

# Coaching Portfolio

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Developing the Next Generation of Leaders Through Elite Sport

## Chris Lawson

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## /// Culture

Dedicated to creating a vision-focused, value-driven environment centered around cultivating high-performance mindsets that extend beyond the pitch. By authentically supporting players through all the demands of elite sport, I am able to drive character, academic, and athletic growth and help prepare them for future opportunities.

## /// Authenticity

When you embrace **individuality**, players feel safe enough to bring their personality into their role. From here, you can help them identify their independent strengths and impact the group in a way no one else can.

## /// Trust

Ultimately, we are asking young athletes to stretch their potential in a wide variety of areas. We need to create a culture that puts people first, so they can **believe** they will be supported, regardless of performance.

# Core Values

## Development ///

"Better Never Rests." This All Blacks mantra embodies the essence of a high-performance mindset. Consistently striving to put our best foot forward every day is the ultimate key to long-term **growth** and success.

## Courage ///

Success in a high-performance environment is dependent on the ability to be **brave** in the difficult moments. Taking risks on the pitch and doing the right things off it are both essential to drive the team forward.

## Resilience ///

We learn the most when things go wrong. Failure is essential to growth. By accepting that mistakes are a vital part of the process, we can establish a **go-again mentality** and deal with the inevitable setbacks.

## Personal Philosophy

Coaching is about more than just developing players—it's about fostering an environment where people can grow. My personal philosophy and the culture I aim to create is built on the core values of **development, courage, resilience, trust, and authenticity**, which guide all aspects of my approach. The key to instilling these core values in our players and culture is ensuring that they don't just become buzzwords, but that I am finding tangible ways to integrate each one into how we identify and develop talent, our style and principles of play, and our performance environment as a whole.

## Application



The first step in creating a high-performance culture is to create a passion for the **self-improvement** process. I seek out opportunities to contribute to this passion by constantly analyzing training and match performances to highlight improvements in both quality and consistency. Then I continue to help push players by creating additional growth opportunities through IDP's and targeted film sessions. I also encourage players to not only be **risk-takers** in the final third, but to use their knowledge and skills to solve the performance problems in all phases and situations by utilizing clear objectives and concise tactics.

During my time working as a coach, I have been able to identify that I have a unique ability to manage disappointment very effectively. This enables me to contribute to a culture of **persistence** by re-framing setbacks and by providing perspective, stability, and support to high-level groups. The players I work with know that I genuinely care for them as people, and their **belief** in the support of our culture is what allows them to set remarkably high aspirations both as individuals and collectively. This culture starts from the top, and it is based around genuine connections with the players and understanding



what motivates each of them. By establishing relationships rooted in their personal aspirations, I am able to facilitate a meaningful approach based around an **authentic** desire to see the players achieve something that they want to achieve and couldn't achieve until we provided a little help.

## Work Experience



**The St. James FC**

**Director of Goalkeeping & 2007  
Girls Academy Head Coach**

**2024-Present**

- Designed and implemented club methodology to align team and goalkeeper coaches on player development and analysis of team and individual success
- Guided the 07GA team to a 3rd place finish at the 2024 Girls Academy Finals
- Balanced individual development with team success in the 2024/2025 Season currently leading the U19 division of the Mid-Atlantic Conference with a record of 7-1-1 in addition to qualifying for Champions Cup National Finals
- Empowered the players to play in a fluid attacking style leading to an average of 2.63 goals scored per match while dominating possession and having a goals against average of 0.75



**Ouachita Baptist University**

**Head Men's Soccer Coach**

**2020-2023**

- Implemented a style of play based our core values and principles that instilled confidence in players. Allowing them to progress in all our main attacking KPI's: progression distance, final third entries, penalty areas touches, and efficiency
- Created a culture of academic excellence with more than 10 players being selected to the GAC All-Academic Team each season
- Designed and executed performance programs that led to measurable improvements in speed, power, agility
- Structured a player-led culture and leadership training that enabled the program to raise expectations and create successful habits



**Little Rock Rangers**

**Goalkeeper Coach**

**2022**

- Implemented individual development plans for all goalkeepers on roster while leading match preparation for the top choice goalkeepers
- Assisted players in adapting to the style of play and helped continually improve individuals and results, earning 10 points in the last four matches
- Motivated the team as caretaker manager to come from behind and win the final match of the season in stoppage time



**Ouachita Baptist University**

**Assistant Women's Soccer Coach**

**2018-2020**

- Focused on player development out of possession to assist in lowering the team's goals against average from 2.35 to 1.39, 1.17, and 0.83
- Monitored academic progress to help the program achieve a 3.54 team GPA
- Developed two all-region keepers and GAC goalkeepers of the year who achieved program records in save percentage and goals against
- Aided in the development of a GAC Defensive Player of the Year, numerous all-conference and all-region players and the second all-American selection in program history



**Doane University**

**Assistant Women's Soccer Coach**

**2015-2018**

- Served as interim head through the spring of 2016. Worked to develop the current players while recruiting to bring in a class of 15 freshman and 2 transfers
- Implemented year-long development plans for all goalkeepers at the university to focus on individual growth while preparing them to fit in into their program's respective game-model
- Developed technically and tactically sound goalkeepers (Coached a combined five different starting goalkeepers who had save percentages at 72.9%, 74.7%, 79.6%, 81%, and 81.7%)





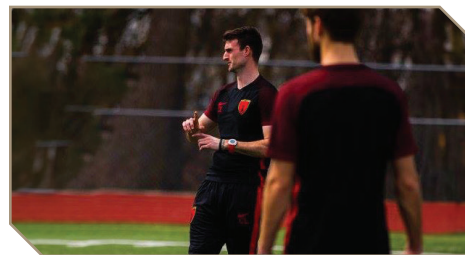


**Lincoln United Football Club**

**Head Coach**

**2017**

- Led the team to first place in the region during the inaugural season while remaining unbeaten at home
- Created an environment where collegiate players could learn from ex-professionals and prepare for their college season over the summer months
- Secured both product and monetary sponsorships to improve player experience and offer financial based scholarships
- Conducted match preparation for several high level goalkeepers who played DI, professionally, or for their national team



