



Article

Strategic Understandings: An Investigation of Professional Academy Youth Soccer Coaches' Interpretation, Knowledge, and Application of Game Strategies

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Table 3

Interview Schedule

Sections + estimated time	Question	Probes	Stimuli	Purpose
Descriptive information (5 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For the record, could you briefly introduce yourself, your past experiences in football and current role? 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For how long have you played? At what level? How old are you? At what level have/do you coach? Do you hold any coaching qualifications? If so, what level? Do you hold any educational or other professional qualifications? If so, what and to what level? 	Demographic + background info
The uniqueness of “team games” (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the differences in coaching games compared to coaching technical events such as athletics? How are these differences furthered in team games? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What does the game of football comprise? Differences between technique, skill, tactics and strategy? Can you give examples of each that are required to play soccer? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do coaches apply the concept of “outwitting their opponent” in their practice, or does it vary across age groups, or are we looking at the same thing just manifesting in different ways? 	Get a sense of the mental model they have of games (soccer) as a construct.
The differential importance of understanding (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How does player understanding vary across the technique-skills-tactics-strategy continuum? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why is it important for players to have an understanding of how to execute a technique? Why is it important for players to have an understanding of how to use a skill? Why is it important for players to have an understanding of how to deploy tactics? Why is it important for players to have an 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last training session you coached, how much was dedicated to the technique-skills-tactics-strategy continuum? Why was this? 	Getting a sense of how they interpret technique, skills, tactics and strategy.

		understanding of how to apply a strategy?		
Ways in which game understanding is developed (20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does a player need to have an understanding of the game? • Based on that or otherwise, how would you help a player to develop their game understanding? • How would you know whether a player has an understanding of the game? • How would you know whether the team have a shared understanding of the game? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it coached explicitly or implicitly? Or both? • Is technical ability a prerequisite? • Can you give me some exemplar drills or practices? • Can you give me some examples of the questions or challenges you might set players? • How would you set up a team or squad to demonstrate their understanding? • What about strategic understanding? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So is game understanding something you set out to coach? • Established through previous experiences of playing invasion games? • Can players develop their problem solving skills without the support of the coach? 	Getting a sense of their expectations, ‘normal’ experience and the type of talent development environment they are trying to create.
Relationship between metacognition and game understanding (20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Here are some statements that relate to game understanding (x3 metacognitive game skills). For each one, please comment whether: • In your opinion, are these valid and effective criteria for player game understanding? • How would your ideas expressed earlier in the interview address/develop each of these statements? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these skills developed by the coach, by the player independently, or both? • How might each of this look in game play? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If developed by the coach, how are they facilitated in: • Practice design? • Coach-player interactions? • Player-player interactions? 	Getting a sense of their interpretations, and potential application of “deep understanding” for games.
Anything else? (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there any other aspects of game understanding that I have forgotten/that you want to highlight? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 	

