

# Steve Willis – a curious mind







# Sporting Intelligence

- A possible definition.
- Being able to consistently make the right choices, at the right time.
- What is the purpose of training?
- 'It's not about being the best at technical aspects, but rather being the person who is most capable of reading the situation, and then doing something meaningful with the information.'
- Every team needs people who fly under the radar and fulfil their role with quiet efficiency.
- Jason Dodd - [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason\\_Dodd](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jason_Dodd)

## Jason Dodd

Personal information		
Full name	Jason Robert Dodd	
Date of birth	2 November 1970 (age 47)	
Place of birth	Bath, England	
Height	5 ft 7 in (1.70 m)	
Playing position	Full back	
Club information		
Current team	Winchester College	(coach)
Youth career		
	Bath City	
Senior career*		
Years	Team	Apps (Gls)
1988–1989	Bath City	11 (1)
1989–2005	Southampton	398 (9)
2004	→ Plymouth Argyle (loan)	4 (0)
2005	Brighton & Hove Albion	7 (0)
2006	Eastleigh	3 (0)
Total		412 (9)
National team		
1990–1991	England U21	8 (0)
Teams managed		
2006–2007	Eastleigh	
2008	Southampton (joint-caretaker)	
2009	Aldershot Town (Caretaker)	
* Senior club appearances and goals counted for the domestic league only		

# Summary

- Ronaldo/Messi may get the headlines for their flare and brilliance, but fancy tricks won't define how far someone progresses in the game of football.
- Having a mature thought process is far more important in development than technical ability.
- Listen and absorb the guidance you are given. Think about how you can use it to improve your 'Sporting Intelligence'.
- 'You have to improve game intelligence. The mind is the most important thing to work on in football' - Xavi.
- Roles & Responsibilities.

# Self Coaching

- Analyse strengths.
- Analyse areas for improvement.
- Use of video.
- Set your own strategy; then discuss it and agree refinements with your coach. Think like a coach and design sessions for yourself and your team?
- Expand your mind to consider what you can learn from other sports and specialist experts.
- Dave Alred - Rugby, Football, Golf, Tennis etc.
- Ponder this:
- If you repeat what you already know, the path to becoming an expert will be slow. Instead, constantly seek to stretch and challenge yourself via self-analysis. When reflecting on training sessions and matches, always give yourself credit for what went well. But also embrace the situations which were not successful and regard them as learning opportunities for refinement of your skills.
- Books to read. Soccer Tough 1 & 2 - Dan Abrahams. The Pressure Principle - Dave Alred. How bad do you want it? – Matt Fitzgerald.

# Commitment - the three levels

## Level 1.

- You show up. You do exactly what you are asked to do; nothing more and nothing less. You get a little better, gradually.

## Level 2.

- You show up. You do what you are asked, and target certain tasks that'll help you towards your goal. You push yourself, think about the detail of what you are doing. You get a lot better.

## Level 3.

- You show up, having thought about how today's activity fits into the larger goal you are working towards. You work very hard, pushing yourself into the discomfort zone over and over, with full commitment. Later, you reflect and analyse your performance with a cool, objective eye. You get a lot better and make a quantum leap.

## The questions to ask.

- Where are you now?
- Where do you want to be tomorrow, next week, next month etc.?
- Why do you want to get there?

# Summary

- Take responsibility for your development.
- Always know where you have been and where you are going.

# Language

- When thinking or talking about your development, always try to use 'yet' or 'I will' or 'I'm going to', instead of 'never', 'can't' or any other negative words.
- Example - 'I'm not very good at **xxx**.'
- Example - 'I must stop doing **xxx**.'
- Example - 'Don't give the ball away.'
- How about.....
- Example - 'I haven't mastered **xxx** yet, but I know what I need to work on to improve.'
- Example - When I'm able to **xxx** this, it will help me and the team with **xxx**'

# Summary

- Self-talk and discussions with your parents/coaches must always be positive.
- If you hear negative words from your coach, parents or teammates, challenge them (in a respectful manner) to rephrase in a positive way.
- Take responsibility for your development by committing to the use of positive language.
- Read the link posted on FB/Twitter a while ago (Deena Kastor) - how positive language can influence everything you do. Search Deena Kastor on [www.runnersworld.com](http://www.runnersworld.com)

# Visualisation

- Is it just day-dreaming?
- No - it's very powerful and widely used by top sports people across many disciplines.
- When is it most effective?
- Make it real. Imagine scenarios through your own eyes at pitch level.
- Use visualisation to support the things you do well, but imagine it being even better.
- Use it for improvement - by picking current unsuccessful situations and visualising a good outcome over and over and over again.

