Youth Players Information Thread

Posted by STLCoach - 20 Mar 2009 09:01

When a long ball is played into the opponents defensive players and you aren't able to win the first ball (meaning, the opponent will get to the ball before you will), many players will realize that they can try to win the second ball. This simply means conceding that the opponent will make the first touch of the ball so you try to take advantage of what might be a bad first touch and you win the second touch.

For example, the red player plays a long ball because they are under pressure and it goes toward the red central defender. A yellow forward is laying back with the idea that they will be able to win the second ball.
The problem with this is that the yellow central defender isn't being put under any pressure at all and as a result of this, most likely will be able to receive the ball with the first touch and keep it under control and away from the red player.
In order to win the second touch, the first touch usually needs to be pressured. When possible, this would be done with a second player. Next example, The same ball is played in but now, instead of the red player staying back and hoping to win a second touch, he pressures the player and a second player on his team comes in to win the bad touch.
By pressuring the ball, it changes things from hoping for a bad touch to creating the bad touch by the opponent. This greatly increases the likelihood of you, or your teammate, winning the ball and creating a goal scoring opportunity.

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Youth Player How to overhead kick like ROONEY

Posted by STLCoach - 09 Mar 2011 09:17

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Messi 'I play like a child'

Posted by STLCoach - 05 May 2011 08:42

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explains his artistry:
By Paul Gardner

Watching Lionel Messi play soccer gives me an intense delight. The only other player who comes close to creating the free-spirited aura of enjoyment that Messi displays is Cristiano Ronaldo. But Messi is really in a class of his own.

I'm tempted, every time I write about Messi, to make artistic comparisons, because, as I see it, it is the artistry in Messi's play that gives it a special quality.

So Messi is the Mozart of soccer? Not a bad comparison, that. Mozart was famously on the receiving end of a notorious criticism from Emperor Joseph II -- "Too many notes, Mozart," -- and you will often hear Messi accused of taking too many touches on the ball, of over-elaborating. True? Who knows?

When imaginative genius is turned on, is there any stopping it? Should it be curtailed, reined in to satisfy the mundane notions of lesser mortals?

A disciplined Mozart, a disciplined Messi ... does any of that sound right to you? Disciplined by whom? Frankly, when I watch Messi, I find myself regretting that there aren't more touches from this enchanting little master.

Enchanting, then. Yes, I believe that's the word to describe Messi, for he leaves me spellbound. Not just me, not just the other spectators, but -- surely -- he is also casting a magical spell over his opponents, who can be seen, time and time again, shaking their heads at the wonder of what Messi has just done, no doubt in awe at the thought that there seems to be nothing they can do to stem this inspired force.

There is a further, lovely, link between Mozart and Messi. That of the boy genius. Mozart wrote his first opera when he was 12 years old -- his musical genius was already overflowing his small body. If you've seen those shaky videos of the young, tiny Messi scoring goals at will, you know that a joyful flowing stream of Mozart notes, too many of them of course, is the music that should go with the boyish impishness that was Messi in those not-so-far-off days (Messi was 12 years old as recently as 1999).

Such is the overwhelming sense of artistry that Messi conveys, that it's quite natural to talk of the poetry in his play. And the voice that comes to my mind is that of another young genius, John Keats, most sensual of poets, and with him comes a reminder of the sheer beauty of Messi's play.

There is great beauty in the way that Messi glides and moves on a soccer field, athletic and balletic, the qualities that make soccer such an appealing sport. It was Keats who told us that "Beauty is truth, truth beauty -- that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know."

In displaying the beauty that soccer can bring, Messi also reveals the truth -- too often hidden in this era -- that beauty lies at the heart of this sport. That is the real truth of soccer. Those who like to boast of playing ugly -- oh yes, there are plenty of them -- are committing a dark crime against their own sport.

Both Keats and Mozart lived in times when death often struck early; Mozart was dead at 35, Keats at 25. Their art never lost its boyishness, it never had the time to become old. We shall have Messi for a good many years yet ... can we hope that the boyishness that lights up his game will never diminish?

Yes, it seems we can. Messi -- in a short, simple, elegant statement given to Italy's "Sette" magazine -- has let us know what playing soccer means to him. As Keats would want it, it is so beautifully described, it can only be the truth. Hear ye:

"I do everything through instinct, I play like a child ... I think about myself on a small field, or in the street, I see myself with the ball in the same way as I am now. I have not changed at all. You must remember soccer is a game to have fun and you play for that. I don't plan or anticipate my play."

A superb cri de coeur from a 23-year-old who believes, who feels that the right way to play soccer is as a boy, with all the boyish enthusiasms and delights -- and the naivete too, of course.

From Mozart and Keats to Karl Marx is quite a leap, but Messi, in those sharp, shining sentences has -- unwittingly, no doubt -- written a Manifesto for today's players, revealing to them that they play this game far too often under the shadow of the mind-controllers, the joy-destroyers, the coaches.

How much more subversive of modern coaching theories can you get than to proclaim that you do everything by instinct? That you still play the way you did as a boy, that you haven't changed at all? That you play for fun? That you don't anticipate or plan anything?

Players of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your tactical chains! No, of course not, Messi is not looking to start a revolution, at least not with his words. If changes come to soccer from Messi, they will come because of the extraordinary things he does on the field.

When you've been watching Messi at his majestic best, it is sometimes very difficult indeed to turn to a so-so game and see what a supposedly well-coached and well-organized team expects you to enjoy.

Messi has the conclusive argument here. His soccer is not just ornamental. It scores goals, plenty of them, breath-taking goals, and it wins games. He has told us, in just 64 sturdily beautiful, everyday words, how his genius thrives. And he has shown us, with his far-from ordinary skills, just how dazzling a game soccer can be.

No doubt our highly trained coaches will dismiss Messi's truth as the misleading simplicities of a player who has never had to think about the game. And so -- quite by chance, I trust -- FIFA President Sepp Blatter has chosen this moment to announce the formation of a star-studded, 22-member Task Force that will, among other aims, seek to "improve the attractiveness of soccer."

Should the members of this group (in true FIFA tradition, it is heavily stocked with Europeans -- 13 of them -- and has just two South Americans) really want to improve the game, they should be required to start their deliberations by swearing to make Messi's happily inspiring 64-word credo their key guideline.

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