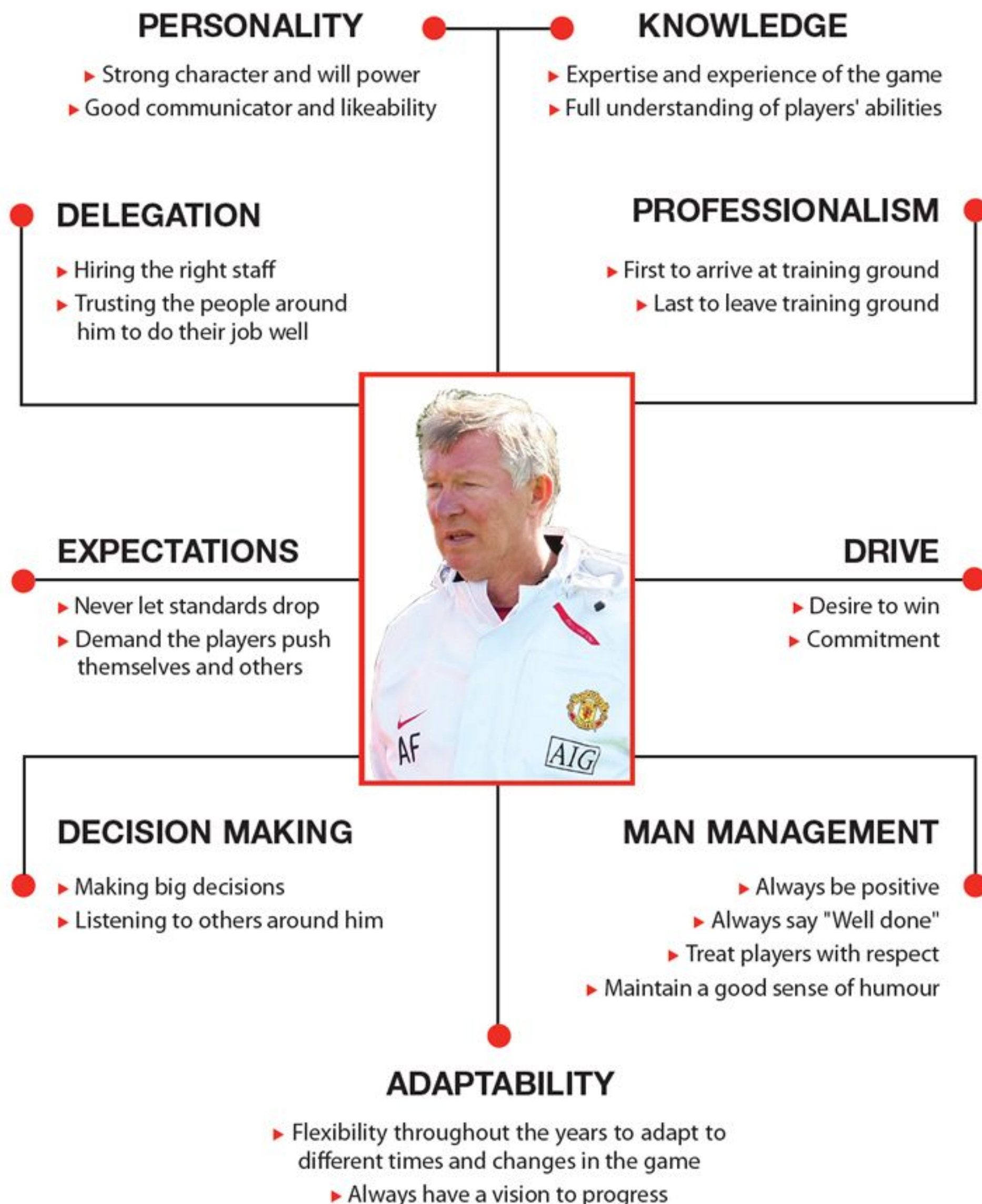


SIR ALEX FERGUSON: LEADERSHIP



ATTACKING AGAINST A DEEP AND WIDE DEFENSIVE LINE - PATTERN OF PLAY EXAMPLE 7



The reds are in a 4-3-3 formation. There are 4 mannequins representing the opposition's defensive line, 4 opposing blue midfielders and 2 blue forwards (passive).

Practice Objective: One central midfielder rotates out to create a back 3 and the other central midfielders look to receive and play in behind.

Practice Description

1. The central midfielder **Carrick** has rotated out to create a back 3 for the build-up and this is where we start. Both full backs push on and the other central midfielders look to receive in the centre. **Carrick** either passes back to centre back **Ferdinand** (red arrow) or forward to central midfielder **Scholes** (yellow arrow).

2. Following the **yellow arrows**, central midfielder **Scholes** looks to play in behind right away, either for the run of right winger **Ronaldo** or the striker **Rooney**. As we continue with the **red arrows**, **Ferdinand** passes to centre back partner **Vidic**.
3. **Vidic** passes to **Nani**, who has moved back to receive in between the lines.
4. **Nani** passes back to **Giggs**, who is free in space.
5. **Giggs** passes out wide for the forward run of the left back **Evra**, who is able to exploit the space left by **Nani's** movement. The team is now in behind the defensive line with a good chance of creating a goal scoring chance. This is the same if **Ronaldo** receives from **Scholes** on the right side.

