





FOUR MASTERS AND THEIR METHOD

Fabio Capello, Jose Mourinho, Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger

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What do Fabio Capello, Jose Mourinho, Alex Ferguson and Arsene Wenger all have in common? On the surface there are about ninety-three trophies between them all, which include Premier League titles, Serie A titles, Champions League, UEFA Cup and FA Cup, amongst many others. And if that isn't enough to wet the appetite, then I'm about to take a look at each one of these masters of the coaching world, to see what can be learnt and how their experience can benefit other coaches.

Before I go any further, I must say that as I write this article, I am extremely aware that I have approached this from a very biased position: a position purely looking at areas and places that I think can be used in order to become a better coach. And as you know, this blinkered view only sees what it wants to see. And in this case, that's exactly how I want it. However, out of respect to these world class coaches, I do not feel that I can do their amazing careers anywhere near the justice they deserve with what I'm about to write – but I'll give it a go.

By: Anthony Hudson





Fabio Capello

I first learnt about Fabio Capello through hearing opinions of some top people in the game. From ex-players to current, the man Real Madrid President claimed to be ‘the Greatest Manager in the world’ has a consistent message of discipline, respect and hard work (and his teams have a habit of winning games of football). These traits may not seem so glamorous to some, in today’s coaching locker, but the fact of the matter is, it translates to nothing more than wanting to win!

Top Spanish goalkeeper Iker Casillas recalled Capello as ‘having a lot of intensity and is on top of everybody – all the time.’ He demands that every training session be like a match - same tension, same intensity, same build up, same concentration. The man is a winner and his record most definitely speaks for itself, ‘I don’t have a minimum target for next season, I only have one objective – to win it all!’ Capello put it in simple terms as manager of Roma.

There has been much written about Capello and discipline. It seems anything that has the potential to become a distraction to the team winning, is promptly removed. From mobile phones to club directors, they are not welcome in and around the preparations of the team; they are as he states, ‘distractions’. He demands that his players respect others wherever they go, be it hotel staff or waiters in a restaurant. ‘I do not accept lack of respect! Would you like it if someone spoke to your father or brother badly? You must never forget - you must respect others.’ He also mentioned that ‘fans liked it when I cracked the whip – they see that I have a plan.’ And a plan he has. When listening to interviews with Capello he can often be

heard talking about – the ‘group’ and the ‘spirit of the group’. This constant seems to be born from his passion and his demands for good, strong character. Discipline and having a clear, strong set of team rules are ‘necessary to create a group. Functioning this way has always given results.’

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A man of character, so sure of himself and his ability, now leads the England National team to the World Cup - and this is a long way from his days at AC Milan, when he took over a year out, away from the game of football. Having just finished his playing career and learning to become a coach, he used this time to study business, learning from the corporate world, in communications, all under the guidance of club President Silvio Berlusconi. It's been said that he approached that year with real ‘spirit and enthusiasm’ – something I would imagine most coaches would find very difficult to do, especially being pulled away from football for so long and thrown into unknown territories. Seeking education from these outside sources is very rare in the game, but I can't help but believe that they have made him an even better coach, manager and person.

COACHING LESSONS FROM CAPELLO

- Demand High Standards – Everyday from Everyone!
- Make Sure Training is Exactly Like the Game.
 - o Same Intensity
 - o Same Build Up
 - o Same Tension
 - o Same Concentration
- Make Sure your Players Show Respect to Others.
- Discipline – Find Your Set Of Rules and Stick To Them.
 - o ‘Rules are Necessary to Create The Group.’ Capello
- Seek Outside Learning – business, language, communications, etc.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full name

José Mário dos Santos Félix Mourinho

Current club

England (manager)

Date of birth

18 June 1946 (age 63)

Teams managed

Years	Team
1991–1996	Milan
1996–1997	Real Madrid
1997–1998	Milan
1999–2004	Roma
2004–2006	Juventus
2006–2007	Real Madrid
2007–	England

Place of birth

San Canzian d'Isonzo, Italy







Jose Mourinho

And special he is!