**Buxmont Torch Football Club**

**Goalkeeper Coach**

**2015-2016**

- Delivered focused training sessions and led matchday warm-up for goalkeepers, contributing to the team finishing joint second in the conference, the club's best league finish to date
- Worked in part with Torch Sports Ministry and the Ayuda Community Center to deliver an athletic outlet to kids in the city of Philadelphia

## Education



**Doane University**

**Master of Arts  
in Management**

**2015-2020**

- Conducted a thesis on The Benefits of Technology in High-Performance Sports with a case study on measuring player health and performance using a GPS tracking system



**Bryan College**

**Bachelor of Science  
in Business Management**

**2010-2014**

- 2 AAC Regular Season Titles & 2 AAC Tournament Championships
- 2 NAIA National Tournament Appearances & a Final 16 Appearance

## Professional Development

<b>C License</b>	<b>United States Soccer Federation</b>	<b>2024</b>
<b>Level II Accreditation</b>	<b>International Society of Performance Analysis of Sport</b>	<b>2023</b>
<b>Advanced National Goalkeeping Diploma</b>	<b>United Soccer Coaches</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>D License</b>	<b>United States Soccer Federation</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Performance Analysis</b>	<b>United Soccer Coaches</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Talent Identification &amp; Scouting in Football</b>	<b>England Football Association</b>	<b>2021</b>
<b>National Diploma</b>	<b>United Soccer Coaches</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>Goalkeeping Level 1 &amp; 2</b>	<b>United Soccer Coaches</b>	<b>2015</b>
<b>E License</b>	<b>United States Soccer Federation</b>	<b>2015</b>

# TALENT

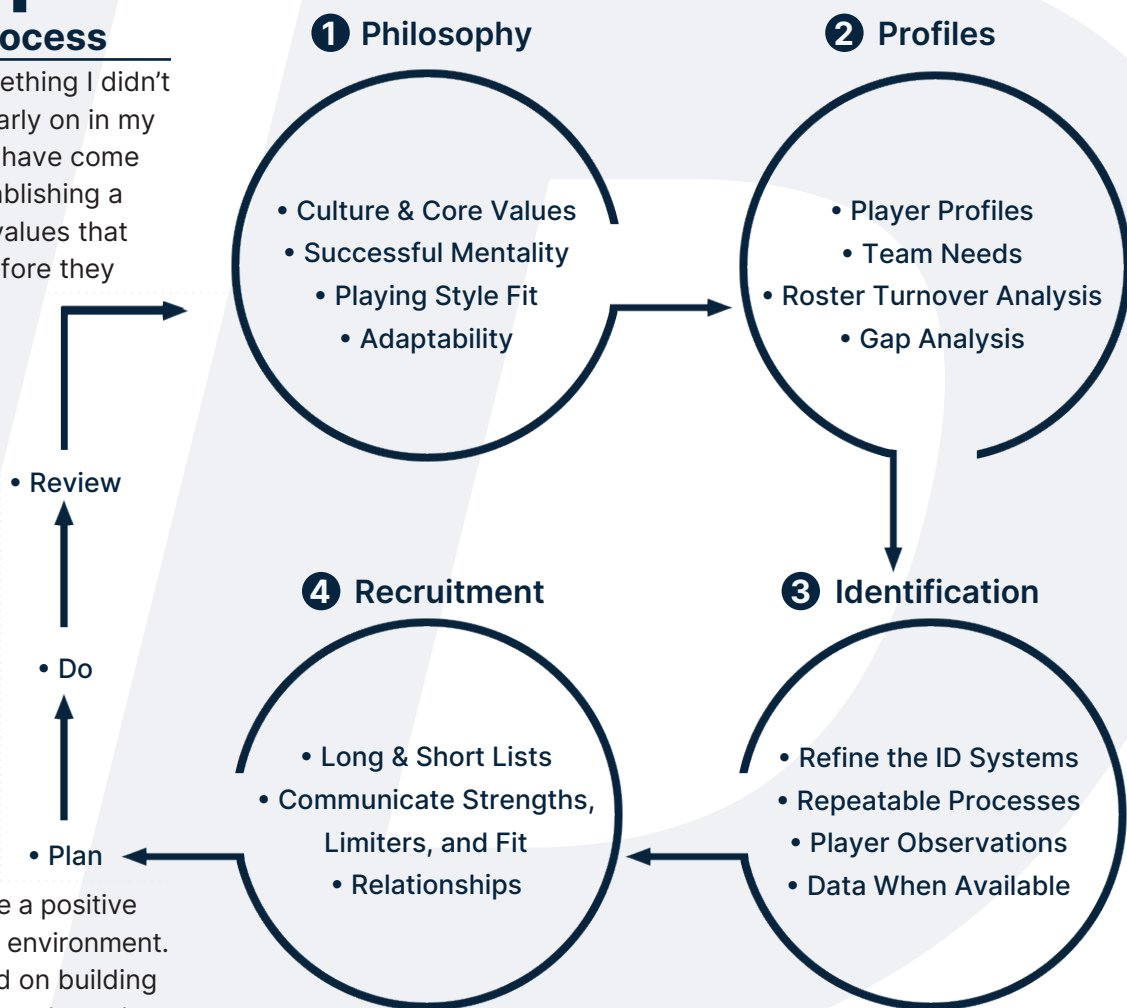
## Identification Process

**P**hilosophy was something I didn't prioritize enough early on in my coaching journey, but I have come to understand that establishing a clear culture and core values that players can buy into before they ever step on the pitch is crucial for success.

**P**rofiles provide much needed insight into the needs of the team. Analyzing the skill sets in certain roles and the gaps required to get the team to another level will create an efficient

**I**dentification process. Organization, effort, and collaboration are essential to being able to consistently identify individuals who will have a positive impact on our team and environment.

