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STREET SOCCER:

THE COACHES' GUIDE

COACHING PEOPLE
CREATING PLAYERS

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SPORT

Street soccer is exciting, creative, and fun. But even the most creative players need a good coach to realize their potential. This guide to street soccer coaching, written by the founder of the International Street Soccer Association (ISSA), is an informative, practical, and easy-to-use handbook for coaches of all levels.

The best way to nurture creativity is to have an optimal learning environment. The ISSA has spent decades developing the best and most efficient coaching methods to create such an environment and shape better players and teams. In the book, these methods and strategies are detailed for every street soccer coach, whether they're coaching a grassroots team or a professional club.

Street Soccer: The Coaches' Guide contains 50 games—small sided and 1-v-1—that coaches can try out with their players in order to become more successful and still have fun. This book is informative, easy-to-use, and enjoyable. It will help everyone become a great street soccer coach and learn a creative, efficient, and dynamic way to coach the beautiful game.

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DARREN LAVER

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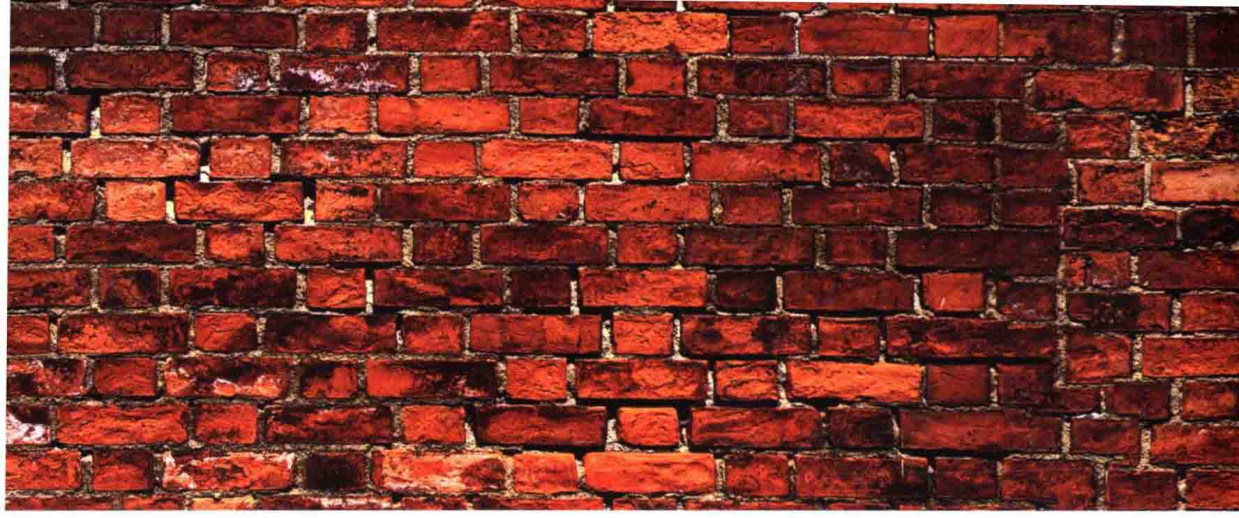

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Darren Laver is one of the most unique and creative coaches in the world. He is the founder of the International Street Soccer Association (ISSA) and the street soccer concept, and is a globally recognized expert coach and exhibition performer.

Street soccer was born out of Mr. Laver's growing disappointment with the traditional coaching and teaching methods so widespread throughout the United Kingdom. Based on his creativity in teaching street soccer and the distinguished organization he created in 2006, he is widely respected as an expert. It was self-evident that the gulf between soccer mechanical skills and creativity was growing, and Mr. Laver has revolutionized the coaching process to remedy these gaps.

