

## **Guided Discovery and Jose Mourinho**

As we progress in the game and in our coaching development, we tend to venture in and out of various coaching and teaching methodologies: whole-part-whole, rehearse-restart-replay and coaching in the game to name but a few. These methodologies eventually tend to fold, blend and merge into various elements of one's independent coaching philosophy.

I wish to offer another: Guided Discovery.

After recently reading "Luis Lourenco's book, "Jose Mourinho," Mourinho talks in-depth about his "coaching bible" and his methods on guided discovery. Admire, respect or dislike his personality, there can be no argument that he is one of the most successful current club coaches. Lourenco's book follows Mourinho's journey with FC Porto through four championships and his eventual move to Chelsea.

The methodology of Guided Discovery is based on questions and how those questions are framed to gain the answer from the player(s). The questions do not necessarily need to be verbal; they can be in the shape of a drill or tactical formation. Variables like age, ability and experience also dictate the difference in a coach's approach and application to this methodology. The skill comes from the coach knowing his players and their learning receptors (audible, visual, mental, etc.). It is the coach's position as the facilitator to create the environment to extract the response he is looking for from the player(s) or team.

When a player makes a mistake, the coach should not dismiss it as wrong. Offer your opinion as the correction, but ask, Why did you make that decision? Were there any other options available? What else can you see? Who is supporting you? How could you create other options? Can you show me? (and various other "leading" questions.)

As the player develops technically, physically and cognitively the game also becomes part of the education. After all, is there any better coach than the game itself? Within the planning and coordinating of a training session, the drill or small-sided game becomes the "question" and the players are able to continually provide different answers to the same question.

For example, when setting up an attacking practice to reinforce third-man penetration, the drill or small-sided game should be set up with this coaching question in mind: How can I as a coach create this session? The coach sets up his session, guides his players through his requests, explains how he wants his players to create third-man penetration through combination play and leaves it there. Then, he stands back, becomes a keen observer, offers the odd clue (guides), sometimes freezing the play and discusses, guides and tunes the team into the same wavelength. What combination could we use to create the channel and width prior to the penetrating pass? The players talk and discuss, eventually concluding with the idea of a "takeover." Show me. Obviously, there are other answers to this same question, but if it works, the coaching moment has been a successful one. There is no fixed solution. If tactics work, then tactics are correct.

By coaching in this method, the game or drill creates the question, the guidance from the coach helps the players create and discover the answer and continually makes the players think for themselves.

When Mourinho utilizes this method he talks of removing the “transmitter” (coach) and “receptor” (player) system and places both on the same pathway, discussing and coming to conclusions together; after all, the starting point of confidence is knowing that job one is to achieve on the field.

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