**R**ecruitment is based on building genuine relationships through effort and honest conversations.



## Talent Development

**01** Provide **Performance Opportunities** where players can experience the demands and pressures of high-level matches. Development starts by giving players the freedom to **express themselves** and figure out how to be successful within these environments. By having **confidence** in our players to perform their role at a high standard and in our own methods to prepare them to handle these environments, the players are able to feed off this belief and produce difficult results.

**02** Constantly **Evaluate** the players' strengths and performance to gain a comprehensive understanding of what qualities they can bring to the group. Build confidence around their strengths and empower them to **fearlessly** tackle any challenge.

**04** **Support** the players along their development journey. Assist in preparing them for a non-linear progression path by exposing them to diverse challenges, encouraging adaptability, and fostering a growth mindset that embraces setbacks as opportunities for learning. This caring approach prioritizes their long-term success as both a player and a person, providing the stability they need to relentlessly push forward—always **ready to go again**.

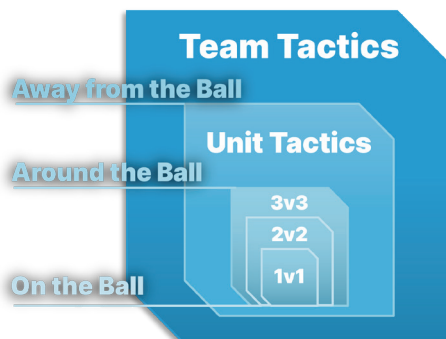
**03** Adapt and **Plan** clear pathways where the players can see the destination and tangible results from their commitment and work-rate. Provide structure for the players to take lead on their own **growth**, and become a sounding board for them.

## Training Environment

Provide a **clear & concise overview** of the training session to players pre-training including **objectives & core principles** to enable players to find solutions to the performance problems that work for them.

Utilize the **Four Corner Model** to improve players in their ability to effectively execute the current solutions or develop the tools to establish additional solutions.

Create **additional opportunities** for players to experiment and find appropriate solutions by using **small group training** to create realistic pictures of different aspects from each of the five game moments.



Simplify the objectives & core principles into manageable pieces to aid in player development by coaching **individual, small-group, and unit tactics** while relating it to the bigger picture. Allow the players to work through various solutions **on the ball** to performance problems caused by the game moment, situation, or opposition, and assist the players **around the ball** or **away from the ball** in supporting their teammate in highly adaptable ways. Help them utilize the six **core capabilities** to consistently perform these roles at the highest level possible both individually and collectively.

## Learning Environment

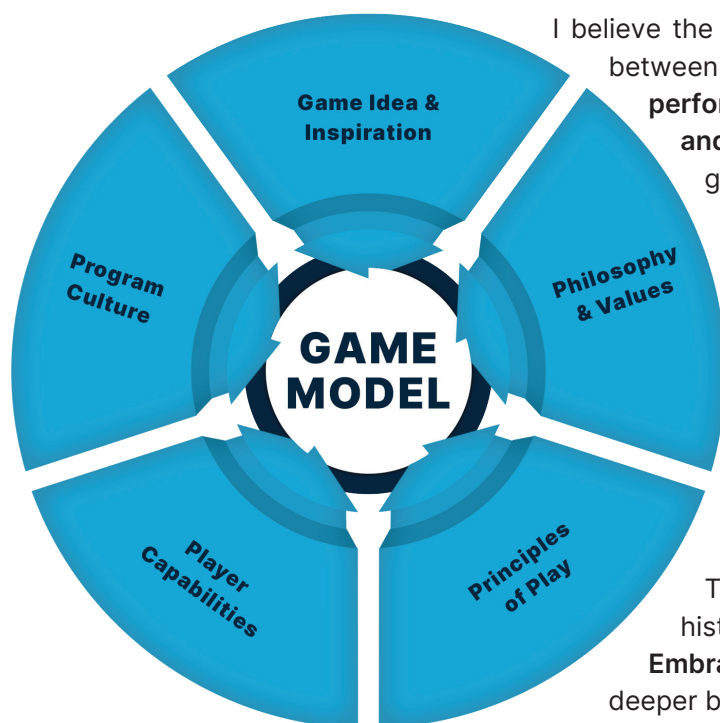
The biggest key to successful learning is creating **player ownership**. By supporting an environment where the players are able to become **comfortable** analyzing their own performance and where they feel **empowered** to have an impact on it, we can lay the foundation for a **culture of development**.

Off the pitch the focus is based on helping the players learn how to effectively **reflect** on both their performance and habits that facilitate or inhibit good performances. By creating a deeper understanding of how analysis and collaboration can support their learning, the players will be motivated to do the extra things required to be successful both individually and collectively.

Once the players feel comfortable honestly evaluating themselves and have been given the tools to be objective, the final puzzle piece is to help the players make changes to their habits. These habits can be during their preparation or during the performance itself, but the goal remains the same: to find limiters and improve them little by little. The importance of helping the players add the **Adapt Phase** to the **Plan, Do, Review Model** is critical to self-improvement, but how we personalize the performance cycle for each player needs to be tailored to each **individual learning style**. Building an understanding of how each player learns through Visual, Auditory, Written, and Kinaesthetic methods is essential for growth and success in sport.



## Game Model



I believe the Game Model should be a dynamic tool to create **clarity** between the staff and players in how we want players to **solve performance problems**. While a coach's personal **inspiration and values** plays a large role in driving the game model, the game ideas should allow the players enough freedom to explore and use their own inspiration and values to find solutions that they believe in.

In addition to providing an overall **vision and style** to the way the team aims to play, the Game Model needs to be able to adapt to the **current capabilities** of the players and allow for success while providing a clear pathway to **develop** these capabilities in a way that helps players achieve **long-term goals**, individually and collectively.

The final piece of the game model needs to be rooted in the history of the program or club and tie deeply into its **culture**. **Embracing the legacy** within the current culture will create deeper buy-in and help build **sustainable success**.

## Inspiration

My game model is strongly influenced from growing up watching the premiership in the 90s and early 2000s. The growth of **possession-based** tactics and **simplistic principles** gave the players opportunities to solve performance problems collectively and by using their **individual skill sets** to positively impact the match.