As entertaining as the Premier League is, for me the majority of the managers don't do too much in terms of inspiring the public. Post game interviews and press conferences filled with clichés and predictability seem to be the norm – which I find absolutely amazing. Finally, when Jose Mourinho came along and uttered those words you knew he was different. Almost as if an actor on stage, he leaves everyone, including his players, with something to talk about. His comments are thought provoking and at times a whole lot more, with his pre and post match words not just speaking to the man with the mike, but falling upon the players, other managers in the league and football's governing bodies all over. And what he displays 100% of the time is a complete and utter knowing and confidence in his own ability as a coach and as a manager. He is no way afraid to speak his mind and can back it up with performance. How does he back it up? Well, if I was to try and explain, like I said before there's no way I could do him and his ability justice. So I'll start by taking a look at a quality that is so very evident, not just from his work, but from the many top professional players that have testified to it – his Hard Work. Sounds simple, right?

“We have top players, and I'm sorry I'm a bit arrogant, we have a top manager. I am the European champion. I think I am special.”

Deco once said that ‘there are many coaches with the same ability as Mourinho, but no one works as hard as him.’ As coaches what does that do for you? How can that affect you? Here's a man, who after an unfulfilled playing career, declared out loud that he would strive to become the ‘best coach in the world’. If he's not there yet, he's on his way and getting close. Former coaches of Barcelona, Bobby Robson and Louis Van Gaal, whom Mourinho assisted, both complimented on

how Mourinho's work was first class. His scouting and match reports were the best 'bar none', detailing the strengths and weaknesses of both teams, characteristics of each player, how he would play against them and on and on. He 'listened, learned, looked, remembered. He was bright, alert and intelligent.' Robson said. How very simple. This quote says it all and is filled with fantastic insight that we can all learn from. He listened, learned, looked and remembered – was bright, alert and intelligent. That, for me – is magic; what more could a coach looking for knowledge want?

Hard work is definitely at the heart of what this great coach is all about. And a trait that is thrown around so much today, as if in fashion, is Attention to Detail. Everyone uses it, commentators, coaches, assistant coaches, general managers, all of them. I met a former colleague of Mourinho's and asked the one thing that he learned from him, he said without hesitation, 'he was the Champion of Details.' So what are the details? I would say the characteristics Bobby Robson was talking about certainly lead to this quality of paying attention to details. And to hear accounts of Mourinho's

work is fascinating. How he prepares for games, handing personalized (well edited) DVDs to his players before games, showing the opposing players they'll be marking, the type of runs they make, their strengths and weaknesses and more. His training methods, his use of the training field, of pitch sizes, amount of players, how he incorporates his fitness coach, his communication with his owners, the press – everything meticulous and with a purpose. The amount of detail he puts into scouting and preparing for games. The way he transmits his message to his players, leaving them to walk into games knowing they are already a step ahead. 'He has a knack of transmitting his amazing confidence. He drums it in every day that you're the best.' Said Frank Lampard. As I said earlier, it's very difficult to give full credit, but hopefully this small insight will entice coaches to seek for more. I would like to finish with one of his quotes, something that cannot help but educate and inspire, 'I have complete confidence in myself. I am not afraid of the future. I know I can make a difference.' Say no more!

COACHING LESSONS FROM MOURINHO

- Have Confidence In Your Ability – 100% Of The Time.
- Be Un-Predictable - Learn to Act (keep people on their toes).
- Take Care Of The Details – Prepare Your Team Well.
- ‘Be Bright. Be Alert. Be Intelligent. Be Ambitious. Be Confident.’
- Work Hard.
 - o ‘There are many coaches with the same ability, but NONE works as hard as him.’ Deco. Can you let this statement influence you?

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Full name

José Mário dos Santos Félix Mourinho

Current club

Internazionale

Date of birth

26 January 1963 (age 47)

Teams managed

Years	Team
2000	Benfica B
2001–2002	União de Leiria
2002–2004	Porto
2004–2007	Chelsea
2008–	Internazionale

Place of birth

Setúbal, Portugal







Sir Alex Ferguson

Alex Ferguson may well go down as one of the most successful British managers of all time. He has produced countless world class teams and footballers, most of whom are turning into top managers themselves today. To put it in perspective, when Alex Ferguson took over at Manchester United, one of the biggest teams in the world, the Berlin wall was still standing and Nelson Mandela still in prison. I once asked a top English manager for advice on being a coach; he said 'whatever you do, make sure you stay in the game!' No one has done it better than Fergie. Longevity, stamina, mental toughness and character in such a high pressured industry, are traits displayed in ways that very few can identify with, as very few can match it.

