

## **The Coaching Philosophies of Louis Van Gaal and the Ajax Coaches**

By Henny Kormelink and Tjeu Seeverens

“Soccer is a team sport, and the members of the team are therefore dependent on each other. If certain players do not carry out their tasks properly on the pitch, than their colleagues will suffer. This means that each player has to carry out his basic tasks to the best of his ability, and this requires a disciplined approach on the pitch. In my opinion this can only be achieved if there is also discipline off the pitch.” (p.2)

This quote opens the book, showing the reader that this is not intended to be read by an introductory coach. Van Gaal is a strong believer in team building on the pitch. Players need to accept, and carry out, their role (assigned tasks) that the coach (must clearly) give them in order for a team to function properly. Van Gaal was one of the first top level coaches to take notes during a match. Here is his reasoning:

The soccer notebook that I always have with me in the dugout attracts a lot of remarks. For me it's an extremely valuable aid, so it's not important what other people think. First I always jot down the collective mistakes that go against pre-planned tactics....Next, I always note down individual mistakes of course. This way I have a logical sequence of aspects about which I can talk to the players during the interval. The chance of forgetting something important is negligible.

In addition I use my notes for the post-match team talk, for other forms of communication with the players, and of course for putting together the drills for the training sessions after the game is over. (p.6)

Van Gaal and his staff are very detail oriented in everything they do. There is constant communication about which drills are appropriate for that day's training, how to scout players, how to gauge fitness, even going as far as deciding what ball should be used in training.

The book offers information on:

- The Ajax System
- Proper Drill Selection
- How to Rehabilitate from Injury
- Searching for Talent
- Goalkeeper Programs
- Coordination and Fitness Training
- Teambuilding

This is an exceptional resource for any experienced coach, but is inappropriate for a novice coach. It is a fantastic book with plenty of useful information for coaches looking to further their knowledge of the game.

**Highly Recommend: U12 and above**

Cary Memorial Library Call # [796.334 K](#)