SOURCE: René Meulensteen's Manchester United training sessions at Carrington Training Ground, Manchester - 2007-2013

RENÉ MEULENSTEEN: KEY POINTS FOR EVERY TRAINING SESSION

1. **PURPOSE** - Every training session has its own specific purpose. Players need to understand what and why they are doing certain exercises, practices and games.
2. **CHALLENGE** - The players get challenged in every single session. This can be done by creating a certain organisation i.e. Space, restrictions etc, or by solving tactical aspects of the game or of a specific opponent.
3. **QUALITY** - In every session, we aim for game realistic quality. Exercises, practices and games are played at match pace.
4. **INTENSITY** - To achieve the highest quality, the intensity must be match realistic. If the tempo is too high, the players will rush things and make mistakes. If the tempo is too slow, the players will not produce the quality required in matches.
5. **ENJOYMENT** - When the previous 4 boxes are ticked, the players will most likely enjoy all the training sessions.



THE IMPORTANCE OF ENJOYING TRAINING AND STRONG LEADERS

HOW IMPORTANT IS ENJOYMENT OF TRAINING SESSIONS?

- ↑ COMPETITION
- ↑ CONFIDENCE
- ↑ CAMARADERIE
- ↑ RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER
- ↑ APPRECIATION FOR EACH OTHERS' ABILITIES

HOW IMPORTANT ARE LEADERS IN TRAINING?

- There were many leaders - **Van der Sar, Ferdinand, Neville, Scholes** (leader on the ball) and **Giggs**. Their standards set an example for the rest of the players in every single training session. The level, quality and execution in training was always of the highest possible level.
- **I never had to stop training because the application was below par, not once in 6 years.**
- As well as leadership, you also need camaraderie. Otherwise, the players won't take criticism from each other, and they won't improve based on the expectations and level required from their team-mates.

5. Build-up Play Against 2 Forwards with the Central Midfielder "Rotating In" (10v8)

8-10
min


Practice Description

- In this progression, we now play 10v8 and have 3 pole gates in the positions shown.
- A central midfielder (**Carrick**) "**Rotates In**," which means he drops back into the middle of the 2 centre backs. The aim is to drag the 2 opposing forwards over to one side to free up space for either **Vidic** or **Ferdinand** to carry the ball forward into midfield.
- Alternatively, one of the centre backs can move into the centre and **Scholes** or **Carrick** move to the left or right of that centre back. Either way, a back 3 is successfully created for the build-up.
- In this example, **Ferdinand** carries the ball forward into the space ahead and the other central midfielder (**Scholes**) provides support on the same side as the ball.

- Full backs **Evra** and **Neville** have pushed high up. Wingers **Giggs** and **Ronaldo** push high and inside, and the forward **Rooney** is also high up.
- The players either switch play (to **Evra** in diagram) and then dribble through a pole gate or pass in behind the defensive line (**red arrow**).

Coaching Points

1. Players must understand the best way to "rotate in" to create a back 3 (3v2 for the build-up).
2. Move the ball quickly between the back 3 to drag the forwards over to one side.
3. As soon a centre back or midfielder has got time on the ball, he can carry the ball forward.
4. Create a cue for the winger to come inside and full back to push on (create options and angles).

SOURCE: René Meulensteen's Manchester United training sessions at Carrington Training Ground, Manchester - 2007-2013

MY APPROACH TO SPECIFIC TECHNICAL TRAINING WITH FIRST TEAM PLAYERS

"I never used the word CHANGE. Instead, I would always say: 'I'd like to ADD this to your game.'"



- When I came to work with the first team, I wasn't a new face to many of them. I knew how to approach working with players who were strong characters and serial winners.
- Imagine you say to a player: "Listen, we need to change something about your game."
- The first thing the player will think is: "Change? Why do I need to change? What am I doing wrong?" It's a negative approach.
- The word 'Add' means more. It means better. That way, you don't build a barrier between yourself and the player.

SOURCE: René Meulensteen's interview with coachesvoice.com

6. Varied Attacks and Finishing in a Tactical Large Sided Game

30 min



Practice Description

- Mark out 3 middle zones and 2 wide zones using the area shown.
- There are also "**Shooting Zones**" shown on the pitch, which are fully described in Chapter 7 of this book.
- The GK starts the practice by kicking or throwing the ball to either winger (or a central midfielder). The attack alternates each time between attacking through the centre or out wide.
- If the reds attack through the centre, they try to capitalise on their 6v4 advantage to score.
- If the reds decide to use the wings, a 2v1 situation is created with 1 blue full back (Brown in diagram) moving out to defend.
- Every attack out wide has 2 players involved (**Martin + Ronaldo** on the overlap in diagram). The left back **Evra** is resting until the next attack on the left, when he can make the overlap run.
- Once the 2 wide players have beaten the defender, they look to deliver a cross for a teammate to score from.
- One winger (**Simpson**) on the right joins the attack and the other one (**Eagles**) rests. The right back **Bardsley** is also resting until the next attack. The next time the reds attack out wide, one of the wide players provides support behind and delivers a deep cross (to vary the attacks).
- The blue defenders focus on working together to defend their goal from attacks coming through the centre or defending crosses from out wide.

SOURCE: René Meulensteen's Manchester United training sessions at Carrington Training Ground, Manchester - 10th July 2007