# Summary

- Visualisation is an important/crucial tool in learning, improving skills and correcting (current) areas of weakness.
- Take responsibility for your development.

# The process and matching intention

- In other words - the journey (process) and the destination (intention).
- The destination is important - scoring a goal, hitting an accurate 30 metre pass etc.
- Is it more important than the journey?
- You should always set a target, but without getting the fundamentals right, it is fair to say that the destination is unlikely to be reached.
- Stairway to Heaven - Led Zeppelin.
- Thought:
- We all learn differently and at varying speeds. But only through commitment to the process can mastery be obtained.
- Recent experiences - discuss.

# Summary

- Concentrate on the task and let the outcome look after itself.  
Examples:
- Striker - clean hit and on target.
- Goalkeeper - watch the ball and get something behind it.
- Defender - show the attacker where you want him to go.
- Midfielder - see the pass and go for it.

# Anxiety/nerves

- Welcome the feelings?
- Yes - it means the task in hand is important and worth being nervous about. It matters.
- Confidence. What does it mean to you?

# Summary

- Being nervous is part of sport and life in general (exams/job interviews etc).
- A useful quote...
- ‘It’s not a case of getting rid of the butterflies, it’s a question of getting them to fly in formation.’
- Use self-talk to put it in perspective ‘this is great, it’s what I love doing, I’m ready for it.’
- Try to think about confidence in terms of being courageous and giving your best effort, rather than worrying about the best outcome (Process/Intention).

# Adrenaline – beyond anxiety

- What is it? Where does it come from?
- Friend or enemy?
- It can be both.
- Video - when it's corrosive.

# Paul Gascoigne

1991 FA Cup Semi-Final & Final



# Adrenaline – beyond anxiety

- Video - when it's powerful.

# Usain Bolt

2012 Olympic 100 Metres final



# Summary

- Just like anxiety, recognising the stimulus of adrenaline is important.
- It can help or hinder, but when it's harnessed properly, it is the most powerful tool in any sportsperson's armoury.
- Use self-talk to recognise when adrenaline is present and put it in perspective.

# Clear the rubbish

- Is self-talk important?
- When should it be used?
- Mainly before/after training and matches, or when there is a natural break in play and reflection can be helpful to refocus.
- When is a clear mind important?
- During the activity itself - because too much thought can be destructive.
- Jonathan Trott - former England cricketer.

# Summary

- A clear mind during play is important.
- Develop your own mantra to 'clear the rubbish'.
- Example - touch/pass.
- Example - strike through and clean.
- Example - save/distribute.
- A trigger to use?
- Or, another way if you prefer.....
- Make a list of all negative/distracting thoughts you experience. Update this after training and matches (Laurence Halsted - Olympic Fencer had 4 pages of A4!).
- Use the 3R technique:
- Recognise.
- Respond/Release.
- Refocus.

