

Chapter Seventeen

Legends Lose the Ball and Games to Win Big!

Most societal problems come from individuals with the least education. In contrast, most of the great societal achievements have come from individuals with the highest levels of study and education. The majority of study and education is, by its very nature, self-centered or, put another way, "selfish". However, if young people and their penultimate teams are to achieve optimal potential, it is completely necessary. In perhaps the greatest of all historical achievements NASA assembled a team of scientists from all over the world. Each had a history of many decades of self-centered pursuit of knowledge. When they put man on the moon this team of "self-centered individuals" became the ultimate "team of brilliance". Without many decades of individual selfish study and an "out of the box" non-conformist team mentality, the mind-boggling goal of moon travel would never have been achieved. In the history of mankind all human progress has been the result of intense curiosity and enquiry, plus selfish "out of the box" creative, contrarian thinking. The "Training Soccer Legends" methodology gives the soccer player the greatest amount of self-centered knowledge and skill. Just as the pursuit of academic learning and staying in school instead of taking a job delays the ability of the young person to "win" in the economic sense, so the pursuit of elite soccer skills and phenomenal tactical speed delays the ability of the team to "win" in the statistical sense. While the team is losing the statistical game, the individuals on the team who are taking the risks necessary to learn and play a more creative style, are winning in the developmental sense. Fred Astaire puts it well, "The better you are; the more mistakes you are allowed. Right at the top, if you make enough of them, it's considered to be your style." The self-concept and confidence that players build while developing exceptional soccer skill positively affects their whole attitude to life. Your child will acquire a high self-concept when he/she becomes brilliant. Your child will make greater positive "team of brilliance" contribution in soccer and life if he or she has phenomenal skill and a great self-concept.

Your child won't develop quicker if he or she gets upset over a statistical loss. Children must be helped to identify the immediate next thing to focus and work on. They must then be encouraged to apply themselves in a positive, proactive, solution oriented manner. Emotional stress is most often paralyzing. This is minimized when the effort to make creative progress is maximized.

A complete life has a general sequence with overlapping borders as follows:

- Dependence
- Independence
- Interdependence
- Leadership (Self-Centered)
- Mentorship (Centered on the growth of others)

In team sports most coaches give only cursory attention to, or attempt to skip, the independence stage because of the incorrect early emphasis on three things, "passing/team", "winning", and "positional play". However, in individual sports there is no emphasis on team, a greater emphasis on technique than winning, (because great technique leads to winning), and no time wasted on the team specific concept of positional play. The "Training Soccer Legends" approach is unique because we have an "individual sport" emphasis on exceptional creative technique and tactical speed, (selfish pursuit of knowledge), that eventually guarantees our players the ability and self-concept to be the best of all team players, (the big play making ball wizard), later in their career when it really matters. Each individual player will eventually be a more complete team player if more developmental time is spent in the pursuit of incredible levels of creative skill acquisition and the resulting higher level of independence. This results in a great self-concept that automatically feeds the desire to make a bigger positive team contribution. In the long run individuals that spend the necessary time and effort to complete a higher level of personal knowledge education, have been shown to be the most successful in businesses, marriage and other "team" environments. This has many parallels in team sports. Michael Jordan, Magic Johnston, Wayne Gretsky, Maradona and Pele all developed a much higher level of creative individual, (selfish), technique under pressure, before learning to apply those skills to a higher level of "team" game than ever previously witnessed. However, at age 15 Pele had a nightmare game when playing for the Santos youth team because he was playing too selfishly. Just days later he played a great game for the Santos first team in the Brazilian professional league.

"Football is like a religion to me. I worship the ball, and I treat it like a god. Too many players think of a football as something to kick. They should be taught to caress it and treat it like a precious gem."

Pele

"To be successful you have to be selfish, or else you never achieve. And once you get to your highest level, then you have to be unselfish. Stay reachable. Stay in touch. Don't isolate."

Michael Jordan

Eventually a combination of maturity and external forces, (i.e. coach & team peer pressure), will force even the most incredibly gifted but selfish dribbler and goal scorer to balance their individual brilliance with a positive team contribution. However, no amount of maturity can compensate for the failure to develop individual dribbling and finishing brilliance at an early stage in ones soccer career. There has never been an instance of a truly great dribbler and goal scorer who developed these capabilities later in their career.

Important Quick Note: The "Training Soccer Legends" program is the only one that is 100% dedicated to teaching and developing the neuromuscular habit of permanent individual dribbling and shooting brilliance before focusing on the "team game". Straying from this 100% focus inevitably results in a dilution of the message and less long-term ability to dominate the immediate opponent. First focusing total concentration on the goal of individual brilliance builds the tremendous foundation of skill and self-concept from which amazing team success can be forged.