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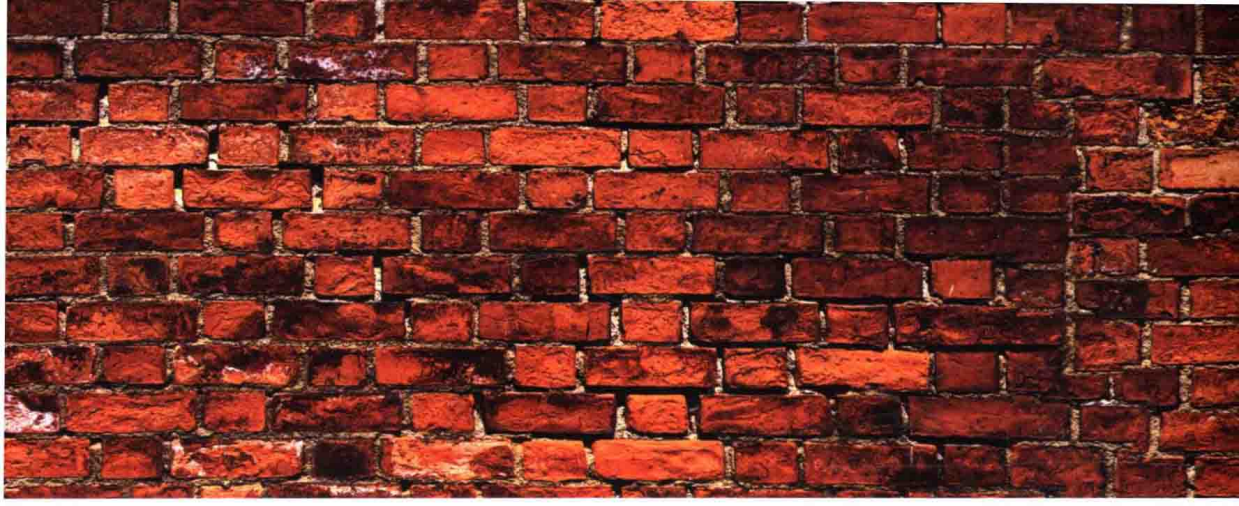
He is a recognized authority on the subject, and his performances and exhibitions have allowed coaches, teachers and those involved in the biggest sport in the world to seek more creative, efficient and dynamic ways to coach this beautiful game. Mr. Laver has brought together some of the most influential, creative concepts in the game from all over the world to develop skillful players.

Using the International Street Soccer Association (ISSA) as a platform, Mr. Laver has dedicated his life to coaching players to improve their creative skill. He provides training programs and street soccer events for amateur, youth and professional clubs, councils and communities with the ISSA training license across the world. Mr. Laver's influence has grown to be a worldwide phenomenon, with global titan Thomas Cook running ISSA programs in many of their holiday resorts across Europe, featuring Mr. Laver as a performer. Mr. Laver is also the founder of the famous Creative Skill Camps that runs across North America and Canada, using street soccer as a means to develop skillful players.

Mr. Laver has lent his expertise and performances to the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA), providing skill-training tutorials with Danish international soccer player, Brian Laudrup, for whom he was selected to run a series of events and exhibitions across Denmark. For SoccerEx in Africa, Mr. Laver exhibited his skills, and in the UK engaged with young adults for the BBC *Your Game* tour.

Mr. Laver is recognized as one of the leading street soccer coaches and soccer skill performers in the world. He has also been recognized for his extraordinary coaching skills and performance abilities in a variety of published books including *Street Football* published by Wayland Publishers in 2013, and has published numerous articles on the importance of creative thinking including an article for the NSCAA Coaching Journal in 2015. In 2011, Mr. Laver's extraordinary abilities and performances led him to being voted one of the best street soccer players in the United Kingdom, and he was the selected to be one of 45 star players to feature in EA Sports FIFA Street (2012 video game).