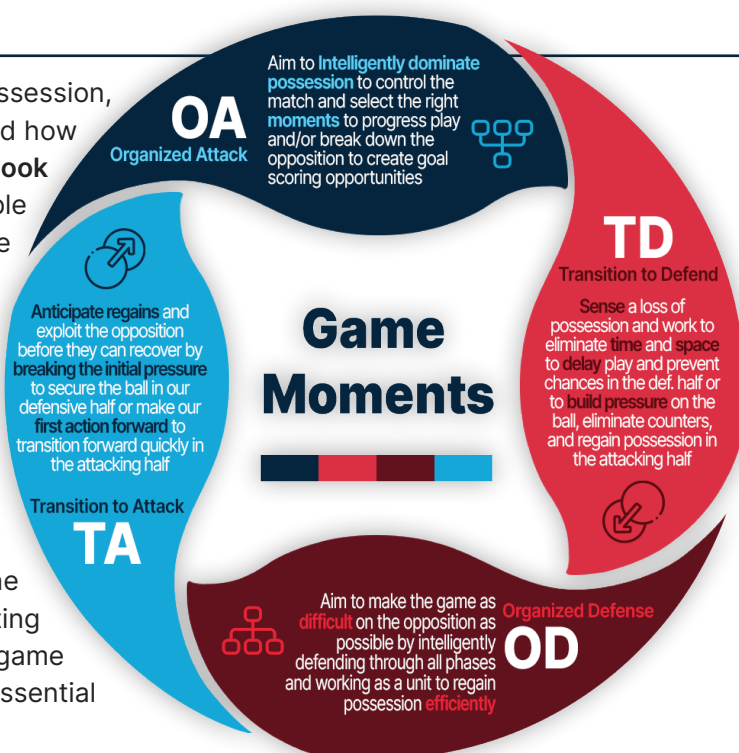
Throughout my coaching career, I have leaned on the principles of **relationism** in order to progress my game model as the game has evolved. This has enabled it to provide additional solutions based around **Tabela** and **Third-Man** principles, so the players have more individual **freedom** and can use their teammate(s) to solve the problems presented by the opposition in an **adaptable** way.

## Style of Play

I aim to help players and teams become confident in possession, so they can make the appropriate decision on when and how to exploit the opposition. While we always want to **look forward & play forward**, the players also need to be able to comfortably dominating possession in order to create a numerical, positional, or qualitative **superiority** when they don't already have one.

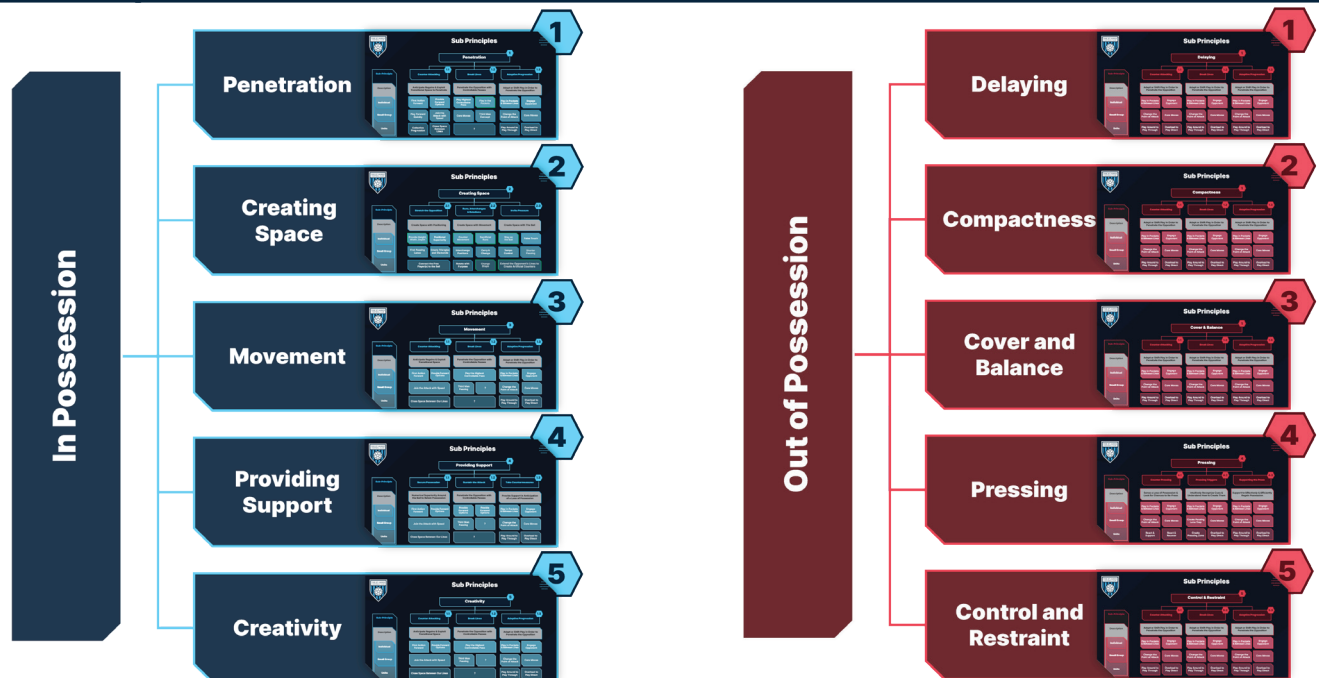
Out of possession, the players need to be committed to defending as a team. **Remaining organized** and **restricting space** are crucial to limiting the opponent's chances and creating positive transitional moments.

The main focus in transitional moments is aiding the players to **anticipate** a regain loss of possession. Getting the players to consistently look forward into the next game moment and creating simple objectives in transition is essential to react faster than the opposition.





