

Nuggets and Bright Lines

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Playing The Long Game

So Norwich City were victorious in winning The Championship in 2019/19. A victory for the long term philosophy? There are many quotes that have come from the media stories of Norwich's success but the most relevant seem to be the ones that portray the calm focus of a club who know their process.

Stuart Webber, Norwich's Sporting Director, has been quoted as saying that he does not read Twitter, preferring to ignore the noise and instead concentrate on successful implementation of a considered strategy of that includes employing the right people, being open minded and promoting young players from within.

I don't think it is so much the strategy that is the attractive jewel here, rather the confidence of ignoring the noise and focus on what is important to them. As Webber has previously alluded to, they are playing the long game and with that comes a peace that relegates the social noise to where it belongs.

We sail very close to Cal Newport here, who in 'Deep Work' talks poignantly about the benefits of focus and eradication of the unnecessary to bring about great results and a sense of happiness, uncommon in the digital frenzy of information overload.

The prolific exponent of Stoic Philosophy, Ryan Holiday wrote an excellent article about how the first draft of anything is rarely, if ever at the required standard. He discusses in depth the tendency of the world to assume the instant successes of every new wonder of literature, music or sport that hits the headlines or goes viral. He cites example after example of iconic writers, artists, industrialists and producers who's journeys were littered with 'back to the drawing board' experiences. The directive: to jump through more obstacles, refine, edit or practice time and again to satisfy an ego busting editor, coach or manager.

It all takes time, patience, resilience, vision, persistence and down right hard work. It's George Leonard's plateau, the process and purification of the forge. Infuriating and irrational the way may seem, it is the way. It will be a testing crucifixion walk, ask anyone who has done anything worthwhile. This is where the beauty lies. Many will not begin, fewer will finish.

It's the long game. It's the only game nature ever plays. Consistently, persistently, quietly, assuredly and on and on and on. Back to the opening subject of this article, well done Norwich City. A fine example and a lesson for us all in the quest for sustained success.

The Author

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This is why Stuart Webber, Norwich City's Sporting Director, said: "I have a sign up here in my office - ignore the noise. ***Don't read Twitter, because they don't know.***"

When he arrived at Carrow Road in April 2017, one of the first things the Welshman did was to implement a philosophy.

"We came back to three things - employ someone who can implement a certain style of play, be open-minded in the transfer market and promote young players from within."

Norwich finished 14th in Daniel Farke's first season in charge, in 2017/18, leading some to call for the German's head, but ***Webber was playing the long game.***

"Our criteria wasn't just win, win, win," he said. "If that was the case, Daniel wouldn't still be here after last season."

Now Norwich are top of the Championship with 15 games to go and eased past local rivals Ipswich 3-0 last weekend. Have others learned to ignore the noise?