and not achieve the desired results.

(iv) **Player criticism**

Players are never to be criticized in public, especially not through the media. This was the common answer submitted by all coaches in this survey. If players are to be criticized it is best that there is direct communication with the player and that the latter is dealt with face to face. Moreover, it is essential to keep such problems behind closed doors. Some coaches also agreed that it is best to keep media intervention to a minimum and to never have any kind of confrontation in public. Coaches are very aware that the media is always looking for headlines and the less information they (the coaches) give them, the fewer headlines they will be able to create.

(v) **Injured players and their role**

The consensus here was that the human aspect is of the utmost importance. There is also a life outside of football and this is especially important when players are injured. Not all players are mentally strong enough to deal with the injuries that they may have incurred. This is an extremely important aspect that one has to keep in mind. The coach has to handle all injured players in an equal manner and he has to be a fatherly figure in the eyes of all his players. Dedicating some extra time to talk to them before and during rehabilitation will make the injured players feel that they remain an important element within the team and thus will help them with their psychological recovery.

(vi) **Conflicts in the dressing room**

The coaches interviewed had different ways of dealing with conflicts in the dressing room. Most coaches stated that whilst they would intervene in any major conflict in the dressing room they preferred to leave minor conflicts in the hand of the players to resolve. This is usually done by the team captain or the 'leaders' of the team. Others, like Ghedin, Donadoni and Lagerbäck replied that when there is a conflict in the dressing room, no matter how minor, they would intervene

straight away and tackle the problem head on. The latter approach is often referred to as the 'direct way'.

(vii) **The team captain**

All coaches stated that the team captain has to be a leader and that they must know and understand their coach's style of leadership. They must be respected by their teammates, the fans and also by the media. However, Robert Donadoni made a very important point in his answer to this question. Although he strongly believes that the team captain has to be a leader, sometimes one has to bear in mind that at times a player is appointed as captain because the club's policy is to appoint the player with the most caps for the that club as captain. Such a player may not necessarily be a natural leader and coaches may have no option but to accept the club's policy.

(viii) **Touchline styles**

There was unanimous agreement amongst the coaches surveyed that gesturing on the side-lines does not influence the players' motivation or their performance during the game and therefore it is not as effective as it might look. Some coaches mentioned that this behaviour has nothing to do with coaching. This however could be because most of the coaches interviewed do not have that style of coaching.

(ix) **The Game – Percentages**

The coaches were asked what, according to them, is the most important aspect when preparing for a game. They were asked to give a percentage rating on four aspects that could influence a game: 1) side-line coaching; 2) pre-match preparation and coaching; 3) dressing room atmosphere and 4) other reasons.

As the figures below show, most of the coaches gave the highest percentage of importance to match preparation and coaching during the week before match day. The dressing room atmosphere was the second important factor. Only Roberto Donadoni rated the dressing room factor higher than that of match preparation. All coaches gave side-line coaching a small percentage of importance. Dušan Fitzel was the only coach from those interviewed that attributed 20% to other reasons. The reason he gave was that as a national coach he had more time and opportunity to have the best players available for selection.