# Dislocation of expectation

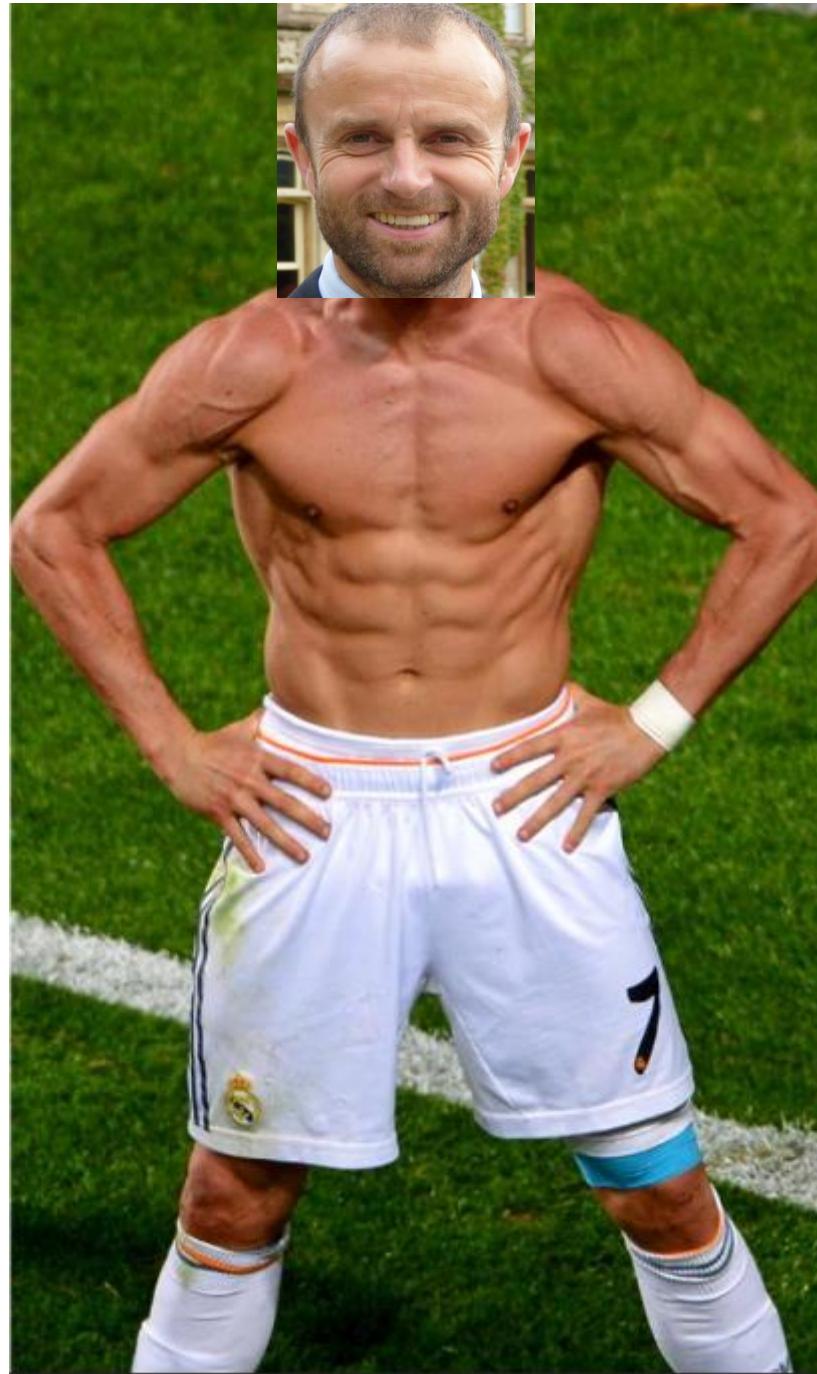
- Does anyone know what this means?
- Example - cricket bat handle.
- Example - stuck in traffic.
- Example - hot weather/cold weather.
- Example - grass or 3G.
- Example - opposition mind games.
- Example - swimming goggles.
- How do you deal with it?
- Michael Phelps.
- Have a plan for the most likely scenarios - perhaps a shorter warm up routine?
- Use visualisation - see yourself being calm in an anxious situation.

# Summary

- Sport (and life) will always throw up unexpected situations.
- Learn to recognise and label.
- Be ready for them at every moment!
- Share it with your team if you spot something, and make light of it - 'Come on, it's just DOE'.

# Command posture

- What does this mean?
- Can you give me an example of commanding posture.









# Summary

- Try to keep your emotions in check. If you can't control something, why worry? Poor pitch, wind, referee etc.
- Keep a sense of balance in good times and bad.
- But always project the image that an error doesn't matter - a clever opponent will use this against you.
- Work with your teammates to develop a code to support each other - shouting out 'keep your head up' simply attracts attention.
- Can anyone give me an example of what tactic might be used?
- 'People are insecure by nature. Even those who seem the most confident often have doubts.'

# Affirmation statements

- Who can tell me what this is and what it does?
- What role does this tool play in what we have been discussing today?
- Who has written one before?
- How many of you have edited the original document?

# Summary

- An affirmation statement supports positive thinking and development.
- It should be part of your self-coaching strategy/self-talk - to underline your strengths.
- Take responsibility for your development.

# For the coaches and parents – some quotes

- ‘Why understanding the teenage brain is key to coaching.’ Read this article: <http://www.trainingground.guru/articles/why-understanding-the-teenage-brain-is-key-to-coaching#.Wro2B0hF-Mh.twitter>
- ‘Personalisation helps the player to see the benefit through their own eyes, thus increasing the likelihood they will perform a drill with a sense of purpose.’
- ‘When coaching and leading others, you need to see the world with your eyes, but think with your listeners’ minds.’

# For the coaches and parents – some quotes cont'd

- Your job is not to prepare the path for the player, but to prepare the player for the path.'
- 'The best of anything cannot be rushed. Patience, in a coaching context, is how we behave while we're waiting.'
- 'Coach in colour. Use vivid pictures to explain.'
- Learn something new – it's the only way to empathise with the student.'
- And finally....
- 'The response we get is the meaning of the message.'

# Need inspiration for when it gets tough?

- Look up Heather Dornidon on YouTube. Genuinely, nothing is impossible.

Any questions?