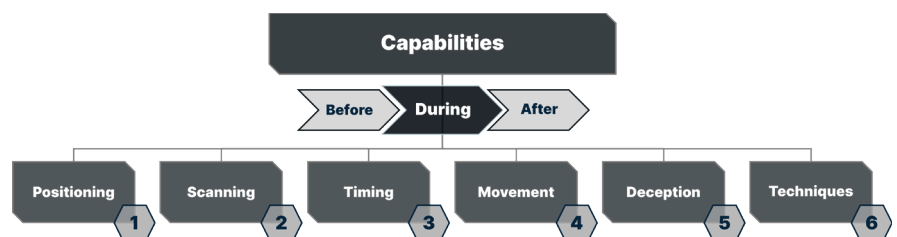
## Core Principles



Utilizing the **Core Principles** of invasion sports, we can develop players that have the confidence to creatively solve problems while remaining predictable to their teammates and aiding in accomplishing team goals in all game moments and phases of play. The key to creating cohesion on the pitch is by constructing **Sub-Principles** that tie in the capabilities of the players to the broader style of play. I believe it's essential to use these unit and small group tactics to carefully **guide players** toward the overall objective in each scenario since we can unintentionally constrict player freedom and creativity. As a staff, it is important to avoid rigid language in both the framework and our coaching. In contrast, we need to constantly help players understand various solutions to any performance problem they might face on a matchday.

## Player Capabilities & Actions

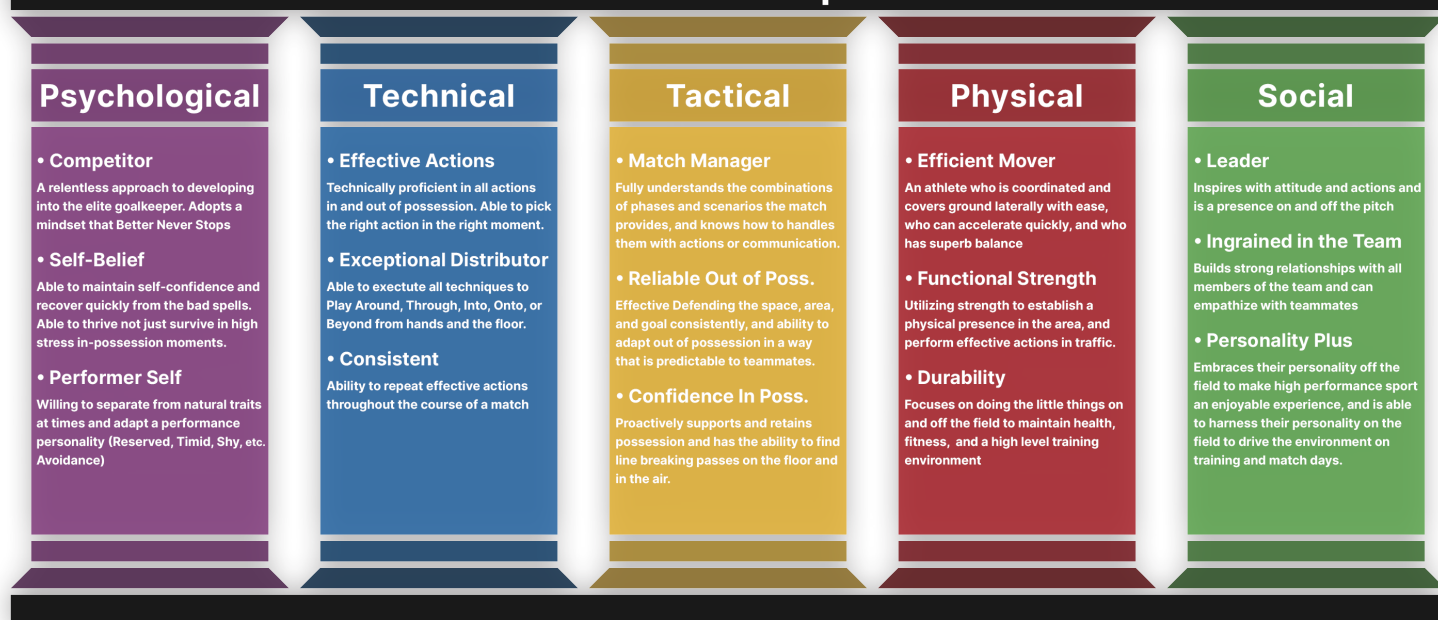
The **Core Capabilities** are at the foundation of success for players in the modern game. Teaching players how to effectively execute these capabilities in the **before, during, and after phases** of each action allows players to continually refine their game and reach their potential.



By helping players build the proficiency to utilize the capabilities in each of the **Core Actions**, they can be given the freedom and confidence to solve problems individually and collectively. This helps lead to a team that has the **courage** to go win matches against top opponents, and has the **resilience** & **trust** to reset and find new solutions when things go against them. In addition, this approach keeps us as a staff from limiting players and allows them to **authentically** express themselves on the pitch. While this approach doesn't bring immediate results, it allows players to feel safe trying to impose themselves onto a match and making wrong decisions which is the first step to **self-improvement**.

# Goalkeeper Profile

## Pillars of Development



Utilizing the goalkeeper player profile to establish what areas our goalkeepers should excel in across the five pillars of development, we can then meet the player where they are currently at and guide them along their individual pathway to success. I am to create goalkeepers who are **effective** across their roles and responsibilities. There is always a focus on helping them refine their techniques, physical ability, and decision making, but creating a **consistent** goalkeeper also requires development of their mental and social ability as well. Ultimately, I aim to help give them the tools to be resilient in their **self-belief** and become **leaders** within the team.

