

THE FUTURE OF THE GAME – DICK BATES (EUFA INSTRUCTOR) January 2009

Presentation to NSCAA staff at the NSCAA convention – based on assessment of top European Leagues and Champions League

- I. Athletic & Physiological Changes**
 - A. Increased distances covered – 13K Normal (50% more than 40 years ago)**
 - B. Increased speed of those distances (high intensity runs doubled in last 6 years)**
 - C. Increased emphasis on speed and power**
 - D. Increased ball speed and speed of players**
 - E. Increased use of number of subs.**
 - F. Increased strength of players**
 - G. Increased number of direction changes – greater agility required**
 - *Arsenal:**
 - 1 – covered more distance at 7 meters/second than any other team**
 - 2 – 10 Arsenal players in the top 60 for 20 meter speed**
 - 3 – Fabregas – 350 meters – highest intensity running in 30 minutes**
 - *Future Physical “Shifts?”**
 - 1 – Physical attributes to be enhanced**
 - 2 – Training to be more individualized**
 - 3 – Power and speed will be major attributes**
 - 4 – Genetic screening – presently illegal, But**
- II. Technical/Tactical Changes**
 - A. Expanded systemic and tactical variety**
 - 1 – Need 11 technical players**
 - 2 – GK’s employed feet 7 times more than hands**
 - 3 – Need “technically effective” defenders in possession**
 - 4 – The modern fullback - Clichy, Evra, Cole, Abidal, Zambrotta, Boswinga, etc.**
 - 5 – Increased positional interchanges (i.e. #9 and #10)**
 - 6 – Anchor midfield player or players now more prominent**
 - 7 – midfield movement and interchange more prominent**
 - 8 – More “wrong footers” playing in wide positions**
 - 9 – More teams building and attacking centrally – through rather than around the defense**
 - 10 – More teams passing into and inside penalty area**
 - 11 – More teams defending later (deeper)**
 - 12 – More counter-attacking teams**
 - 13 – Prominence of Zone 14 (central attacking area outside “D”) – In EPL more attempts at goal and more goals scored as a result of balls from this zone**

- 14 – Multi-purpose wide players
- 15 – Semi-positions
- 16 – Prominence of withdrawn (shadow) striker
- 17 – Use of “lone” striker or no true striker at all – more fluidity of positions among top teams

1998-2008

- 1 – More teams kept possession for longer stretches
- 2 – Longer passing sequences
- 3 – More passing and receiving situations
- 4 – More passes below head height
- 5 – More goals scored off extended possession play
- 6 – More runs with ball were made

Conclusion

- 1 – Dominating Possession reduced the chance of defeat (80% of games were won or tied by the team dominating possession)
- 2 – 52% of teams dominating possession won the game

*Average number of passes per goal – 4.6 (Champions League semi-finalist throughout the competition)

*42% of goals in free play (not restarts) were from 4 passes or more

*38% were one touch goals of goals scored in run of play

*30% of goals scored were two touch

B. Significance of Counter-attacking

*Chelsea (2005-06):

42% scored from counter-attacks

44% from extended possession

38% scored from of possession of 10 seconds or less

81% of entries for counter goals came through zone 14

C. Defending Counters – Key Area

Future Necessities

1. Counter-Attacking Ability
2. Ability to Build
3. Ability to Build and Penetrate
4. Ability to Play Accurately and at Pace in Congested Areas
5. Attributes to Play a Possession Based Game
6. Attributes to Play a Mixed Tempo Game
7. Capability to Defend the Counter-Attack
8. Capability to Defend Deep and with Patience, Discipline and for Prolonged Periods of Time
9. Capability to Defend Effectively Against Team Movement
10. Capability to Break Down a Defensive “Block”
11. Ability to Inter-Play and Play Minimal Touch Football at Speed
12. The Necessity for an Assured and Varied First Touch at Speed
13. The Necessity to Retain Ball Possession – Individual and Team

14. The Ability to Master Space and Time Making Skills

15. The Necessity for Deception and the Unexpected When Appropriate

16. The Ability to Win Games without a Possession % Advantage.