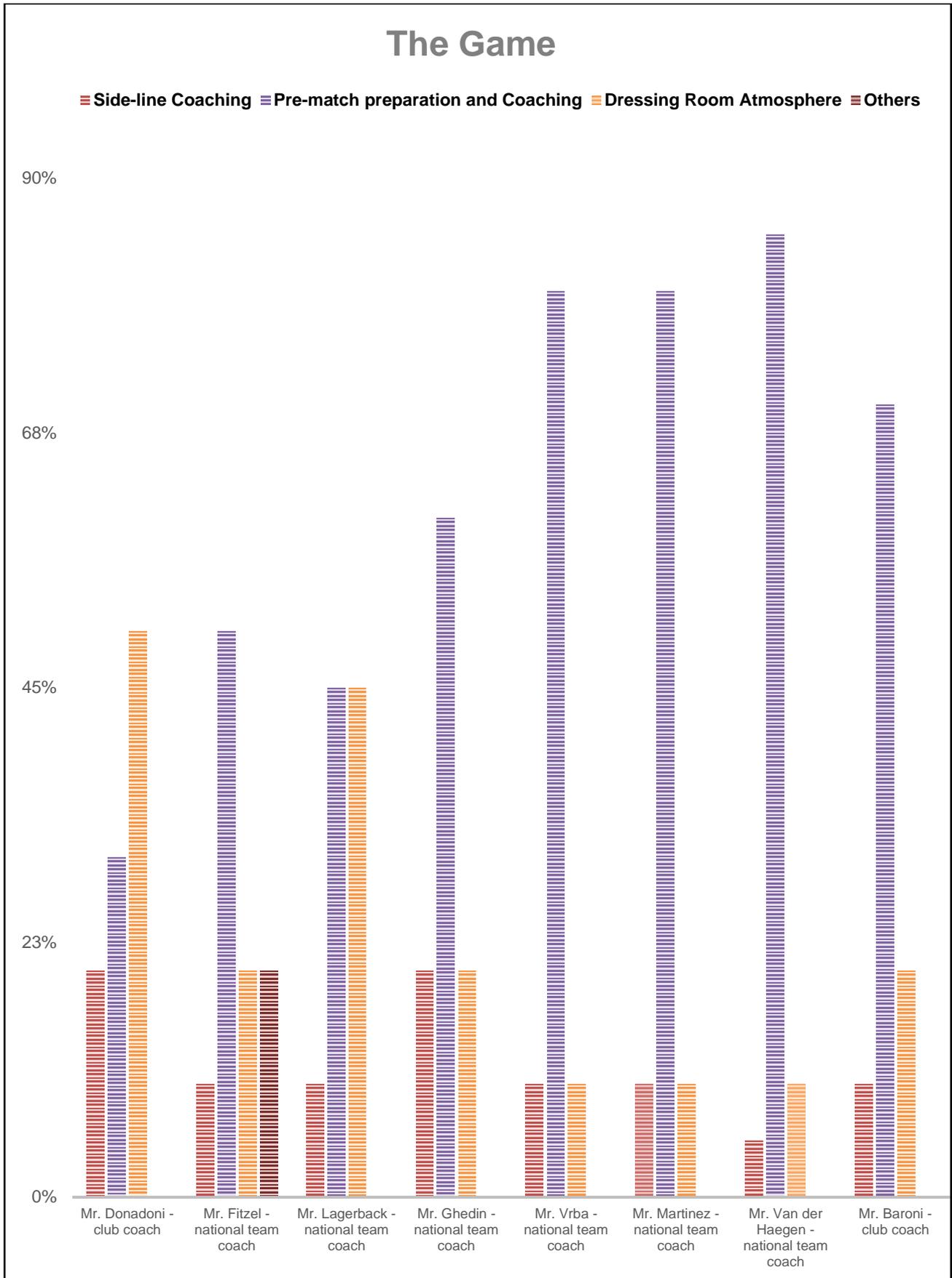


Figure 1. How the coaches answered question (ix) of the questionnaire

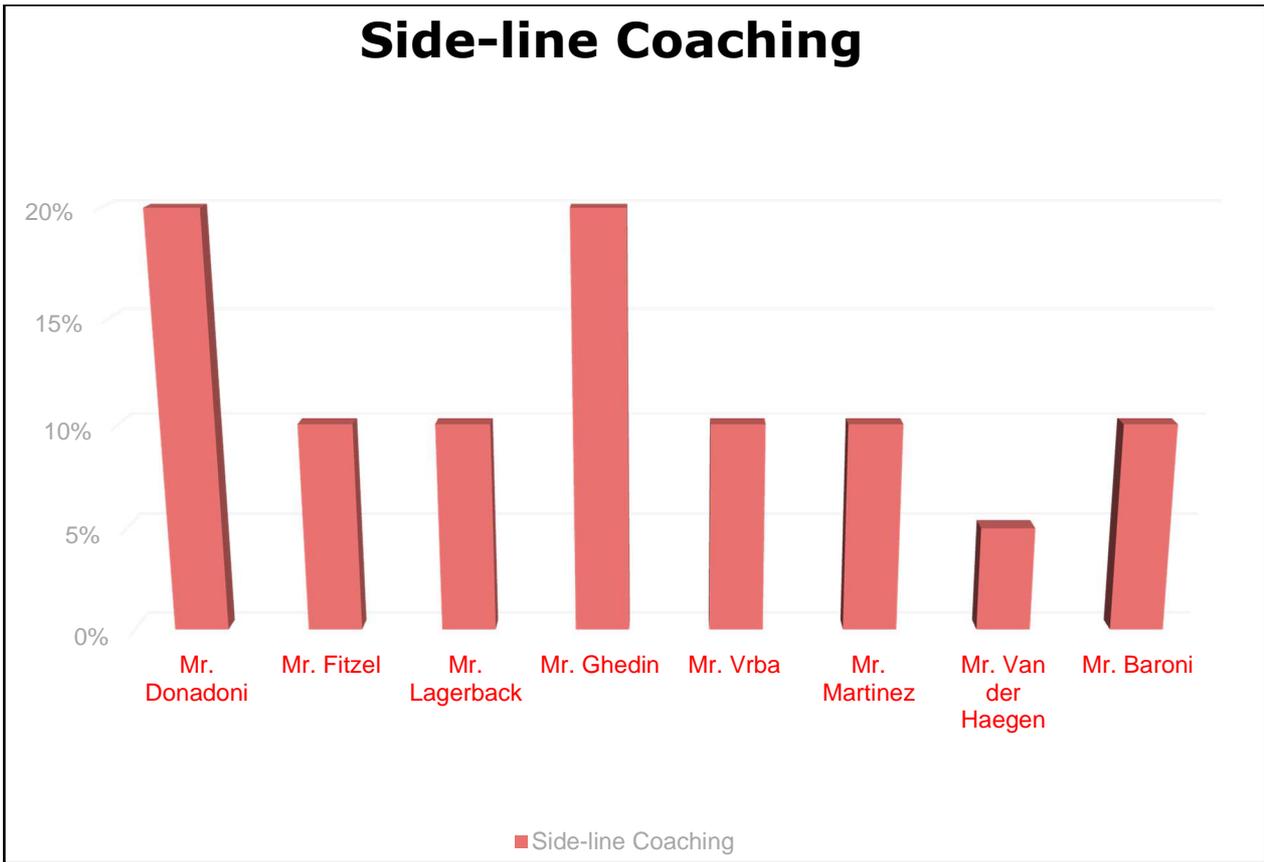


Figure 2. Side-line coaching

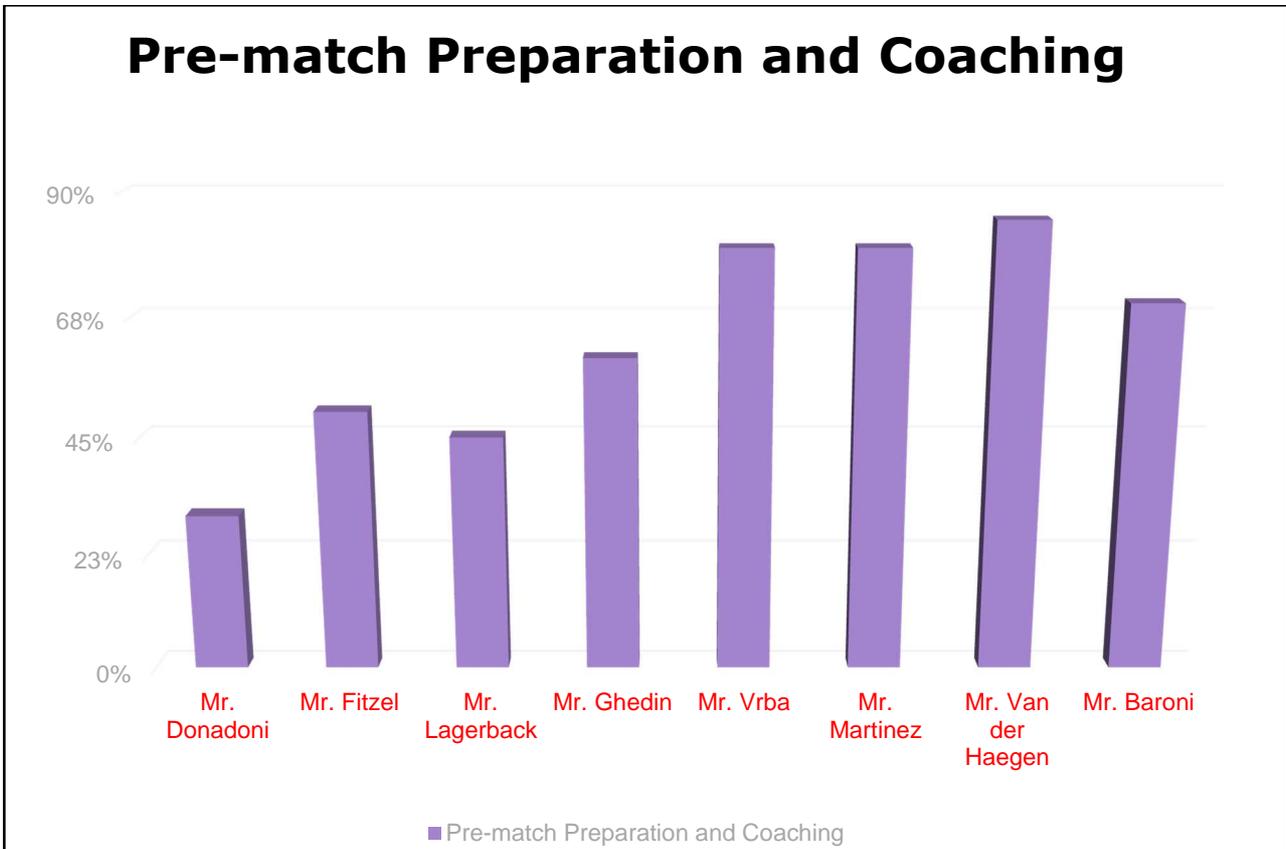


Figure 3. Pre-match preparation and coaching

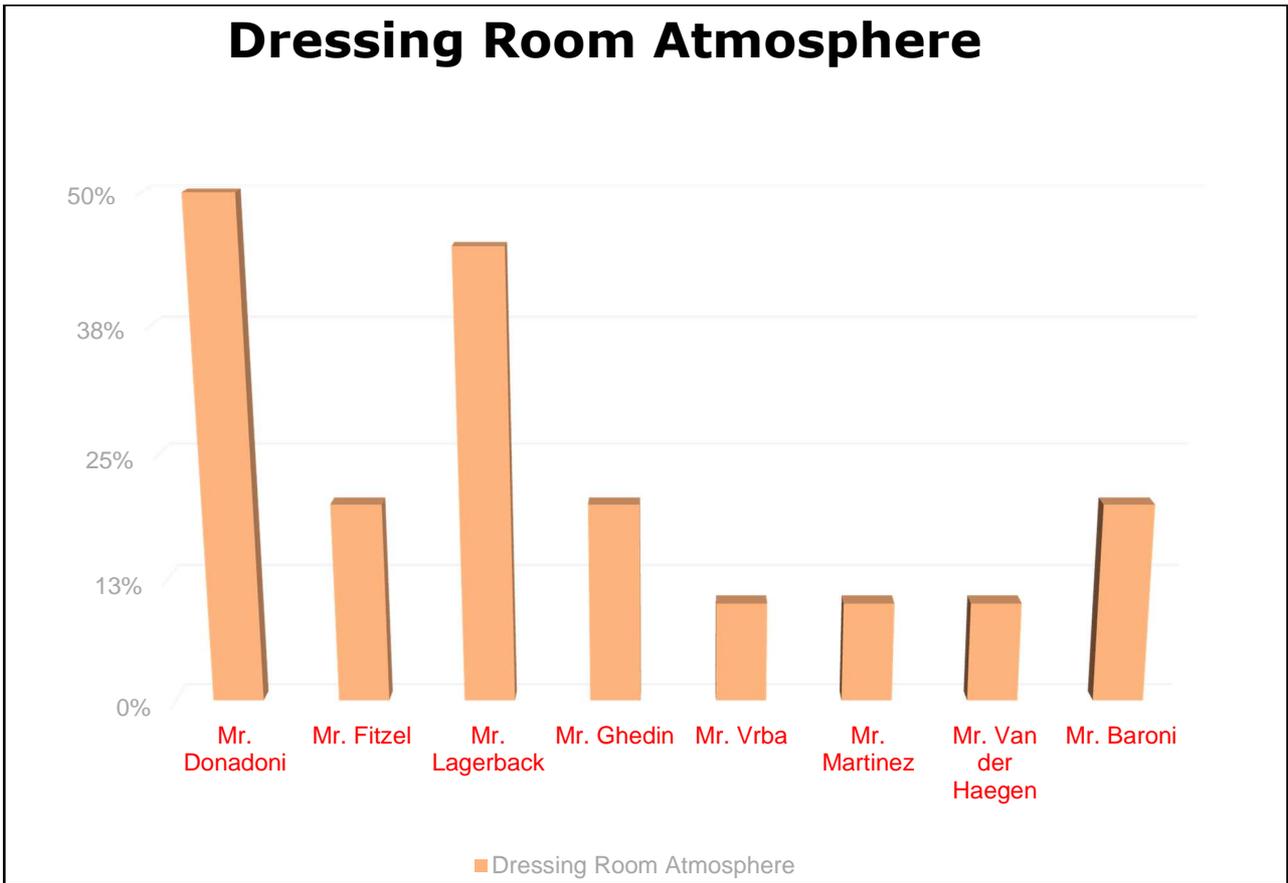


Figure 4. Dressing room atmosphere

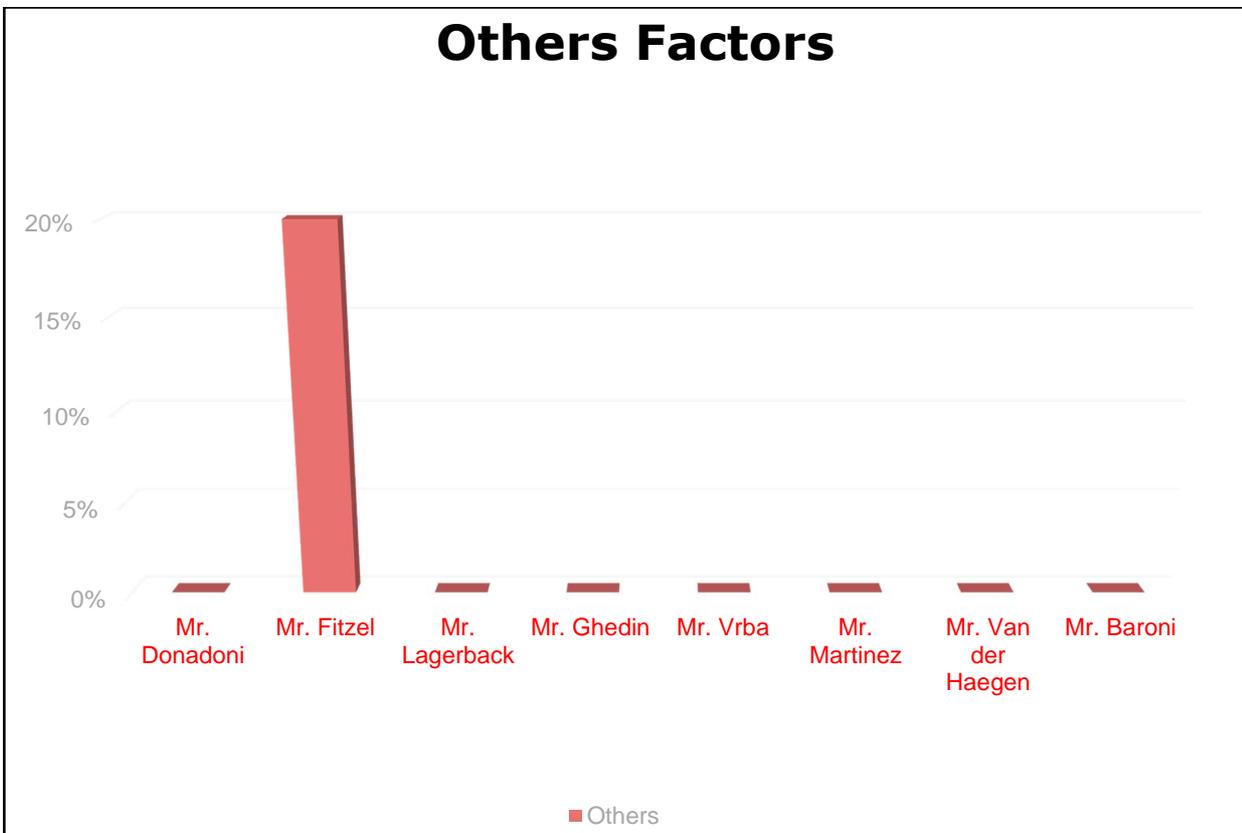


Figure 5. Other factors

(x) **Real-time corrections during the game**

Not all coaches surveyed had the same perspective regarding when corrections from the side-lines were needed during matches. Some answered that match preparation during the week will generally reflect on the pitch and therefore, if one does one's preparation correctly, corrections during the game should be minimal. Others said that it depended on how the game unfolded as well as its difficulty level and the strengths or weaknesses of the opponents. They all agreed however that the better you know your players the less corrections you should need to do during the match.

(xi) **Dealing with substitutions**

Even here coaches shared different views and approaches of how and when to make the right substitutions. They all agreed that if a substitution is forced due to injury or players getting tired, you must act immediately — make the decision and execute. Some coaches insisted that they also made substitutions depending upon the status of the game. For example, is the coach's intention to defend a favourable score line or to be more offensive if the result is not in their favour? Most thus use substitutions during a game for tactical adjustments.

However Kris Van der Haegen said that he (and this is also the Belgian FA's philosophy) would rarely or never make a substitution to change tactics or the style of play. He will often only make substitutions to have fresher legs or players with different characteristics.

Most of the coaches agreed that luck is also an important factor when making a substitution; sometimes it worked well and sometimes it did not. Lars Lagerbäck stressed that if a substitution is needed early in the match to correct an important aspect on the pitch, it must be done without hesitation.

(xii) **Passing on the right approach to players**

All coaches agreed that thanks to the experience they have gained throughout their years in coaching as well as, for many of them, as former professional players, that this contributed to improving their way of communicating their message and philosophy of the game to their players. Experience enables them to better prepare for games, to read situations quicker and more accurately, and to understand their players in a positive way. Marco Baroni ended his interview by saying that *"I try to pass on to my players the value of respect; respect for the game, respect for the laws of the game and respect for themselves and the other members of the team."* This quote sums up the essence of what football is about — it is not just about playing and achieving results, but it is also about helping players build character.

2.3 Discussion of the Results

During the time spent following the UEFA Pro License course we were given the opportunity to visit various clubs overseas as well as national teams. We interacted with other coaches from a number of other countries and shared as much information as possible. Such interaction was aimed at garnering a better picture as to who we want to be as coaches.