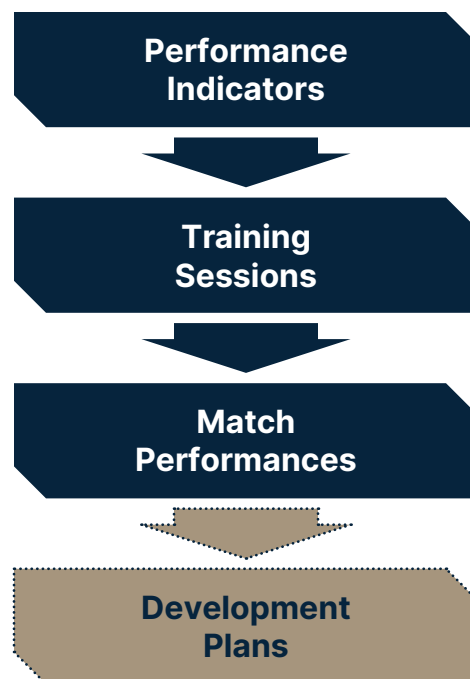
## Analyzing Goalkeeping Performance

The first step in holding goalkeepers to a performance standard is to create clarity in their objectives. From there we can **measure** their performance, **track** their development, and **define** what both short and long-term success will look like for each player.

As a staff, it is paramount to take full advantage of the training-to-match ratio. Using every opportunity to **analyze performance** and **provide feedback** to the goalkeepers can continue to provide and **understanding** and **motivation**.

While the goal is to beat our opponent on matchdays, we still need to be aware of the opportunity we have to provide **lasting feedback** and **enhance the development** of all the goalkeepers on the team.

The final step is to organize this analysis into a tangible plan. Once we have created a plan, it's important we implement it at **every opportunity** (during IDP training, team training, and on before, during, and after matches).



## Training Environment

### Session Structure

#### Announced

- o Technical and Mental warmups to solidify technique and prepare the keeper for the actions they will be training
  - o Incorporating match realistic pre-set movements

#### Unannounced

- o Create realistic repetitions of focus actions from the identified match scenario.
- o Adjust the start point not the end point (We can bring the scenario closer to them to allow for more repetitions in this phase of training, but we always want our keepers to finish out the passage of play (until the ball is out of play, retained, or cleared).

#### Live

- o Recreate an environment where the identified scenario occurs frequently.
- o Remove the script and allow the goalkeepers the opportunity to make decisions on when and how to apply the focus actions to deal with the scenario.

#### Game-Form

- o Always finish training by reincorporating the goalkeepers into the match environment (Complete the Performance Cycle)
  - o Track performance in the identified scenario and provide coaching and feedback to the goalkeepers.

Goalkeeper training sessions typically follow a simple-to-complex structure where we work with **announced** then **unannounced** activities where we can continue to develop **effective techniques** and **decisions** through repetitions. As we progress through the session the focus becomes on creating match realistic pictures where the goalkeeper can gain quality experience in their roles. This **live** portion of the training session allows for the goalkeeper to implement the training focus and develop **consistency** in their roles. Goalkeepers are always reincorporated back into the team training environment to train techniques and decisions in a **game-form**, either small-sided or 11v11.

## Goalkeeper Development

Enhancing goalkeeper development involves first creating a strong familiarity with the roles of the position both in and out of possession. We want to create goalkeepers who are **consistently effective** with both their **actions** and their **decisions** on when and how to utilize their abilities to impact the match in all game moments. As the position continues to evolve, establishing this type of consistency is increasingly difficult since we have added additional responsibilities and expectations onto our goalkeepers in the modern game. We need to bridge the gap between their current understanding and what is ultimately required of a goalkeeper at a high level. It is important to paint **clear pictures** off the field of their roles and responsibilities, so we can continue to improve their decision-making and highlight the other areas of improvement. My approach involves utilizing **development plans** and telestrating individualized clips throughout each phase of their development with the goal being to ensure the goalkeepers not only understand the role, but how they can perform it using their **own strengths**.



## Roles & Actions

### In Possession Roles



### In Possession Actions

#### Support

- Utilize the core capabilities to provide the optimal position in order to complete the next action needed.
- Increase speed of play by limiting the number of touches, increasing the weight of passes, and decreasing the time between touches.
- Communication - Use both verbal and visual to aid teammates in breaking pressure.

#### Playing Around

- Inside Foot - High Tempo
- One Touch Across Body
- Curled Passes Around Opposition
- Bowling & Sling Throw

#### Playing Through

- Inside Foot - Weighted, Accurate, Clean
- Disguised Passing
- Driven Passes on the Ground
- Sidearm Throw

