

[Psychology]

GETTING THE BEST OUT OF PROBLEM PLAYERS

Man-management with InnerDrive's Bradley Busch and Charlton boss Phil Parkinson



THE MOANER

The psychologist: Go over his goals for the season and what his life would look like if he did or didn't achieve them. This will help him prioritise his behaviour and the unimportant things he used to moan about will quickly seem irrelevant.

The manager: If a player's moaning is having a negative influence on the team I'd highlight it in the dressing room. You don't want other players thinking, "Does he know this is affecting us?" Don't get into a debate: just say you're not happy with their conduct, then in the week address them one-on-one. Tell them what you want from them for individual and team success.

THE GREEDY STRIKER

The psychologist: All successful strikers have a selfish streak - that's what makes a lot of them tick. Make them understand the benefits of doing the dirty work by stressing that players attract a lot more attention if they play in a winning team.

The manager: If a striker continues to ignore team-mates in better positions to score, tell them they're an important player and you want them to keep being selfish, but make them understand the team and winning is more important than individual glory. Explain to them that being part of a winning team will ultimately help them be successful.

THE ANGRY ENFORCER

The psychologist: Before the match highlight the difference between being angry and being assertive, and make the player aware of his warning signs when he's getting angry. On the pitch, simple deep breathing can reduce his emotions' intensity.

The manager: Explain it's good to be fired up, but you've got to be controlled with what you do on the football pitch. Lose control of your actions and you become no good to the team. Tell them you like that they're a fiery player but they have to channel it in the right way. If his anger continued to affect his performances, I wouldn't play him.

THE LAZY SHIRKER

The psychologist: A 'social loafer' is a player who slacks off when part of a crowd. They think their role is not that important or that no one will notice. Stress the importance of his and his team-mates' roles in the team and the potential consequences of one player not fulfilling their responsibilities.

The manager: Players who don't work for the team ultimately don't play. Explain to them they need to be disciplined off the pitch and work hard on it - if they do these things they stay in the team. Say you think they're important to the team, but they're not doing it or themselves justice.

THE FLASHY WINGER

The psychologist: The player must understand nothing will get him more credit than assists, goals and working hard for the team for 90 minutes - not flashy skills for the sake of it. Regular match analysis of his game and of the most successful wingers in the world will quickly bring home the message of what really constitutes success on the pitch.

The manager: Make this player understand they have to be productive. Give them targets to add to their skill. You've got to give them confidence to keep trying things, but make it clear they're going to be judged on their effectiveness as a player.

THE TIMID WORRIER

The psychologist: Start on easy tasks and build up the degree of difficulty. Talk to him about successful previous performances. Encourage him. You can even use an experienced, successful team-mate who faced similar obstacles to him as a youngster as a template.

The manager: When you're one-on-one you can be as harsh as you want, but in front of their team-mates you have to be tactful. Managers who get too personal with players in the changing room can lose them. Talk to the player about what he does well and just explain to them what you expect from them.