Our course tutors also underlined the importance of how we, as coaches, must see things from different perspectives. Furthermore, they also emphasized that although there are numerous sides to managing a professional team, we must always be in a position to see the whole picture. The answers acquired show that coaches use different styles of leadership but their ultimate goal is always the same: to win every game possible.

It was also clear that the footballing culture of each coach's background (educational and nationality) had a major influence on how they answered the questions. The Italian coaches' answers varied from many of the others in the survey in that they seemed to put more emphasis on their own tactical solutions and abilities in winning each game.

On the other hand, Kris van der Haegen and Roberto Martinez (both with the Belgian FA) insisted that learning from each game and further improving their game is an equally important factor as winning games. The Belgian FA's footballing philosophy has provided the foundation for the impressive setup which the Belgian FA has managed to build since 2000. They work hard on improving on it every year. Some of the salient points of this plan include the way that they monitor and assess each of their players, their training philosophy, how they choose the players and how the clubs and the FA work together for the best for Belgian football.

In fact Mr. Lagerbäck, believes that as a coach one has to be ready to adapt one's system and style depending on the culture and football philosophy of where one is coaching — it can be at any club and/or at national team level.

It is not the purpose of this research to judge which style or individual approach is best suited (if any) but to strive to maximize on the wealth of original information that has been gathered. Through my approach and interpretation, I believe that I put the information to very good use and its analysis will help me greatly improve my coaching style and leadership qualities. I will also endeavour to pass on what I have learnt to my players and staff.

2.4 Analysis of the Research Undertaken

(i) Pre-match preparation and the coaches' projected image

It is imperative that a coach must have a temperament that allows the absorption of pressure, as well as the projection of a consistent and genuine image, something that is clear both from previous research and the answers obtained here. This is especially true during the week preceding a game. It is clear that the ability of the coach to absorb pressure has a direct bearing on the results obtained. All coaches interviewed stated that you need to show your players that you are calm before each game. One needs to be seen as a calm problem-solver and not the one creating problems. Your personal image is very important as players look to you as their leader. The way you act, your body language and the way you approach them can be the inspiration that gets them motivated, dedicated and ready to support every direction you give them on the pitch. These three factors — absorbing pressure, being a problem solver and your image as a leader in their eyes are all crucial factors in steering the team to victory.