#### Playing Into

- Floated Passes
- Driven Passes - Mid-Low Height
- Overarm Throw

#### Playing Onto

- Driven Passes - Accurate & Long
- Side Volley

#### Playing Beyond

- Driven Passes Beyond the Back Line as Low as Possible
- Drop Kick or Volley



## Out of Possession Roles

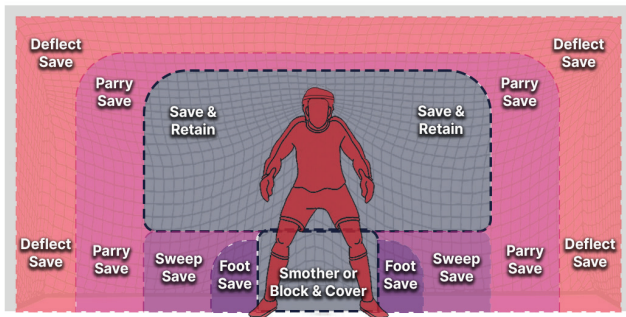


## Out of Possession Actions

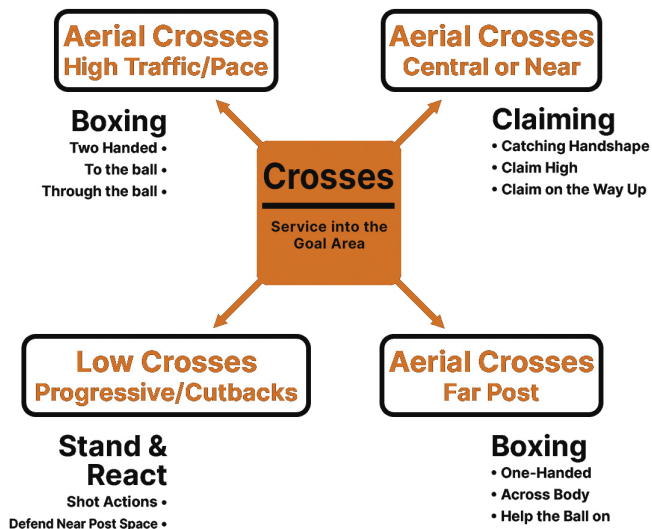
### Protect the Goal

#### Shots

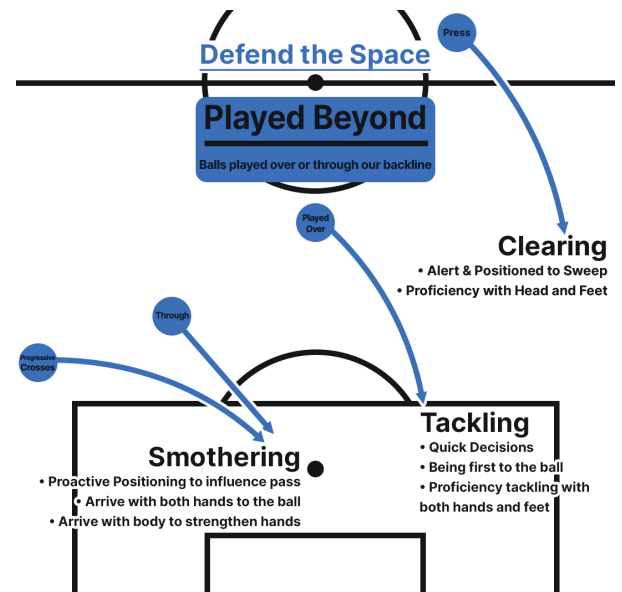
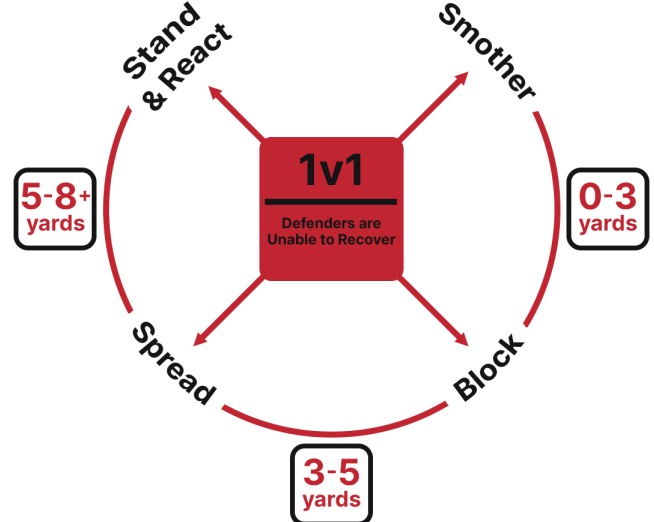
Effective actions to deny goals and avoid second chances



### Defend the Area



### Protect the Goal



# Performance Analysis

## Data Driven

Take advantage of all available technologies to break away from a reliance on subjective information (Facts over Feelings). Solidify or contest opinions and provide meaningful insight to players and staff.

## Key Performance Indicators

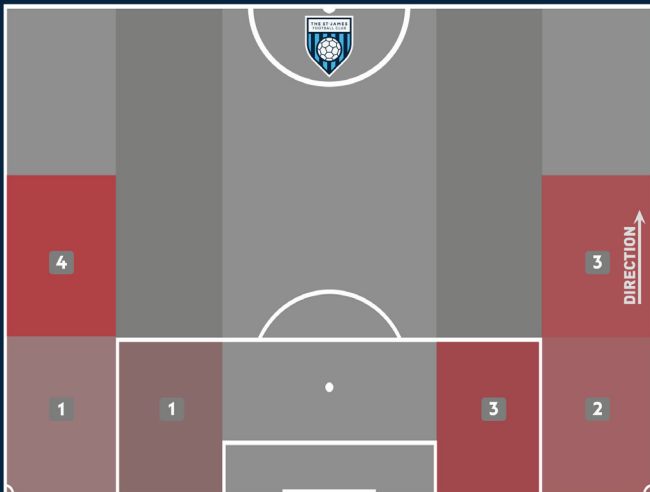
### In Possession

Progression - Quality, Distance, Packing, & Entries  
Space Creation - Distance Between Lines/Players  
Movement - Offers to Receive & Overloads  
Support - Counter Press/Prevention Start Position  
Individual - Line Breaks, Dribbling, & Finishing

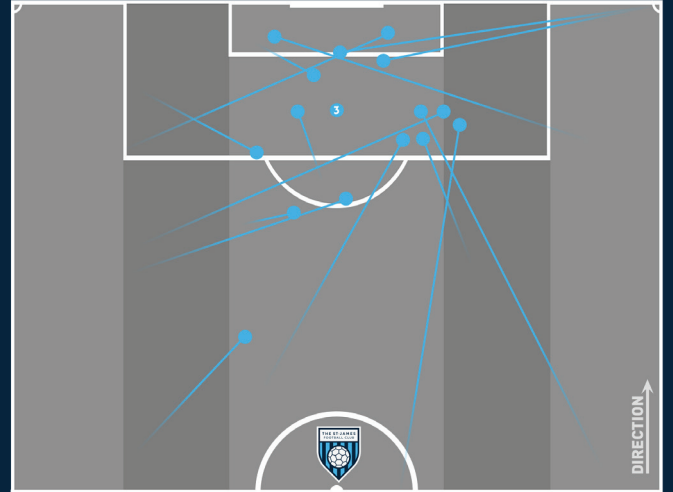
### Out of Possession

Delaying - First Action Direction & Time to Progress  
Compactness - Distance Between Lines/Players  
Cover & Balance - Tracking/Marking  
Pressing - Time on the Ball  
Individual - Duels, Pressures, & Interceptions

## Opposition Scouts



## Maps



Create a systematic approach to scouting to consistently provide relevant, actionable, and repeatable insight for the staff & players to aid in match-day performance & development

Provide visual context to data in order to help staff identify trends and patterns, and relay the information to the players in a clear and concise way to reinforce our team principles and ideas.



