



EURO2004 CONSPIRACIES: Urs Meier, the Swiss referee that disallowed Sol Campbell's 'game winner' for England over Portugal, was the same ref who awarded a late penalty to Romania to send England out of Euro2002.

Portugal's coach Scolari masterminded Brazil's 2-1 victory over England in the Quarter-finals of World Cup 2002, June 21. Oddly, now as then, England's keepers were the single biggest deciding factors in the losses.

Coach Sven Goran Eriksson, though disappointed that England failed to beat Portugal, will take some time out to relax and ponder everything from the sun-drenched patio of his second home just outside Lisbon.

Abbotsford seeks better way

Abby's top brass sound alarm bells over what they deem an unworkable BCSA Player Development Pyramid that fosters a destructive tug-of-war.

Ian Kennett

Abbotsford's technical director, Barry Crocker, and coaches Alan Errington and Colin Miller, responded to last issues *BC Doctrine of development* (p.11, issue 43) with terse words, frustration, ideas, and hope for an improved model of player development. The biggest point of contention revolves around the roles of the soccer club and provincial staff in developing elite players for Provincial and National teams. Who should coach and develop players, when, and for how long?

As simple as this

Crocker's philosophy is modeled upon former Ireland coach Jackie Charlton who said, "When I call players up to play for Ireland, I don't coach them. The clubs do that. I just borrow them, use them for a while, and then give them back to the clubs".

Crocker disagrees with the structure of the BCSA's developmental pyramid, which he believes puts unnecessary pressure on players to choose between club-leagues such as the PDL Y-League, and the BC Provincial team training schedule. "I think that BC Soccer should be putting its resources and money into developing clubs around the province", said Crocker, suggesting the BCSA could be building strong clubs by creating a template, and educating the people in the clubs about how the club should be run. Crocker believes it begins with a head coach, "There are lots of soccer schools making money teaching players. That talent should be hired by clubs and they should be developing players within clubs, ultimately for BC Soccer, [who] should then have the right to select kids to play for BC."

Miller insists that Canada needs to follow the example of other countries employing successful club models. "Clubs develop players, and then national teams borrow the players from the clubs, which must then let the players go. Its as simple as that".

BCSA not changing with times

Errington explains how things in BC have changed over the past 25 years, and how, when he coached Provincial teams there was little or no summer activity, and that alone created a need (following the Provincial Cups) for the BCSA to step in and keep players tuned for the Nationals. "That's not the case these days as there are other programs in place. The province doesn't need the players now like they did. What they need to do is to look at the players in the Y-League, tell the clubs which players they want, and put players into the league. When the National tournament comes around BC can select the best players at that time. Right now, BC selects the Provincial team in April, even though the nationals are not until August!"

Errington believes this to be folly. "Some

players can have a loss of form, or another overlooked could have improved, so teams should be chosen at the time of the tournament".

Y-League's perfect player pool

Miller believes that having several Y-League clubs ought to make the BCSA's task of choosing its teams far easier. "I said this three or four years ago when we sat down with BC Soccer. If I was the u16 Provincial coach, I would be rubbing my hands together at the moment because there is a Y-League u16 team in Abbotsford, Kelowna, Vancouver, with the Whitecaps, and one over in Victoria. That's four teams with, I'm sure, quality players".

Miller continues, "You could even have a training camp, and get that group together for a weekend here and there. Now if that makes too much sense, or if there are different agendas out there... I don't know."

Errington is convinced that BC has the opportunity to be the best in Canada because of the extra playing time provided by two seasons. "We can — develop players better than anywhere else in the country, and the province should take advantage of that. We need to field the very best players for the provincial

teams. We in Abbotsford want our players to play for BC, as do other clubs, and we have to figure out a way to find what's best for the players. Let's be adult about this. There needs to be some compromise, and if we do that the players will be the ones to benefit, and BC will be the hotbed of soccer in Canada. Right now we're holding the game back."

Communication breakdown

Central to the friction is the decision as to which program players join: Y-League or BC Provincial. For various reasons, it is not practical to do both. Crocker relates how several Abby players opted to remain with the Y-League club rather than join the Provincial Program in April. "We have four national players, and two more on the cusp, who are not playing for the BC u16 team at the Nationals, [though] we offered them. I wrote to BC Soccer and said that the players in question were released to play for BC, and BC said no".

Miller added, "Those kids were allowed to make their own decision: and all four opted to play in the Y-League."

