

Making The Team

High Calibre Recommendations

- Heard whispers about the ‘mystery methods’ of the Milan Lab?
- Feel you should know more about those sports theory books on the shelves?
- Wish you could make sense of all that talk about expert psychology, nutrition and conditioning?

We'll look no further – it's all here, in a clear, precise form.

We have worked our way through the stacks of theory books, saying to ourselves, ‘So in simple, clear English that means...’, we have translated it into a format you can follow, understand and use, shaped to the unique demands of this complex and demanding sport. We've also applied it in a wide variety of soccer settings – at youth, academy, semi-pro and professional levels. We've found out what works and what doesn't, and our experience is reflected in this handbook.

So, here is practical information you can actually USE to make an immediate impact on your performance on the pitch. We have identified the best advice, scientifically proven and tested in practice. Then, from our own experience of what works best, we have given it our own unique slant.

What's in The Handbook?

- A complete, football-specific programme of mental preparation and motivational techniques
- Clear, no-frills instructions on how to eat and drink to ensure you play to your highest standard.
- A checklist of the factors to consider to ensure top-quality fitness conditioning
- Advice about how to achieve all of those 5 C's – Consistency, Concentration, Composure, Commitment and Confidence: all in one, easy-to-navigate place!

Some of the questions we answer

- How do I hold onto and improve my self- confidence?
- What can mental preparation add to my game?
- How do I play my best, consistently, at all times?
- How can I prolong my career for as long as possible?

Rob Edwards Introduction

“I first started working with Jim towards the end of my spell at Huddersfield Town. I was already at the ‘veteran’ stage by then, and like all pro footballers, I obviously wanted my playing career to go on for as long as possible, especially as I was Captain of the Club. Jim had already produced really good results from using his techniques with a couple of my team-mates, and they recommended that I should go and do a couple of sessions with him.

At the time, I was out of the first team, and I feared my career might be drawing to a disappointing close. The sessions with Jim had an immediate impact, and I was back in the first team within weeks. From then on, we met regularly, using all the mental preparation techniques described in this book, pretty much as they stand here. The methods were clear, practical and easy to apply, and I used them consistently, both in matches and in training. They undoubtedly had a direct, totally positive effect on my performances on the pitch.

During my final season at Huddersfield Town, I worked with Jim on the Friday before matches. The strategies we used gradually became more varied and detailed. We worked on the Reframing and Internal Dialogue ideas, as well as techniques such as Goal Setting and Objective Thinking. Every time I used a new technique, I felt its positive influence on the pitch. As my powers of concentration and confidence grew, every dimension of my game improved. Even at that late stage of my career, my game was developing, and I held onto my first team place for the rest of the season until I picked up an injury.

Looking back, I really feel in all honesty that I could have played to a consistently even higher standard if I’d had access to these preparation strategies when I was younger. I had an enjoyable, fulfilling career, but I can’t help wondering what I could have achieved if I’d been able to use Jim’s methods of psychological training from the early days. I honestly believe these ideas can hold the answer to one of the most difficult areas in football – how to remain self-confident in all situations. Here in the Making the Team manual, you’ll find clear guidance about nutrition and physical training as well as mental preparation strategies. Again, these are areas we used to get little advice about, even at pretty high levels of the professional ladder. It was obvious from looking around the football world that a programme linking these things together could help bring success, but the specific expertise didn’t always seem to be there.

This manual pinpoints the key conditioning strategies and, crucially, helps you build the mental strength to put them effectively into practice. Jim has taken the time and the trouble to write his techniques down, just as he used them with me and my team mates, and I urge you to read them and get using them straight away. I recommend these methods without hesitation, because I saw first-hand how they worked for me.

Robin Wray

“With over 40 years of coaching experience from grass roots to the highest level, the knowledge I have assimilated tends to be very fragmented with much of it being stored in my head and the rest in various files around the house.

Coaches in today’s game need a much wider knowledge of its many different aspects and new concepts which improve performance. Whilst in the past technique, skill and basic fitness were enough, now individual fitness programs, psychology and nutrition improve personal performance and are an integral part of the scientific preparation for winning matches.

With the advent of Sky and the huge amounts of revenue coming into the game, many clubs at the highest level are able to employ specialists in each discipline either full time staff or consultants on a part-time basis. They are experts in their own field and are able to draw on the recent explosion of nutritional, physiological and psychological knowledge from research which has taken place over the last decade.

“This book encompasses all these disciplines and as such is a valuable source of knowledge which will aid coaches working at all levels of the game.”

Experience

Head of Faculty of Sports Science Leisure and Recreation (Barnsley College)

Finalists E.S.F.A. U18 Trophy

Winners E.S.F.A. U18 Trophy

Winners British Colleges Championship

Youth Coach Huddersfield Town A.F.C. Runners-up F.A. Youth Cup

Youth Coach Sheffield Wednesday A.F.C. Runners up F.A. Youth Cup

Youth Coach Leeds United A.F.C.

Twice winners F.A Youth Cup

Players coached

Paul Garner, Steven Spriggs, Bob Newton, Mel Stirland, Mark Smith, Peter Shirliffe, John Pearson, Siggy Johnsson, Gavin Oliver, Brian Cox, Bob Boulder, Jonathon Woodgate, Harry Kewell, Paul Robinson, Stephen McPhail, Alan Maybury, Gary Kelly, Andy Grey, Jon Stead, Jon Wothington, Andy Holdsworth, Nathan Clarke and Nicky Byrne (Westlife)