



*Interview with David Adams – Welsh National Squad (Youth)
Coach & Fitness Coach (U21s) at the Football Association of
Wales and a Level 4 'A' License Coach Educator*



David Adams is a senior lecturer of Football Coaching Science at the University of Glamorgan. He is also National Squad (Youth) Coach & Fitness Coach (U21s) at the Football Association of Wales and a Level 4 'A' License Coach Educator at the Welsh Football Trust. David Adams has supported many current professional managers and professional players in gaining their coaching qualifications as an instructor, mentor and assessor on the UEFA A License Coaching Program. As part the FAW Coach Education working group, David Adams supported the development of new resources to ensure courses reflected the ever changing football environment. More recently he developed the New Youth Coaching Pathway in Wales – by leading the working group responsible for new youth specific licenses at Level 2 (C' Certificate) to Level 4 (A Youth) – which was released in June 2013.

David Adams is currently completing his PhD – B.Sc, M.Sc (Coaching Science). He holds the UEFA Professional License and is a UEFA A Licence (Level 4) Coach Educator and Fellow of The Higher Education Academy.



The UEFA coaching courses offered by the Welsh FA are held in high regard throughout the United Kingdom and Europe. As an instructor, why do you feel the courses offered in Wales are so popular?

We have the advantage of being a small country so as a coach education department we are able to develop a clear philosophy within all tutors to ensure a consistent approach to coach development and learning, secondly we have developed very robust coach mentoring tools, each candidate is given a personal mentor who works with the coach throughout the 12 month period, this involves speaking via Skype or on the phone regularly about sessions, problems, players but also the mentor attends the clubs sessions (4-5 sessions) over the 12 month period to support the coach through the A License journey. This enables the coach to develop reality based skills and apply knowledge and learning in his/her own environment. Additionally it creates a non-threatening environment as a major weakness of any coach education course is that candidates never relax around tutors as they feel they are constantly being assessed. These strategies support the learning process and have enabled us to create a reputation for developing coaches with their own style, philosophy, values and ideas. This is fundamental to our philosophy.

What do you believe is the most important trait that young players need to possess in order to progress up the competitive ladder?

There is very little between technical, tactical, and physical qualities of elite youth players, in my experience of working with all age groups in our Wales National Team the ones who have a mental toughness in abundance separates many players who are able to progress from youth to senior.

What factors enable smaller countries to develop more players than countries with larger populations?

In my opinion 3 things:

1. A clear vision from the Football Association and clubs on how they want to develop young players, and develop a clear strategy and stick to it as opposed to change every

ASET – Association for Soccer Education and Training
www.asetoccer.com



2-3 years due to changes to people in roles (e.g Belgium 10 year strategy has been rewarded with players like Lukaku, Vertonghen, Hazard, Vincent Company to name a few).

2. Coach Education - Not enough qualified staff at all levels will ultimately affect the quality of provision you can offer talented players. Look at the figure below, this may partly explain why the likes of Spain and Germany have greater success in producing players.

Table 2: Qualified Coaches Across Europe in 2008

Country	Qualification		
	Uefa B	Uefa A	Pro Licence
England	1,759	895	115
Spain	9,135	12,720	2,140
France	15,000	2,400	188
Italy	27,430	1,298	512
Germany	28,400	5,500	1,070

Figures taken from Green (2009). Values are number of coaches qualified in specific area.

3. Does the league in this case the English Premier League support the progression of the players, in other countries there are far more home grown players playing in the top leagues which obviously enables players the opportunity to develop which in turn supports the National team.



Table 1: Decrease in British players in the Premier League

Year	1993	2006-07
Overall	462 (90%)	246 (49%)
Position		
Central Defender	72	34
Winger	36	16
Midfielder	93	44

Figures taken from Green (2009). Values are number of British players in the English Premier League. % as a percentage of every player in the League.

Below is the remainder of the questions asked to David Adams. To view the interview in its entirety you will need to log in as an ASET emerging technician.

Mauricio Pochettino has instilled a philosophy and a way of playing at Southampton that the first team players have adopted. What are the obstacles a coach/manager will encounter to influence a first team to his philosophy and style? In general, how long would you anticipate this process taking?

In every game there is always a perception of a superior and an inferior team, do inferior teams need to be more tactically flexible than superior teams in order to remain competitive? Why?

Three at the back is becoming a more observable formation among professional teams. It has taken hold in Serie A with a number of clubs. Everton and Liverpool have also played with this formation in 2013. Why do you feel three at the back is becoming more prevalent?

Could you name your favorite three coach/managers and explain why they are admired by you.