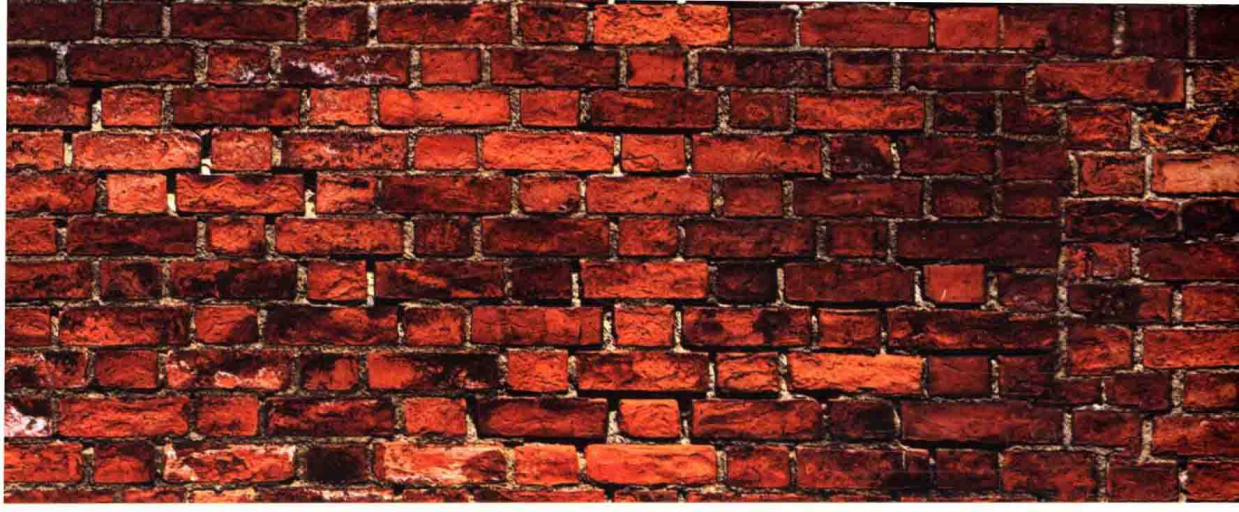
FOREWORD ON STREET SOCCER

Apart from those blessed with a natural talent, the vast majority of players require some level of training or coaching before they can compete at the highest levels of the discipline. This is where rules are established and we begin to play according to set patterns. The experts tell us that this is the only way to ensure consistency. Amateurs can afford to make plenty of mistakes because they really have nothing to lose but their pride. However, even that is only temporary. At the professional level things change significantly. Here we are expected to win and win again. We either establish a pattern of dominance or are consigned to that undesirable space between losing streaks and embarrassing mediocrity.

Modern technology and techniques have created plenty of opportunities for learning but they also demand a lot from us. One of the complaints from players is that modern coaches have simply lost the will to have fun. They focus so much on details and goals that they forget that they are working with a human being who can get bored. Soccer players in particular thrive in creative and exciting environments that give their talents the space to shine brightly. This does not mean that we forget the basic concepts and techniques; rather, it requires that we coach with a bit of imagination and excitement. This book attempts to change the mindset by revolutionizing the following process of typical coaching practice:

1. Introducing successful core techniques which lead to player development
2. Crafting a thinking game once progress has been achieved
3. Encouraging teamwork and support from large and small groups
4. Implementing what has been learnt by way of small-sided games

The typical way of coaching is full of content but also suffers from some level of tediousness and is likely to inspire boredom in the player due to its long-windedness. In fact the drills that are demonstrated time and time again can begin to take away from the art of playing soccer. It then ceases to be the beautiful game and instead turns into yet another repetitive activity. We suggest that the only way to make coaching work is to make it practical. Doing instead of just thinking is one of the great interest points for natural soccer players. We want to tap into that. That is what modern coaching science is all about. We attempt to overcome the shortcomings of traditional coaching systems. This book is presented after extensive research, anecdotal evidence and the practical experience of actually coaching soccer players. It is indeed all about the exciting phenomenon that is street soccer.



INTRODUCTION

"Street Soccer is for everyone who refuses to let their individuality, creativity and imagination die."[1]

This book has been written for all those interested in making coaching a success for soccer. It is aimed not only at the coaches but also the players who are being prepared for great things. It is relevant to the coach, parents and soccer clubs who want talent to come up and be nurtured. We have tried to present complex theories and methods in a language that is accessible to people who engage in soccer on a day-to-day basis. Therefore we hope that this book will outline the basic principles that are critical for the successful implementation of a street soccer coaching program. We believe that our approach is special because it is different from anything you may have encountered so far. The coaching style that we adopt can completely revolutionize the way in which we handle players, particularly in the delicate stages of their development when they are not completely in tune with the sport.

We are often inundated with questions from readers and we suspect this is because our one-of-a-kind training programs pique everyone's interest. Nevertheless we believe that this book provides you with a firm foundation for understanding what we are trying to do and how it can help you. All our exercises and sessions are very modern in their approach

