

Nuggets and Bright Lines

- *Determine your coaching style*
- *Determine your coaching strategy*
- *Think outside the box*
- *Put the team before yourself*



Lessons From Sir Clive Woodward

You know when you have one of those moments when you hear or are reminded of something really powerful that resonates with you? This morning I listened to the third episode of Joey Barton's podcast 'The Edge', which by the way is fantastic. In this episode Joey interviews 2003 England World Cup winning coach Sir Clive Woodward.

Coaching Style

Sir Clive talks about, amongst other things, the way in which coaching within football differs from coaching in rugby and other sports. The primary difference he highlighted was the way in which in football coaching involves predominantly a one-way communication, directive and methodology whereas in rugby and the other sports it is much more a two way model. In this two way model coaches, athletes and players engage in more discussion and analysis with a stronger feedback mechanism compared to the uni directional directive approach commonly seen in football.

This highlights stark and key differences which when you consider that professional football is almost in a standalone position regarding the financial aspect of the industry at the top level.

What I'm not doing here is commenting on whether this is good or bad, positive or negative. What I am saying is that it has to be a subject worthy of analysis. It could well be that it is professional football and academy youth development that is predominantly on the right track and that the other sports are lagging behind. It could be that rugby and the other sports are blazing a trail and leaving football behind or indeed. It could well be that neither one is better than the other and a binary process of analysis is not a good one to use in the analysis process. No matter what the reality this debate has certainly gives food for thought. More recently in football there has been a definite swing away by the educational departments who are advocating a much more discussion, question and answer type process of teaching the game. There are many who consider this is appropriate for development to facilitate independent decision makers where as at the cutting edge of the professional industry there is no room for the time it takes for such learning to occur.

The need for results is the dictating factor. This does not however answer the question as to why the highlighted difference between the two sports.

Coaching Strategy

Another big rock of information that I gleaned from listening to Sir Clive this morning has been his approach to enhancing performance by chunking down the game or sport into what he calls 'big headlines'. He talked about how he has broken skiing down into six major constituent parts and how when he was at Southampton he broke the game down from a coaching perspective into ten constituent parts. He then went on to say how he would then further break each of those constituent parts into finer detail and then come up with six or seven sub points. So in essence under the banner heading the sport you would have a number of headline areas broken down into a further set of finer detail coaching points. No one is saying that this is new and never been tried before. It is just another way of organising your thought processes around your coaching to give you a focus and a session strategy. In football at the professional end particularly the game schedule would be a significant determining factor in the coaching focus. The areas and sub areas noted above are an excellent basis for a syllabus formation for young players.

Thinking Outside The Box

So what else was there of note in Joey's interview with Sir Clive? The next bright light was the reference to the QC that he involved with international rugby. There was, he says, an illuminating and positive influence as a result of the presence of the respected professional, with a different perspective that added significant value to the journey. How many of us would benefit from such a situation? Is this something we should be looking to do more of? Do we shy away from allowing individuals from outside our arena the opportunity to add value because of our own inherent insecurity?

Ego

Finally see Clive talked eloquently about a number of people in his industry. He cited Eddie Jones the current England Rugby Coach, Jason Robinson, as well as another player who was very critical of him in his early days as England coach and who he later appointed as a coach at a club he was at. Sir Clive was very generous in his approbation of these characters when it would be very easy for him to be critical and certainly less approving. This certainly shows the mindset of the man and gives us a lesson on relationships, self-image and the route to success. How many people would be capable to putting success before personal issue and preferences?

So there we have four stand out takeaways from Sir Clive's interview. They are four points with a rounded balance of coaching, strategy and management and personal leadership. A perfect fit for us at Leader Manager Coach.

The Author

Rob is a UEFA qualified coach with a League Managers Association qualification and a science and medicine background. He has worked in the football industry in Europe, The USA, Asia and Africa; at International, Premiership, League, Non-League and grass roots levels with both World Cup and European Championship experience.



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