(ii) Decision taking and staff

In today's game, communicating with one's staff is essential, and as was clear from the previous research, ensuring you have the right staff for the job. Your staff have to share your vision of how to deal with various situations, and the importance of this is underlined with how many backroom staff join and leave with the coach. You have to present all the instructions that you want followed by staff clearly. Coaches have different ways of communicating including leading from the back (such as Carlo Ancelotti) or leading from the front (Jürgen Klopp). Both these have been proved to be valid methods. Staff have to assume responsibility for their tasks. Preparing training and evaluating the sessions with your staff provides a lot of indispensable information about how to better prepare for each game. Medical staff must also work hand in hand with the club's technical staff because the rehabilitation of injured players can be as important as the training sessions for those players who are fit.

Advice and help from staff may also be sought during the game. Such a case is where one is making a necessary substitution during a game or even changing his game plan. Discussion and exchanging views with your staff can result in better options, which may have, for some reason or other, escaped the coach's thoughts. However, the last word and decision has to be taken by the coach. All coaches interviewed underlined that the coach always has to take full responsibility of all actions taken in the dressing room or on the touchline — even if these were advised to him by his staff, a conclusion evidenced in the existing literature.

(iii) **Adapting personal style**

Changing your personal style of coaching and indeed some degree of change, is almost always required when changing clubs/teams. Most of the coaches interviewed adapted their style slightly and were also guided by the experience they had mastered. However, it must be borne in mind that the relatively small size of this dataset compared to the existing literature makes the drawing of firm conclusions difficult; some coaches for example do not adapt their style regardless of circumstances (e.g. Jose Mourinho). However, it does appear from the research that at least some modifications to one's style are necessary. For example, changes may be influenced by the quality of players one has available. It could well be that arriving in mid-season one finds a set of players who are not suited to playing the coach's preferred system or style. Experience can also improve one's ability of how to bolster your image, both inside and outside the game. As long as the coach fully understands the strengths and weaknesses of the team they can adapt to all situations and improve on this.

(iv) **Player criticism**

How one deals with the media is also clearly very important. Coaches who were interviewed and others who have published their biographies (such as Sir Alex Ferguson) seem to agree that the media can help make one's job easier. It is no secret that the media often wants sensationalist headlines and breaking news. It is therefore imperative for coaches to avoid conflicts with journalists. Moreover, I believe that it is of the utmost importance to refrain from criticizing players, referees, coaches and fans publicly before or after a game. This may well cause unwanted situations further down the line. One must always strive to tell the truth and if possible in the most diplomatic of ways. It is not always easy to be positive after a loss or after a bad decision by the officials which may have changed the game. However, this is part of a coach's job and he must be careful of not allowing the emotion of the moment influence their comments.

(v) **Injured players and their role**

The coach must also be intelligent and diligent when dealing with situations in the dressing room. This may be related to aspects such as commenting on players who are not available for the forthcoming match. As a coach, one must never assess the impact of an injured or suspended player publicly so as not to affect the team's morale as this can lead to a below-standard performance by the team. In the case of an injured player any public statement might result in a longer recovery period than required and one must always keep in mind the human aspect.

Thus as mentioned when dealing with injured and/or dropped players, one also needs to consider the personal side of life. For example, an inactive player can suffer from anxiety and this may cause problems at home. It can become a domestic issue. In turn, a domestic issue can be translated into a drop in effort and delivery. During rehabilitation one certainly needs to keep close

contact with injured players. Communication about how their rehabilitation is going and informing the player that you have taken time to speak directly with the medical team will make the player feel valued, and as previous research showed, an increased perception of being cared for causes an increase in motivation. This can play a big part in encouraging them to get fit and back on the pitch where they belong. As a coach it is necessary to always help players get back their confidence and they must always feel that they are still very important to the team. Simultaneously, it is very important to keep the other members of the squad confident and motivated when one is with injured or suspended players. One contributing factor is not to overplay the absence of a key player thus showing the available players that one has full faith in them.

(vi) **Conflicts in the dressing room**

It is essential to have a 'healthy' (in the sense of high morale) dressing room in order to achieve one's goals. The main challenge of any coach is to develop the right team environment in the dressing room so that week in and week out they can field a team that plays at a high level with a predictable consistency. In today's football, a team will probably be made up of players with a variety of backgrounds, religions, ethnicities and different national customs and cultures. I tend to agree with coaches who said that minor conflicts should be dealt with by the players themselves. This is especially true when one has leaders in the team. However, I also agree that in some circumstances the coach needs to intervene immediately in order to help solve the problem. I am also in agreement that the coach's staff can help greatly in this particular matter. Andy Cole (Manchester United 1995-2001) in an interview with daily mail revealed that he never spoke a word with his fellow striker Teddy Sheringham (Manchester United 1997-2001) during the five years they spent playing together with Manchester United under the guidance of Sir Alex Ferguson. Cole admits that their rivalry began with England duty in 1995 (Sportsmail reporter 2010). But when they played together they never showed any differences on the field of play. Their combination play and the goals scored by them were incredible. They won every major trophy achievable at club level. Ferguson dealt with this circumstance for five years, without letting it out from the dressing room. This is an excellent example of how to deal decisively with conflicts in the dressing room.

(vii) **The team captain**

The team captain has to reflect the image of the team. That he has to be a leader and an example for his teammates both on and off the pitch as well as having charisma and being a great communicator is clear from the available research. Every coach would wish to have such a captain in his team. However, it is not always easy to come across an individual with such qualities. Some clubs have the policy that the most capped player must be the captain of the team. So it may be that one's team captain is not a leader or worse still, he may not be respected as such by his teammates or by the fans. This can cause problems in the dressing room and as a coach it is important to monitor the situation closely. It is crucial to ensure that the captain is always respected and that

if the captain is not the person one may necessarily have chosen himself, he still backs him and assist him in the best way possible to fulfil his duties as captain.

(viii) **Touchline styles**

It was in regards to the question of touchline styles (and the importance thereof) that there was the biggest disparity both between the thoughts of the author and previous research, and the answers provided by the coaches. As stated previously, this could be because most of the coaches interviewed do not have an extrovert style of coaching. Additionally, regardless of the effect on the game, it would be hard to envisage those coaches known for their more extrovert touchline style (e.g. Diego Simeone, Antonio Conte or Jürgen Klopp), if they knew for certain that their frantic gesturing was irrelevant, to then sit quietly in the dug-out. They behave the way they do because it reflects who they are as people, and the (passionate) image they wish to project to the players, the fans and the public at large. It is the belief of the author, based upon personal experience, that the body language of a coach from the touchline can sometimes help the team get out of certain situations and can motivate the players help to overcome particular problems. In regards to the best time to enter in detailed discussion with players, both the available research and the findings here agreed that the half-time team talk was the most effective forum for this.

In my opinion the key is that a coach must strike the right balance and do what he feels most fit, in any circumstance. Players will quickly sense whether the coach is being himself or herself or just acting a part. If this is picked up by the players, they can quickly lose respect for their coach.

(ix) **The Game – Percentages**

All the work that coaches carry out is should aim at preparing players as well as possible for matches in order to perform well and win. A lot of preparation is involved: studying movements, correcting and improving the style of play, having different game plans, watching and analysing opponents' weaknesses and strengths, as well as choosing the right players to field on match day. When the interviewed coaches were asked how much importance they give to match preparation, side-line coaching and dressing room atmosphere, a number of different answers were received.

That the Italian coaches answered that side-line coaching was very important for them should not come as a surprise. Italian coaches are renowned as tacticians and maybe transmitting tactical instructions from the side-lines is their perspective of how to win the game. By contrast, coaches of other nationalities said the preparation in the week before the match was the most important factor.

I tend to agree with the latter because if one is well prepared for all possible outcomes during those ninety minutes, the importance of one's side line coaching will in all likelihood be marginal. The dressing room atmosphere was also cited as an important factor. I strongly believe that if one has a good, healthy environment in the dressing room, decision making is always much easier. As Mr. Marco Baroni said in his interview, sometimes one's job with a club depends on how much the

players have bonded with him and his staff. Team stability creates the atmosphere to work hand in hand with players as well as improve results and performances. However one must always keep in mind that the coach is ultimately responsible and that all final decisions are all taken by him.