## Performance Feedback



### Visual Feedback

Utilize data visualization and telestration to contextualize information for players in order to increase their clarity and recall rate.

### Team Development



Provide clarity and understanding of club and team principles and how to execute them to create advantages in possession (numerical, positional, or qualitative superiorities) and to solve performance problems out of possession (denying penetration, controlling players & space, and regaining possession). Streamline the principles to allow for rapid decision making in transitional moments for example *First Action Forward* and *Make Positive Runs* when we regain possession in the attacking half to quickly exploit the space between opposition lines and players.



### Unit Development

Teach players how to proactively impact the match, both in and out of possession, by helping them apply their skill sets effectively to the entire phase of play.

### Individual Development

Increase the players' understanding of the capabilities that make them successful and how to apply their capabilities to specific skills, phases, or moments of the match.





## Set Piece Principles

### Orientation



All corners, free kicks, and throws begin with the players quickly utilizing the body orientation problem. Players need to position themselves in a way that it is difficult for their marks to keep track of both them and the ball.

### Deception



Make use of individual and team deception to draw defenders away from the target zone, create a qualitative superiority, or gain an advantage against the opponents in 1v1 duels.

### Disruption



Work as a team to identify and disrupt the opposition's tactics (Zonal, Man-Marking, or Combo). Creatively dismark target players by using blocks, screens, and decoy runs.

### Timing



Rehearsal of set piece timing to allow players the freedom to read the situation, accomplish their objectives and arrive into the correct zones with precise timing

### Distribution



The final and key principle to set piece success is to have a healthy distribution of players in the key zones. This includes an overload in our target zone in addition to players framing the goal and players framing the 18 yard box.





## Set Piece Development

### Individual & Team Development

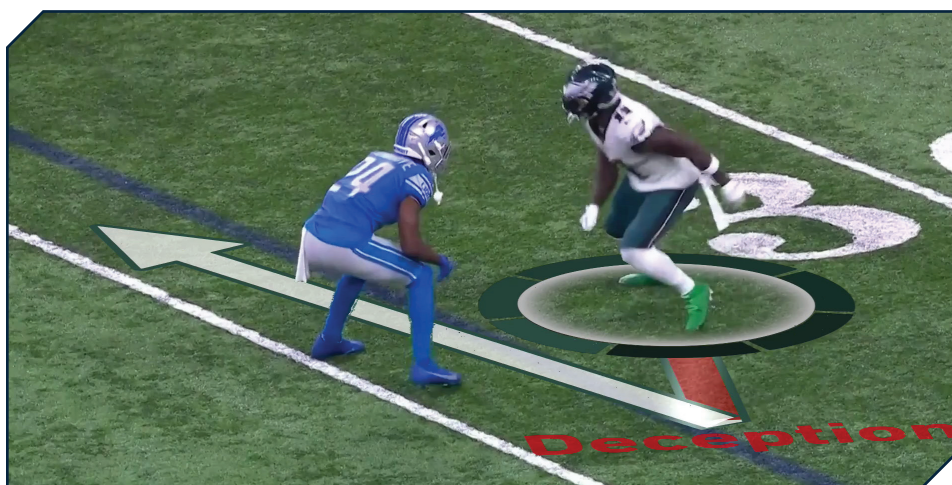
By providing a principle-based approach to set pieces, we can teach players how to excel within the fifth game moment by using traditional development methods such as technical or physical drills, tactical activities, small-sided games, film, and telestation. The importance of re-framing set pieces and approaching them as you would the rest of the game moments allows our players to break free from a reliance on routines and collectively approach them with confidence and use their individual strengths to have a positive impact in every situation.

### Best Practices

Capitalize on the availability of information and film provided by coaches and teams at the highest level of the sport to create a best practice library. Provide examples to reinforce our set piece principles to the players and facilitate discussion on how to execute our principles both individually and collectively.



### External Sources

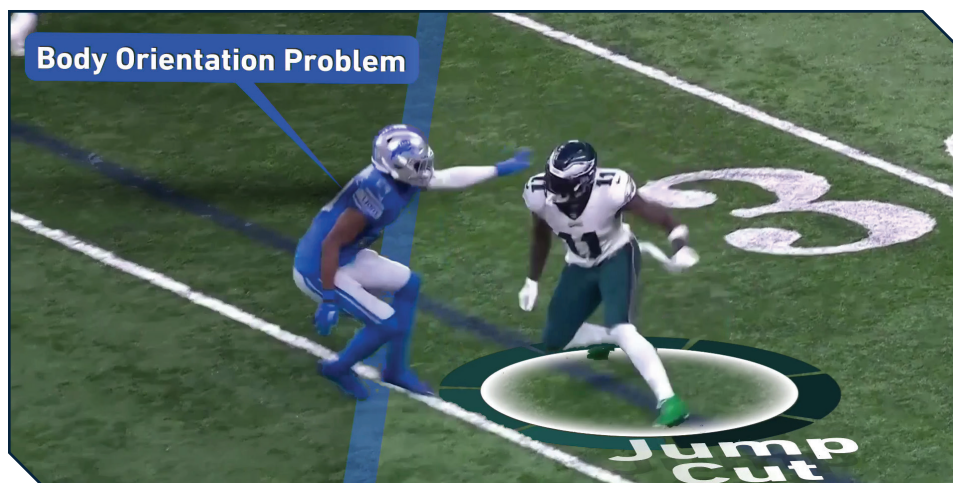


#### Clarity & Insight

Develop an openness to outside ideas and use principles & routines from other sports especially the NFL, NBA, and Rugby Union. Create simplicity and consistency by relating these ideas to the set piece principles and core capabilities.

#### Physiological Development

Utilize the work in other sports to help the players increase the efficiency and explosiveness of their cuts, feints, jumps and other movements.



# REFERENCES



**Kristin Thompson**  
Girls Academy Director  
The St. James FC  
Head Women's Coach  
Guam Football Association  
Contact Info Available Upon Request



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