GEORGE ROBERTS COACHING

SCANNING

Overview

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What is scanning?

Scanning is the process of looking away from the ball to search for information to inform decision making.

This is typically done by players who don't have the ball.

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Why should players scan?

Simply put scanning allows players to gain information on their surroundings to develop awareness which then informs their decision making and actions with the ball.

The better the players awareness, the better and more effective decisions they can make.

If you observe the best footballers, their ability to scan frequently during games helps them to decide their next move before even getting the ball. Some may say this allows them to 'play in the future'.

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How do players scan effectively?

To scan effectively, players should be looking to scan frequently by taking quick glances, especially when they are looking or expecting to receive the ball.

Players should look at the ball carrier every time they touch the ball and look away in between their touches.

If the player scans when their teammate passes, they are less likely to be able to read the flight of the ball and therefore adjust appropriately to receive.

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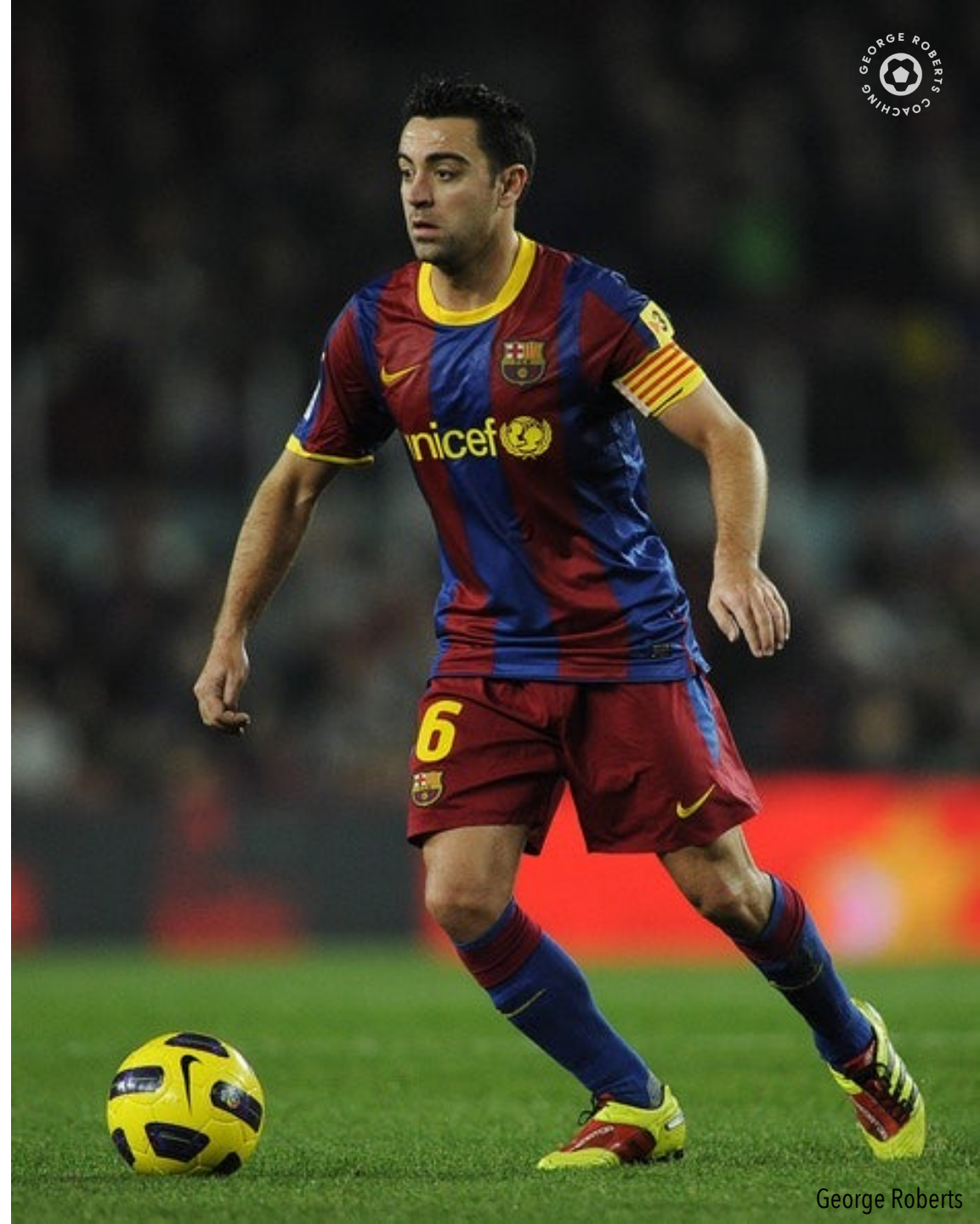
What should players look for when scanning?

TEAMMATES
Understanding where teammates are positioned in relation to the ball and the individual.

SPACE
Understanding what space is afforded in different areas of the pitch and how this may influence the individual's decision making.

OPPONENTS
Understanding where opponents are positioned and how this may influence the individual's decision making.

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"Take Pictures"

Frank Lampard's dad used to constantly tell him to take pictures during games when he was younger.

This constant reminder embedded scanning within his game which allowed him to play at the highest level as he was always able to make good decisions due his awareness on the pitch.

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When should a player scan?

Before:

Scan to take pictures when you are anticipating/expecting to receive the ball to identify your next move. Look at the ball when your teammate makes contact with the ball.

During:

Look and having at least 1 quick glance when the ball has been passed and is travelling towards you to quickly take on board information.

After:

Getting your eyes up to look up after receiving the ball to see if the picture has changed.

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Why scan at different times?

Players should scan before, during and after to ensure the information gained is as accurate as possible.

Due to the nature of the game, the pictures and surroundings change almost constantly therefore its essential players scan frequently.

For example, a player may identify a free teammate before they receive the ball but as the ball is travelling this option may no longer be available as an opponent has changed their position.

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What influences a player's ability to scan?

Time is one the biggest influences on a player's ability to scan. If time is available this affords the opportunity to scan more frequently as more time is available to look around and away from the ball.

If the ball is passed over a shorter distance or if a player turns and the ball travels to them quickly without time to prepare, their ability to scan is reduced due to the player having to deal with the ball quickly.

When considering scanning whilst having the ball, the amount of pressure and space available will influence a player's ability to look up and away from the ball to make decisions.

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Importance of body shape

Having an open body shape that allows the player to see both goals will help them scan and gain greater information.

If the player's body shape is closed, their ability to see the whole pitch is reduced therefore potentially making decision making more difficult.

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