(x) **Real-time corrections during the game**

The undesirability of making tactical changes in the course of the game is an area of common agreement among both the managers interviewed for this study and the opinions of those found in the existing literature, the belief being that this undermines the pre-match preparation and resulting tactical plans. If the team is prepared well during the week, corrections from the touchline should be minimal. However, during the game many things can completely change the game plan, requiring immediate action. Such corrections should be direct, prompt and easily transmitted to players. The players must understand what needs to be corrected or changed in the least time possible. That is why it is of the utmost importance that during weekday preparations, the coach should involve the players and interacts well with them. This will facilitate them knowing exactly what is wanted of them on the pitch on match day.

(xi) **Dealing with substitutions**

Substitutions are becoming more important in today's game. Nonetheless, most of the coaches interviewed are of the opinion that the element of luck when making substitutions is also a very important factor. Whilst luck is always a factor in any sport, it is reasonable to assume that knowing when and who to substitute comes from the right balance between the reading of the game, experience and sometimes even instinct. However, it must be borne in mind that an overarching philosophy can also play an important role e.g. the Belgian Football Association never make a substitution to change the system of play such is their belief in their playing system.

The wide variety of opinions of when or how to make substitutions is an area of common ground between the previous research and the findings here. That the decision to make a substitution, regardless of the reasons, should be made quickly and decisively was also a point of agreement. As Lars Lagerbäck stated: "*you should not be afraid of doing that [making a substitution] early if necessary*".

(xii) **Passing on the right approach to players**

Both the research here and previous findings agreed that experience gained, both as a former player and as a coach, is of great value in aiding the passing on of the right approach to players. Clear communication with the team as a whole and with individual players in order to impart this was also a strong point of agreement amongst the coaches interviewed. Additionally, it was also their belief that it is an asset if you have longer periods of time to work with the players. The more you know your players the more effective your approach will become.

Chapter 3

Conclusion and recommendations

One can have the best individual players, facilities and possibly unlimited funds but if there is a breakdown in communications between the manager and his players the outcome will be potentially disastrous. It is therefore with this in mind that I formulated my questions to the coaches I interviewed. I wanted to explore where energy could and should be invested and where not. The replies received, coupled with my analysis clearly show a preference for a 'quiet approach' with sincerity and communication at the heart of a manager's relationship with his players and staff.

Throughout my research I was lucky to garner the point of view of a number of world-class coaches. These came from a variety of cultural settings as well as from diverse footballing backgrounds. Such diversity, I believe, enriched my research because it provided the opportunity to observe, analyse and ultimately understand multiple approaches to what is, in my opinion, the most important element of coaching — the ability to communicate well with one's players and staff. I then used all the means at my disposal to get directly in touch with the coaches selected or to get the questionnaires to them. Many of the coaches in my study are considered by many as some of the best coaches currently around the world. I also read many books and autobiographies on the topic which helped my thorough research of the area.

It is also apparent that a professional manager is ultimately responsible, not just for the decisions taken but ultimately for the situations caused by those decisions. With this in mind I can state with confidence that a coach must take a few steps back in order to constantly see the bigger picture whilst always finding the right balance between becoming too close to players and staff and being too distant. Therefore, besides footballing knowledge, a manager needs excellent man-management skills. In fact, a coach with high calibre man-management skills probably has a better chance of succeeding than one who has a full knowledge of the game but no charisma. This could well be why so many talented footballers do not progress and become good managers and why players who were not world class in their playing days can turn out to be top class coaches.

It is therefore imperative for coaches to develop man-management skills alongside their knowledge of football. Such a combination, if well-balanced, can lead to success in one's coaching career.

I am really pleased with the outcome of this study as not only did it serve as my thesis for my UEFA Pro licence course but it also gave me a real insight into what is really of crucial importance as a coach on the touchline and in the dressing room. It also greatly helped dispel some doubts I had as to what was essential in doing a coaching job professionally, such as the coach's side-line behaviour and his relationship with the media.

I hope that my work will not only be of use to me as I further develop my career as a professional coach but can at some future date also be published here in Malta and contribute to the growing professionalism of the local football coaching scene.

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Appendix

Interviews and completed questionnaire of the coaches contacted and selected for this thesis:

Dušan Fitzel

Kris van der Haegen

Lars Lagerbäck

Marco Baroni

Pavel Vrba

Pietro Ghedin

Roberto Donadoni

Roberto Martinez

- 1) *You are a coach that prepares all details of the game before the kick off; and not speak too much from the touchline; Is this your style of coaching or because you felt that players could not handle all that situation?*

First it is my style and philosophy. On the other hand I am ready to help players but in reality during the match is difficult to coach players from touch line due to 2 reasons.

1, they don't hear you

2, some of them there is no chance to coach them due to lack of ability to work with information that you try to give him

- 2) *When you see that the game or the opponents are changing your game plan, before you do changes, both tactical and technical, you speak with your staff about the decision?*

I will give chance for them to give me their feedback, when I know that my staff is fully convinced about my football philosophy. I have a chance to pick up them and then I trust them

- 3) *How do you deal with situations in the dressing room when you have conflicts between players?*

Try to jump into the conflict and try to solve situation if I have all information. If not I have to trust other staff members and try to solve problem later after getting all information.

- 4) *You have coached the Malta national team, a team which has been always ranked in the lower positions in the UEFA standings; did you change your leadership styles in the dressing room because of such a matter?*

I don't think so. I tried to change their mentality to focus more on attacking football and it was completely different to what they did for a long period before. I saw that they liked it and it was more interesting for them and for the supporters too. Finally I wanted to play such football.

- 5) *How do you deal with Media before a match? Before leaving any comments, do you think how the players might react (both positive and negative)?*

After my experiences I see media as enemy. They try to bring up only negative situations and they don't care about players and the atmosphere in the team. I will never send message to the players through media, even if I did it before.

6) *How important is your team captain, when you are coaching from the touchline?*

It depends on his ability to be a leader and to work with information from the coach during the match. If I could announce the captain I would look for such abilities. If the captain is picked already, then I have to care more about his ability. In a perfect world - a captain has a very important role as the team leader.

7) *Between an international fixture and another there is quite some time, during this period of time do you still speak with your players? And if yes, you do it because you want to keep a healthy dressing room or because it is your style?*

My coaching style is to work very close with players. I have no chance to work with them more often, then I have to visit them in the club or call them to keep close contact and understand his problems if he has some or support him or praise him. Contact with players is most important.

8) *Lately we are seeing a lot of coaches from the touchline being 'hyperactive', even when their team scores a goal, from your vast experience and knowledge, do you think that these actions motivate the players?*

I hate this behaviour, because it has nothing to do with coaching. It is just theatre for officials, supporters and for players. Players don't have any idea what coach is doing on touchline. They have to be concentrated for the match.

9) *The coach just needs to be effective, in other words make the players perform. What percentage do you attribute this to :-*

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| a) Side-line coaching | 10% - everything must be done before |
| b) Match preparation and coaching | 50% |
| c) Great dressing room atmosphere | 20% |
| d) Other reasons | 20% - have chance to select players for your team |

10) *A good coach makes the right substitutions at the right time. What is the secret of the substitution? It is definitely something which you can control but what is the likelihood of being effective?*

The secret is to know your team and your players and in which way particular players can help you. Then it's mainly luck at the end of the match. During the

match it must be changing the way of playing to replace player who didn't suit to your playing plans.

11) To date you are working as Technical Director with the Czech Republic FA and therefore you have different perspective of how other people are working; what do you change, Vis a Vis coaching styles and play, from your previous experience with the Maltese National team?

I didn't change anything. To push people to work you have to be strong and be able to motivate them and convince them about your way. It is useless to spend time trying to change people the best way is to replace them with someone who wants to work.

On the other hand position of technical director is become more political and I have to find balance between sport and football politics.

Kris van der Haegen

(Transcribed from video)

- 1) *From the outside, you look like a very calm person, do you absorb the pressure so that the team can play with more ease?*

Yes I try not to give pressure on them by showing them the right example. The players if they feel that you are stressed they will be stressed too and that gives them a negative feeling.

- 2) *When you see that the game or the opponents are changing your game plan, before you do changes, both tactical and technical, you speak with your staff about the decision?*

I always ask for confirmation about what I am seeing if it is right or happening by coincidence. I also speak to them before I make a substitution. When changing something I always involve my staff.

- 3) *How do you deal with situations in the dressing room when you have conflicts between players?*

I don't like conflicts, when it happens I ask my players that in my dressing room there should be no conflicting behaviour. They have to find solutions and solve the conflicts.

- 4) *You have coached club level and now coaching national teams? Have you changed your leadership styles in the dressing room?*

Yes I did change, but not because of club level or national team level. I changed it because I gained more experience. I have been through so many learning processing that it made me a better coach and better leader. I always try to be a positive person and because I do this they give me more back on the pitch.