What has impressed me as I watch Ferguson work, with such a steely and tough approach, has been his willingness to share some of his insecurities, his moments when he's had to dig real deep and hasn't been afraid to talk about it. No false strength, as the large majority seem to show off; he tells his story exactly how it is with brutal honesty. He has spoken about very low times in his career, when he doubted himself, felt lonely, isolated and insecure. 'I went home to bed and put the pillow over my head. A sense of guilt engulfed me....was I doing something wrong....I felt really uncomfortable with my position.' Who would have thought, seeing him work and watching his amazing career unfold, that he could go through this? He speaks about the pressures of the job, dealing with bad results, 'feeling isolated, betrayed, helpless and even creating demons in my head.' It adds to an even greater lesson in staying in the game.....and in life! You will go through tough times but you have to dig deep and stay in the game.

Ferguson seems to have developed these tough qualities from a

young age growing up in Scotland. He seems to be very proud of his upbringing and his family's mining background. He has deep affection for the Govan, the district he grew up in SW Glasgow and he also named one of his race horses after a boat his Dad help build on the shipyards. His Dad was a very big

influence over him, always bringing him down to earth, teaching him great values; he was 'assiduous about timekeeping...I am always early – it's a great discipline.' he recounted. He also looked up to and learned from other great managers. Bill Shankly was 'a great inspiration for me. I used to have cassette tapes of his interviews.' His affection for Jock Stein and the way he talks about him can't help but bring a smile to your face. 'For any young manager – Jock Stein was a one man university.....when Jock came into a room he dominated it. He knew everybody's first name and that's a wonderful asset to have. It makes people feel important.'

He learned from others before him and carries such strong principles with him into management. Another side of Ferguson that really stands out is his character, his approach and his personality. Like the previous

managers I have spoke about, Ferguson is in no way afraid of speaking his mind. He talks about mental toughness in interviews and for me he's a perfect example of it. 'Sheer hard work was a huge factor in bringing success, but I am sure that sticking to my beliefs was equally important.' As a young manager at East Stirlingshire, during the second half of a game they were losing 2-0, a panicked and angry owner of the team came down to the dugout and asked what he was going to do - Fergie responded, 'I'm going to throw you out of this f\$@king dugout if you don't move now!' It's a lot easier for him to be able to do that now, but as a young (less accomplished) manager, I don't think as easy. What a great lesson to be learned. Sticking to your guns, believing in what you're doing and not being afraid to tell others what needs to be said....and you can figure out the best way to get your message across!

He talks about his first day at Manchester United, how he 'was nervous' and how he tackled the massive problem of drinking amongst the Manchester United players. Changing the '48 hour drinking rule', to it being an offense if caught drinking anytime, whilst in training, was his first statement to these top professionals. He stated that at the

time it was difficult for his new players to observe, but he knew his words were ‘a declaration (of his) attitude.’ What strength of character - coming into one of the biggest clubs in the world and declaring your attitude.

In looking at his personality in interviews, on the training pitch and on the sideline much can be learned. Label it what you want, the fact of the matter is he gets people to do what he wants them to do and he gets the job done. ‘I use rhetorical questions, leaving

others no choice but to endorse my suggestions. Your personality has to force things because sometimes you cannot wait.’ Said Fergie.

I will finish with a quote by Ferguson that, by this stage of my writing, I’m sure your starting to recognize a common theme amongst these greats, he stated, ‘I had that burning desire to change the world!’ I’ll let you think about how important this one is....

LESSONS FROM FERGUSON

- Stay In The Game – Be Mentally Tough.
- Be Open and Honest.
- Have Discipline.
 - o Timekeeping – ‘I am always early’
- Learn From Others. Seek out the best and learn from them.
 - o Be Creative – ‘I used to listen to cassette tapes of Shankly’
- Know Everybody’s First Name.
 - o ‘Jock Stein knew everybody’s first name and that’s a wonderful asset to have.’
- Even The Best Of The Best Have Fears and Insecurities. It’s What You Do With Them?
- You’re the Coach – Stick To What You Believe In Regardless Of What Others Think. (Fergie did it at the biggest club in the world!)
- Be Ambitious – ‘Want To Change The World