Efforts have been made between BC Soccer and Abbotsford to resolve the differences, but to no avail and Miller does not understand how dialogue can be shut down so quickly. "I spoke to Derek Possee, and I said, 'We have to sit down and sort this out. Derek said that over the last two years, the clubs have improved, and the coaching quality has improved, and it is now time that BC Soccer addressed where they were coming

from. We got an email back from Keith Ryan at BC Soccer saying that we were no longer allowed to speak to Derek Possee. We football people want to sit down and talk about football, not the constitution and all the other shite things. We had players who opted to play in the Y-League. We don't blackball players who want to play for the Province. Over the last two years we've had 34 players from our club involved in the Provincial Program, and we're accused of not supporting the program!"

Costs and common goals

What should be the role of BC Soccer in player development? Abbotsford's three leaders are pretty clear. "BC Soccer should not be developing players", says Miller, "They should be developing clubs which in turn coach and develop players. I said to Derek Possee, 'You give me that group of u16's for two or three weeks and I'll give you a team that can compete.' I mean these are the elite players, and Derek said that I was right".

Crocker exclaims "We have more resources here than anywhere in Canada. Why can't we listen to these experts? They are right here and they can tell us what ought to work best."

Crocker also suggests that the BCSA pyramid ought to be simpler. "It should go from clubs to the provincial teams to the national teams, and that's it. There does not need to be district teams and intra-provincial leagues".

Meanwhile Errington expressed concern over the expense of participating in the provincial program. "When I coached Colin, many years ago, it did not cost anything to play for the province. It was free. I wonder how many players do not play because of the cost, which is somewhere between two and three thousand dollars depending on the program."

"If your kid could play in three tournaments," said Crocker and nationals from March to August, plus this or that, or he could play in the Y-League, travel around, play top soccer week in and week out for five hundred bucks, what are you going to do?"

"The programs should not be competing because they can be complementary," explains Miller. "We have been accused of not supporting the provincial program, but we do. So all the things we are accused of — not guilty! We run a successful year-round club, and we seem to be the bad guys. Our club is unanimous. The ultimate [goal] should be to play for the province — no question. But we won't stop trying to develop players all year round, and that is the job of the football clubs, not of BC Soccer."



Possee: Gag order



Miller: "Not Guilty!"

BCbriefs

Last whistle for local referee

The refereeing community lost one of its most articulate and dedicated disciples — BCSA and VASRA Life Member Graham Anderson. Honourary National, former National Referee Instructor and an assessor, author of many articles on refereeing including the novelette 'Refereeing Without Neutral Linesmen', Anderson collapsed after returning home from cycling.

Graham was a BCSRA member for over 30 years, joining the association after emigrating from his native Scotland in the early 1970's. He was a former Secretary of the Vancouver Area Association (VASRA) during the tenure of another BCSRA Life Member, Werner Winsemann.

A tireless worker, he also served on BC Soccer's Referee Education Sub-Committee and was an assessor in the North American Soccer League (NASL). Graham was the assessor for arguably the biggest professional soccer match in the province's history: 1979 NASL Conference Final, 1st Leg, Cosmos vs. Whitecaps at Empire Stadium.

— Elvio Chies, BCSRA president

Sharpe not burning any bridges

Speaking at the BCSA AGM in June, CSA President Andy Sharpe advised that he will be returning to Saskatchewan in early 2005.

A retired fire chief with the Port Moody Fire Department, cited family reasons for the move, indicating he still owns a house in that province which must be attended to.

— Elvio Chies, BCSRA president

Shades of Osieck

Overheard on the grapevine: if it were not for newly-hired coach Frank Yallop, Canada would not be playing Heart of Midlothian nor Millwall in the BCSA's landmark 2004 International Pacific Soccer Series, in July (see p13 & 20).

Apparently the CSA had already turned down the opportunity to use these matches as warm-ups prior to Canada's next round of World Cup 2006 CONCACAF Qualifiers. Had it not been for Yallop's desire to play more matches at home, Canada's men's team would have played no home matches between the Belize qualifiers in June and the Qualifying Semi-finals in August, 2004.

— Elvio Chies, BCSRA president

By George, I think she's got it!

I just wanted to share something with you... I was at Swangard for the first time today. I was there for an Easter Seals 24 Hour Relay volunteer meeting.

I found myself imagining the spirit and enthusiasm of the soccer fan's experience when they're in the heat of the game. The feeling continued as I walked the track to map out the site. I could feel the aura of the 'soccer spirit' that lives there.

It looks like a wonderful place to be.... to share, and to flip the bird.

— Caitlin Berndt, LLDT



Anderson: Suited up for the 1977 exhibition at Empire Stadium between AS Roma and the Whitecaps



Yallopping to the rescue: Thanks to Frank, at least a second string Canada will be coming to town