- 5) *How do you deal with Media before a match? Before leaving any comments, do you think how the players might react (both positive and negative)?*

I am never negative with the press - always positive feedback. They want you to talk negative because that is what the audience want. Important to be honest, tell them the things that you can observe and never, never judge persons in an interview.

- 6) *How important is your team captain, when you are coaching from the touchline?*

Yes he/she is very important, has to be a symbol in the team. Being captain in the national team and in a club team is very different. National team captain has to show the best example to the others for only two weeks, when there is a stage. In club level the team captain has a different role as the other players see him every day, they know him very well therefore he must be respected every day.

- 7) *Being a national coach, you have ample time to study opponents and prepare your game strategy; does it help you when you are coaching your team from the touchline?*

It can help but very little. It depends on your game strategy. We put little focus on the strength of the opponents and focus a lot on our strengths and what we have to do.

- 8) *Between an international fixture and another there is quite some time, during this period of time do you still speak with your players? And if yes, you do it because you want to keep a healthy dressing room or because it is your style?*

It is important to keep communication. The more you communicate the better it is. We are lucky because we are a small country so we can go and watch most matches played. We meet them after the game and speak about performances and other minor things.

- 9) *Lately we are seeing a lot of coaches from the touchline being 'hyperactive', even when their team scores a goal, from your vast experience and knowledge, do you think that these actions motivate the players?*

No not all. Don't believe that this can effect the players.

- 10) *The coach just needs to be effective, in other words make the players perform. What percentage do you attribute this to :-*

<i>a) Side-line coaching</i>	<i>5%</i>
<i>b) Match preparation and coaching</i>	<i>85%</i>
<i>c) Great dressing room atmosphere</i>	<i>10%</i>
<i>d) Other reasons</i>	<i>0%</i>

- 11) *A good coach makes the right substitutions at the right time. What is the secret of the substitution? It is definitely something which you can control but what is the likelihood of being effective?*

When you see something visible and can help the team, player injured or very tired I do substitutions. Very difficult that I make substitution to change our style of play.

12) I saw your team today playing and I must say that you have managed to pass on the right approach to your players. They have integrated this and they are pretty consistent. So have your instructions from the touchline become less or are you still correcting the same things?

We prepare the games during the stage and we build on our strengths. If we need to correct something we do it but we try more to motivate in a positive manner than correcting.

- 1) *From the outside, you look like a very calm person, do you absorb the pressure so that the team can play with more ease?*

I have learned through the years to work with my feelings. So today I think I can control them and focus on what happens on the pitch out from facts. I believe I am a better match coach that way.

- 2) *When you see that the game or the opponents are changing your game plan, before you do changes, both tactical and technical, you speak with your staff about the decision?*

With my co coach yes. But I always try to plan the match in forehand so I hopefully will be prepared for all different situations, at least regarding my own team

- 3) *How do you deal with situations in the dressing room when you have conflicts between players?*

I have very few of those situations, but when it happened I have to be the boss and tell them to keep quiet. I also try, if we have time to talk to them individually.

- 4) *You have coached national teams for the likes of Sweden, Nigeria and now Iceland, have you changed your leadership styles in the dressing room?*

Very little between Sweden and Iceland. But in Nigeria I had to adapt my leadership to a different culture and how to handle the players. Some examples was that they all were very religious and that they were very sensitive for being criticized in front of others

- 5) *How do you deal with Media before a match? Before leaving any comments, do you think how the players might react (both positive and negative)?*

Yes, I always try to think before I answer the media's questions

- 6) *How do you deal with injured players in the dressing room? Especially if these can be top players.*

They can take part in everything regarding the team if they like.

7) *How important is your team captain, when you are coaching from the touchline?*

Rather important. But I try to get all to be a informal leader or communicator. I mean I trust most of the players to take instructions and spread them out if nessecary

8) *Being a national coach, you have ample time to study opponents and prepare your game strategy; does it help you when you are coaching your team from the touchline?*

A little during matches but absolutely most in my preparations before the match

9) *Between an international fixture and another there is quite some time, during this period of time do you still speak with your players? And if yes, you do it because you want to keep a healthy dressing room or because it is your style?*

I only speak with the players if something is very important or something special is happening. For example if someone gets injured.

10) *Lately we are seeing a lot of coaches from the touchline being 'hyperactive', even when their team scores a goal, from your vast experience and knowledge, do you think that these actions motivate the players?*

No and if so very little. I think a good coach is doing his job to about 90% before the match.

11) *The coach just needs to be effective, in other words make the players perform. What percentage do you attribute this to a) side-line coaching b) match preparation and coaching c) great dressing room atmosphere d)other reasons.*

B and C is absolutely the two most important. A can be important but as I said before it stands only for around 10%

12) *You have coached 3 national teams and all these countries have a distinctive style of play. Did you change their style or improved their style and what should a coach do when he takes over a team with a particular style of play?*

I have my philosophy that I believe in. So I always try to play that way. My basics are always there. But I might have to do some small changes depending on what skills my players have. The better skills the more flexible I can be in that respect

13) *Your team plays very aggressive football ... what are you correcting from the touchline – more aggression, tactical movements, strategy ...?*

Our basic way of playing like starting positions in attack and defending. Players attitude = If they start getting passive or play in the way that they are afraid of doing mistakes. Or the opposite id they get overambitious or play to individual

14) *A good coach makes the right substitutions at the right time. What is the secret of the substitution? It is definitely something which you can control but what is the likelihood of being effective?*

I think you should be careful with making substitutions. But if a player gets tired, not playing well=Not following our basic way of playing. Sometimes if we need a result or to defend a result I can change a more offensive skilful player vs a more defensive one and vice versa

15) *You have a great team with you – assistant coach, physical trainer, team doctor ... do you consult with any of these during the game and do you make any changes from such consultations?*

Only with my Co coach

16) *You have managed to pass on the right approach to your players. They have integrated this and they are pretty consistent. So have your instructions from the touchline become less or are you still correcting the same things?*

I think I have become better and better to prepare and organize my team so I think it has become less corrections. But of course I do it if I see something needs to be changed. You should not be afraid of do that or a substitution early if necessary.

Marco Baroni

(Transcribed from video)

- 1) *Dall'esterno, sembra una persona molto calma, Lei assorbe la pressione affinché la squadra possa giocare con più facilità?*

Si certo , cerco sempre di non mettere mai pressione sui giocatori, loro avranno sempre la pressione di far bene e allora cerco sempre di ammortizzarla.

- 2) *Quando vede che il gioco o gli avversari stanno cambiando il suo piano di gioco, prima di fare modifiche sia tattiche che tecniche, parla con il suo personale prima di cambiare qualcosa?*

Si assolutamente , personalmente scrivo quello che vedo durante la partita. In campo tutte le situazioni li condivido con il mio secondo e discutiamo insieme, pero' la decisione finale la prendo io, perche' la responsabilita e' solo mia.

- 3) *Come affronta situazioni nello spogliatoio quando si verificano conflitti tra giocatori?*

E' semplice, io non tratto tutti I giocatori lo stesso. Devi individuare alcuni giocatori importanti, questo perche' ci sono momenti in cui tu sei nelle loro mani, e questi giocatori 'leader' non li attacco mai davanti agli altri giocatori. Se pero' fanno dispetti alla squadra, allora faccio il duro. Se e' una cosa fra me e un giocatore 'leader', parlo da solo con lui e la sbrighiamo fra noi.

- 4) *Lei ha allenato diverse squadre, Ha cambiato il suo stile di leadership nello spogliatoio?*

Ho avuto tante situazioni difficili durante la mia carriera, pero' ho sempre fatto un fortino davanti alla squadra e nessuno puo entrare. Con I presidenti e I direttori sportivi qualche volta devi lasciare qualche cosa ma sempre c'e' un limite.

- 5) *Come tratta i media prima di una partita? Prima di lasciare qualsiasi commento, pensa come potrebbero reagire i giocatori (sia positivamente che negativamente)?*

Con i media e' sempre difficile, mi danno del difensivista e non sono simpatico alla stampa. Perche' non attacco mai i colleghi e cerco di spiegare il calcio. Io non gli do i titoli per scrivere, loro vogliono sempre il confronto o con i miei giocatori e con la squadra opposta.

6) *Quanto importante è il capitano nella sua squadra, quando da istruzioni dalla panchina?*

E' un giocatore molto importante, deve essere un leader e deve sapere la tua idea del tuo gioco.