ARSENAL



Arsene Wenger

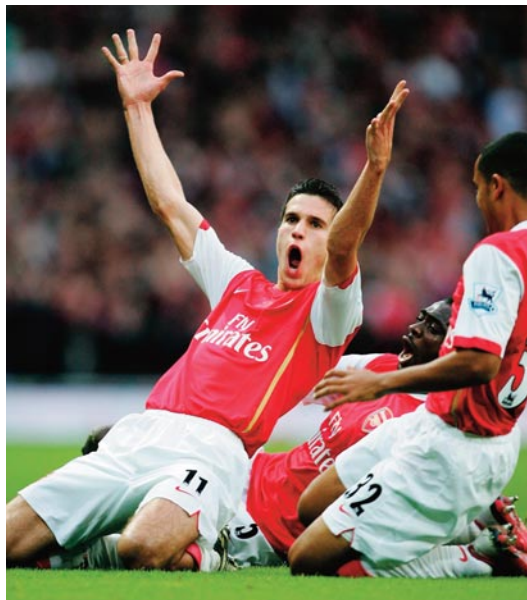
'Discipline, a way with words, a willingness to work hard, and a respect and a confidence in others may come across as naive, but has paid dividends over time.' Arsene Wenger

Coaches and managers at the highest level have been so stereotypical over the years. Ranting, raving, screaming, shouting, pacing and barking on the touchline, all seem to be 'what coaches do'. This image or approach is even more prevalent the lower down the leagues you go and unfortunately, just as bad with young kids. Arsene Wenger entered the Premier League looking and acting more like a school teacher than a top level manager. His nickname at Arsenal was 'Windows' because of his big studious glasses. However, over time he has shown that he has a great ability to analyze games and situations while everyone around him seems to panic. He is able to stay calm. He is able to detach himself from results, games, arguments, even the outside world in order to analyze better, clearer. 'He doesn't allow himself to be distracted by little things.' His approach and personality is so very refreshing, he is different from the rest and there's so much to be learned.

By all accounts it is very evident that he is absolutely obsessed with the game of football. He has said that he thinks of the game '90% of his waking hours', that a 'night without a game of football on TV, leaves me disillusioned.' He spends hours and hours studying video footage, of his team, opponents and players, in his 'own little world'. He lives for, and is obsessed by football.

This obsession colors every area of the game. He studies everything from diet, medicine, athletics, swimming and is fascinated with isometrics. His attention to everything surrounding the game, the preparation and the recovery of the player, is so immense.

Wenger has strong views on the players' diet, and of his own. He apparently prepares the same way the players do, stating, 'how can I ask them to fight for me if I cannot stand shoulder to shoulder with them?' He has educated many by introducing his beliefs on the way players should eat and live. He implements dietary analysis for all new players, puts together player diet profiles, the dieticians speak to the players and their wives, meal times are set with fine attention relating to the human body, single players have to eat at the training ground and he follows through with very strict rules on the players weight and body mass, even punishing by sending players to train with the reserves until they get themselves to the correct body weight. Recuperation, diet and treatment seem to be his Holy Grail with everything aimed at the well-being of the player. Even as I write this, I keep feeling that what I am saying is outdated, as Wenger appears to be constantly asking questions, ever evolving, refining his methods and moving forward. The preparation and attention to the well-being of his players, (which is something not too common in the game but doesn't at all



surprise me about Wenger) all stem from his faith and respect for footballers. His players - whom he states are 'the soul of the team' - come first. He respects footballers and people - and this helps. So many coaches and managers today almost seem to detest players. He treats his players as adults. He asks them how they feel, values their opinion and their views. 'I trust people. I don't see danger coming round every corner. I have a positive image of human beings.' said Wenger.



COACHING LESSONS FROM WENGER

- Be Calm. Try To Become a Better Observer. Analyze.
 - ‘Don’t Get Distracted By The Little Things’.
- Become Obsessed. Study The Game.
- Seek Other Education – Medicine, Diet, Other Sports, Isometrics.
- Learn About Players Diet.
- Be a Role Model. Don’t Ask Something From Your Players Your Not Prepared To Do Yourself.
 - ‘How can I ask them to fight for me if I cannot stand shoulder to shoulder with them?’ Wenger
- Keep Asking Questions. Keep Evolving. Keep Refining Your Methods.
- Respect And Trust Your Players

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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‘Anthony represents the best of the modern coaches emerging with a combination of knowledge, qualifications and experience in both sports psychology and the coaching of high level soccer. As such Anthony is well placed to contribute to any sports organization that has ambitions to be high-performing. I have no doubt Anthony will become a leader in the development of soccer in the world and I recommend him unreservedly.’ Bill Beswick - International Soccer Consultant, Former England, Manchester Utd, Middlesbrough FC and Derby County Team Psychologist.