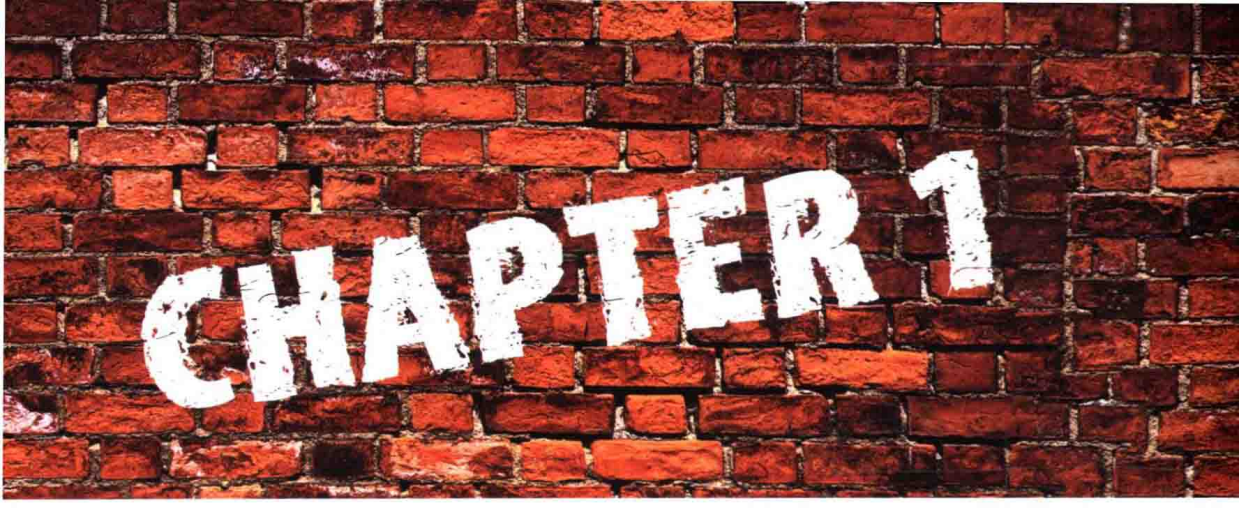
1 *The International Street Soccer Association, 2015*

but they are firmly grounded in the best knowledge about soccer. We do not believe in following the mainstream just for the sake of conforming. That is why this book thinks outside the box and encourages you to do so in return.

The beauty of street soccer is the fact that it challenges a lot of things you may have heard about coaching. We do not lightly abandon the models that have been used before us for years. There is a very good reason why we are prepared to explore this new radical approach. For example, we are not convinced that the traditional approach to tactics is really the best way to prepare players for the ever-changing game. This book casts a critical eye on how coaches train aspiring soccer players. We use all the knowledge that we have about human learning in order to suggest radical but effective ways of achieving great results. This book is written from the standpoint of actual evidence and knowledge of working with players. It is not just about theory but the things that have been proven time and time again.

By reading this book and implementing some of the things we recommend, you can begin to create an optimal learning environment for the budding soccer player. They will be able to pick up a lot of skills and have lots of fun in the process. Street soccer is all about vibrancy and creativity. The chapters will take you through the process of heating things up and intriguing the interest of your learners every single day. We believe the originality and the courage to stand by your principles is one of the reasons for success in sport. Therefore this book is anything but a copy of previous styles. It is new and it is challenging. It is the future of a brand of soccer that will have everyone sitting up and paying attention.

This book is also quite detailed in terms of giving you all the tools that you need when you are running a street soccer session. We emphasize practicality over complexity. This book tells you the what, why, how and where of modern soccer coaching, and includes 25 fun street soccer games, produced for developing thinking players. We have given a lot of thought to making them as relevant to you as possible. They are high impact and inspirational activities that will leave your players wanting more and more of your time with them. We hope you enjoy reading this book. We certainly have enjoyed writing it for you. Let us begin by looking at what makes a great player.



UNDERSTANDING GREAT PLAYERS

"The difference between a successful person and others is not a lack of strength, not a lack of knowledge, but rather a lack of will." Vince Lombardi (1913-1970) [2]

If you look at soccer today, the really elite players are few and far in between. It is this scarcity of exceptionalism that allows the top class to reap unbelievable benefits. Some (like Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Zinedine Zidane, Diego Maradona, Marta Vieira da Silva, Pelé Edson Arantes do Nascimento and Johan Cruyff) have become household names thus transcending the arenas that gave them so much glory. Their accomplishments are unquestionable and they include such glorious exploits like multiple World Cup victories and countless international trophies. However, it is not only the personalities that appeal but also their approach to the game. We admire them because they bring something different to the pitch and therefore entertain millions of people across the globe. Some of their technical abilities have acquired mythical status but each has one thing in common with the other: they are creative. Their coaching and training did not stifle this innate ability; on the contrary, many of them became even more creative as they matured.

2 *NFL Football Coach (Green Bay Packers)*

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