7) *Ultimamente stiamo vedendo un sacco di allenatori che dalla panchina fanno molte scene, che di solito fanno i giocatori... anche quando la loro squadra segna un gol. Dalla sua vasta esperienza e conoscenza, pensa che queste azioni motivino i giocatori?*

Per me un allenatore non deve mai perdere la lucidita', in Italia pero' se durante la partite stai seduto, dopo tre partite ti fanno fuori, se ti sbracci allora sei un bravo allenatore. Conte per esempio quello che lui fa lo sente davvero, uno si deve sentire se stesso.

8) *L'allenatore deve solo essere efficace, in altre parole ottimizzare la 'performance' dei giocatori sul campo. Qual è la percentuale che Lei attribuisce a) all' allenamento dalla panchina (durante la partita) b) alla preparazione e agli allenamenti durante la settimana c) ottima atmosfera spogliatoio d) altri motivi.*

Allora A) 10% B) 70% C) 20 % D) 0%

9) *Un buon allenatore fa le sostituzioni giuste al momento giusto. Qual è il segreto della sostituzione? È sicuramente qualcosa che può controllare, ma qual è la probabilità che erano efficaci?*

Qualche volta sbagliamo anche noi, pero' quando vedi una cosa visibile devi cambiare giocatori e/o sistema. Qualche volta va bene qualche volta va male, anche se noi non cambiamo molto il nostro sistema di gioco.

10) *Quale il valore calcistico che Lei vuol dare alla squadra e la sua filosofia?*

Il valore della cultura del lavoro, il valore del rispetto per le regole, verso se stessi e verso gli altri membri dello staff. Filosofia noi chiediamo alla squadra che sia attenta, dinamica e che giochi con furore agonistico.

- 1) *From the outside, you look like a very calm person, do you absorb the pressure so that the team can play with more ease?*

I prefer to behave front of the team this way, not to let them know kind of nervous and show the players quit atmosphere. If you react then team will react the same way.

- 2) *When you see that the game or the opponents are changing your game plan, before you do changes, both tactical and technical, you speak with your staff about the decision?*

Yes. Many things I discuss with staff before match and during the match I accept if assistants give me feedback about situation on the pitch.

- 3) *How do you deal with situations in the dressing room when you have conflicts between players?*

I prefer to jump into the conflict and try to move to the direction I want to have it.

- 4) *You have coached Victoria Plzen, winning all national competitions. How did you deal with pressure and stress of the players in the dressing room?*

There is more pressure from media press release or director's pressure. I prefer players to concentrate mainly for performance on the pitch and try to avoid any other pressure and focus only for the game

- 5) *Did you change your coaching style from a club level to the national level? If yes how?*

I have my philosophy and use it for club and national team too. The way of the work in the club is different and mainly on day by day working. National teams are more difficult because the information you need will arrive later than at the club. More difficult is too deal with players from different clubs. You need to follow them all the time and it is not easy.

- 6) *How do you deal with Media before a match? Before leaving any comments, do you think how the players might react (both positive and negative)?*

After my experience I know that media will write what they want and I resigned to push media to make any comments. The best is not to speak a lot.

7) *How do you deal with injured players in the dressing room? Especially if these can be top players.*

I try to behave to the all players the same. This is responsibility of medical staff. If the top players are missing – this is reality and try to replace them with adequate substitute players.

8) *How important is your team captain, when you are coaching from the touchline?*

From previous time I had several captains who help me a lot. It must be players with leader's ability and have respect of other team players. Players get all information before the match and if during the game I have to say something I address it to particular players

9) *Being a national coach, you have ample time to study opponents and prepare your game strategy; does it help you when you are coaching your team from the touchline?*

I try do my best and help players even from touchline.

10) *Between an international fixture and another there is quite some time, during this period of time do you still speak with your players? And if yes, you do it because you want to keep a healthy dressing room or because it is your style?*

I think that contact with players is very important and not only with players but coaches and club managers. To let them know my vision and even get feedback from them to their player.

11) *Lately we are seeing a lot of coaches from the touchline being 'hyperactive', even when their team scores a goal, from your vast experience and knowledge, do you think that these actions motivate the players?*

To celebrate goals is normal behavior, but it mustn't be exaggerated. I don't think I am hyperactive.

12) *The coach just needs to be effective, in other words make the players perform. What percentage do you attribute this to :-*

- | | |
|--|------------|
| <i>a) Side-line coaching</i> | <i>10%</i> |
| <i>b) Match preparation and coaching</i> | <i>80%</i> |
| <i>c) Great dressing room atmosphere</i> | <i>10%</i> |
| <i>d) Other reasons.</i> | <i>0%</i> |

13) *You have coached various club teams (both in Slovakia and in Czech Republic) and now the Czech national team; all these teams have a distinctive style of play. Did you change their style or improved their style and what should a coach do when he takes over a team with a particular style of play?*

I have my style and try to play it. This is maybe reason why the club appointed me. I work with team to lead them to my way of playing. It is mainly about training process and focus more to the details which lead to my style. It is important to force players to accept my playing rules not only out of the pitch but mainly on the pitch.

14) *Your team plays very tactical and technical football ... what are you correcting from the touchline – more aggression, tactical movements, strategy ...?*

Everything is from the training and feedback from previous matches. If there are problems I try to solve it from touch line. If this is not possible then I replace player

15) *A good coach makes the right substitutions at the right time. What is the secret of the substitution? It is definitely something which you can control but what is the likelihood of being effective?*

Sometimes it is luck. On the other hand you have to have good substitutes and know your players when they can help you and when you can use them.

16) *You have a great team with you – assistant coach, physical trainer, team doctor ... do you consult with any of these during the game and do you make any changes from such consultations?*

I respect them all and let them take part in decisions, but my decision is final. I accept even their opinion and I am able to change my decisions too.

17) *During the qualifying group stage of this year, the team drew home with Latvia and lost away to Iceland and this was complicating the course to qualify. How did you manage to pass on the right approach to your players so to change that situation after these 2 games? Because they made a good comeback with two wins so far, they are pretty consistent now. So have your instructions from the touchline become less or are you still correcting the same things?*

The experience in spring was more difficult than autumn. In spring you have players after 5 months and only few days to prepare them for the match. Then another 3 month for June, when players are after season mentally tired and playing matches in June is not an ideal decision. The reason to come back in autumn is that players are more prepared for competition. My behaviour or instruction to the players were the same.

- 1) *Dall'esterno, sembra una persona molto calma, Lei assorbe la pressione affinché la squadra possa giocare con più facilità?*

Non e' una cosa importante, devi anche essere un leader e l' importante e' che la squadra capisca che tu non sei un pupazzo. La squadra deve credere che tu hai un valore.

- 2) *Quando vede che il gioco o gli avversari stanno cambiando il suo piano di gioco, prima di fare modifiche sia tattiche che tecniche, parla con il suo personale prima di cambiare qualcosa?*

Parlo sempre pero la decisione finale la prendo sempre io sotto la mia responsabilita'.

- 3) *Come affronta situazioni nello spogliatoio quando si verificano conflitti tra giocatori?*

Devi prendere di petto il problema e' sapere mediare.

- 4) *Lei ha allenato diverse squadre (nazioni differenti). Ha cambiato il suo stile di leadership nello spogliatoio?*

Nella vita si e' modificato. Perche' le conoscenze con altri allenatori ti portano a migliorarti. L'esperienza ti aiuta a capire meglio la vita e poi dipende anche dalla tua intelligenza.

- 5) *Come tratta i Media prima di una partita? Prima di lasciare qualsiasi commento, pensi come potrebbero reagire i giocatori (sia positivamente che negativamente)?*

I commenti sono sempre diplomatici e prepositivi, senza interferire sulle problematiche eventuali dei giocatori. Perche' sono cose di spogliatoio.

- 6) *Come fa a trattare giocatori infortunati nello spogliatoio? Soprattutto se questi possono essere i migliori giocatori.(campioni).*

Se stanno male non possono giocare. Io preferisco sempre un asino sano che un cavallo di razza malato. Questa battuta viene menzionata perche' la squadra di calcio non e' fatta per un gioco singolo ma per un gioco collettivo. Ecco perche' si chiama squadra.

7) *Quanto importante è il capitano nella sua squadra, quando dai istruzioni dalla panchina?*

Anche lui fa parte del collettivo, con più responsabilità.

8) *Quant'è la pressione durante la settimana? Come gestisce la situazione con i giocatori e il suo staff?*

È importante tanto quanto l'incontro che vai a fare. La mia squadra deve essere sempre concentrata nella giusta maniera.

9) *Ultimamente stiamo vedendo un sacco di allenatori che dalla panchina fanno molte scene, che di solito fanno i giocatori... anche quando la loro squadra segna un gol. Dalla sua vasta esperienza e conoscenza, pensa che queste azioni motivino i giocatori?*

No non credo che i giocatori fanno caso a queste cose.

10) *L'allenatore deve solo essere efficace, in altre parole ottimizzare la 'performance' dei giocatori sul campo. Qual è la percentuale che Lei attribuisce a) all'allenamento dalla panchina (durante la partita) b) alla preparazione e agli allenamenti durante la settimana c) ottima atmosfera spogliatoio d) altri motivi.*

A) 20% b) 60% c) 20% d) 0%

11) *La tua squadra, La Nazionale Maltese gioca un calcio molto difensivo e nella metà vostra del campo... che cosa si corregge dalla panchina? - più aggressività, più movimenti tattici, strategia...?*

Tutte tre sono importanti, ma l'aggressività e movimenti tattici sono quelli che si correggono di più. Per il tempo che abbiamo a disposizione, noi lavoriamo solo su queste cose. È una scelta strategica anche per mancanza di ali.

12) *Un buon allenatore fa le sostituzioni giuste al momento giusto. Qual è il segreto della sostituzione? È sicuramente qualcosa che può controllare, ma qual è la probabilità che erano efficaci?*

È un'abilità dell'allenatore nel sapere leggere momenti opportuni.

13) Lei è riuscito a trasmettere il giusto approccio ai suoi giocatori. Essi hanno assimilato questo e sono abbastanza coerenti. Le sue istruzioni dalla panchina (durante la partita) sono diventati meno o sta ancora correggendo le stesse cose?

Si cambia solo per sistema tattico o per stanchezza o per infortunio durante la partita.

- 1) *Dall'esterno, sembra una persona molto calma, Lei assorbe la pressione affinché la squadra possa giocare con più facilità?*

la vera fortuna è essere calmi davvero, i giocatori devono avere la giusta motivazione, non pressione

- 2) *Quando vede che il gioco o gli avversari stanno cambiando il tuo piano di gioco, prima di fare modifiche sia tattiche che tecniche, parla con il suo personale prima di cambiare qualcosa?*

il confronto serve sempre, si prendono in considerazione più punti di vista

- 3) *Come affronta situazioni nello spogliatoio quando si verificano conflitti tra giocatori?*

i conflitti non sono tutti uguali, e le situazioni vanno affrontate, cercando comunque coerenza, nella loro specificità

- 4) *Lei ha allenato diverse squadre di un certo calibro, Lei ha cambiato il suo stile di leadership nello spogliatoio?*

cambiano le squadre, ma cambiamo anche noi, di sicuro nel tempo ho cambiato e riveduto molte cose

- 5) *Come tratta i Media prima di una partita? Prima di lasciare qualsiasi commento, pensa come potrebbero reagire i giocatori (sia positivamente che negativamente)?*

relativamente, con i giocatori il rapporto è continuo e molto più diretto, i veri messaggi passano lì, non attraverso i media

- 6) *Come fa a trattare giocatori infortunati nello spogliatoio? Soprattutto se questi possono essere i migliori giocatori.(campioni).*

i giocatori prima di tutto sono uomini, e quando sono infortunati è importante che sentano vicinanza e siano resi partecipi, sia quelli importanti che quelli che lo sono un po' meno, con loro sempre una parola in più

- 7) *Quanto importante è il capitano nella sua squadra, quando da istruzioni dalla panchina?*

a volte è importante, ma non sempre chi porta la fascia, per vari motivi, è leader

8) *Quant'è la pressione durante la settimana? Come gestisce la situazione con i giocatori e il suo staff?*

dopo tanti anni la routine del lavoro settimanale aiuta a gestire la pressione e incanalarla nella direzione che di volta in volta si ritiene più giusta

9) *Ultimamente stiamo vedendo un sacco di allenatori che dalla panchina fanno molte scene, che di solito fanno i giocatori... anche quando la loro squadra segna un gol. Dalla sua vasta esperienza e conoscenza, pensa che queste azioni motivino i giocatori?*

penso che ognuno debba essere se stesso, senza cercare finzioni, i giocatori se ne accorgono subito

10) *L'allenatore deve solo essere efficace, in altre parole ottimizzare la 'performance' dei giocatori sul campo. Qual è la percentuale che Lei attribuisce a) all'allenamento dalla panchina (durante la partita) b) alla preparazione e agli allenamenti durante la settimana c) ottima atmosfera spogliatoio d) altri motivi.*

ottimo spogliatoio 50, la settimana 30, gestione della partita 20

11) *La sua squadra gioca un calcio molto aggressivo... che cosa si corregge dalla panchina? - più aggressività, più movimenti tattici, strategia...?*

l'aggressività dipende dal tipo di gruppo e più in generale dall'atteggiamento giorno dopo giorno, poi ogni partita presenta esigenze diverse

12) *Un buon allenatore fa le sostituzioni giuste al momento giusto. Qual è il segreto delle sostituzioni? È sicuramente qualcosa che può controllare, ma qual è la probabilità che erano efficaci?*

non ci sono ricette, l'esperienza, e credo anche aver giocato, sicuramente aiutano, a volte si è efficaci ma a volte si sbaglia, è un aspetto del nostro sport

13) *Lei ha una grande squadra che la assiste – assistente allenatore, preparatore fisico, medico della squadra... consultate fra di voi durante la partita? E' se la risposta è sì, Lei fa le modifiche da tali consultazioni?*

dipende, come detto, ascolto più opinioni per non scartare un'idea a priori, poi agisco come mi sembra più giusto

14) *Lei è riuscito a trasmettere il giusto approccio ai suoi giocatori. Essi hanno assimilato questo e sono abbastanza coerenti. Le sue istruzioni dalla panchina (durante la partita) sono diventati meno o sta ancora correggendo le stesse cose?*

in generale credo sia utile ripetere le cose una volta in più, piuttosto che una in meno.

Roberto Martinez

(Transcribed from video)

- 1) *How do you deal with injured players in the dressing room? Especially if these can be top players.*

The injured players must be kept always under your wing. They are all important and it is more important to get them ready as fast as possible.

- 2) *How important is your team captain?*

He is very important to my dressing room. The team captain has to know the standards of the dressing room. I let the players make the standards of the dressing room. Then the captain has to have the power to control that. It is important that my team captain and myself, work on the same wavelengths, and the reason why it has to be like this is because if there is an adversity in the dressing room the captain and the coach have to help the other players to find solutions to keep the standards of the dressing room.

- 3) *Between an international fixture and another there is quite some time, during this period of time do you still speak with your players? And if yes, you do it because you want to keep a healthy dressing room or because it is your style?*

Yes I do speak as I want to have still communication with my players and knowing how they are doing.

- 4) *You have coached various club teams (Swansea, Wigan and Everton) and now the Belgian National Team; all these teams have a distinctive style of play. Did you change their style or improved their style and what should a coach do when he takes over a team with a particular style of play?*

First of all a coach needs to adapt to situations. As a coach you need to know what coach you want to be. As coach you need to know if you are going to be a defensive coach, an attacking coach or manager (in England) or you stay away from the training pitches and allow your staff to do the training. So it is important that you have clear ideas of what type of coach you want to be. You need to highlight the strengths of the team you are coaching and improve on that. And that is what I did with all the teams that I managed so far.

- 5) *You have a great team with you – assistant coach, physical trainer, team doctor ... do you consult with any of these during the game and do you make any changes from such consultations?*

Yes sure, during game I consult with my assistant coach, but all decisions are taken by me and I am responsible for all decisions taken.

- 6) *What emphasis do you put on effective communicating between you and the players?*

I find that it easier when you speak their mother language, especially when you need to speak with them on individual basis. Otherwise you speak with them as a group. The more you communicate with players the more open they are with you. It is very important to communicate with the players, if you avoid communicating with the players you will lose them on the first day. The players have to feel that they are important in the team.

- 7) *How do you communicate between staff?*

Yes sure, I changed a lot from my previous years of coaching, before I used to prepare and do everything myself. But after seven years of experience in the English Premier League I changed completely. We do communicate with each other and share opinions. Before every training session we meet two hours before and discuss all issues and matters. With experience you will know how to anticipate the problems that might arise during the training sessions.

- 8) *Is the way of communicating with your staff in international level different then club level?*

Yes a lot; in club level you need to sit down every day and go into detail as you have a game every four days, whilst in international level you have more time to prepare and discuss. At club level it is very essential communicating with your staff.