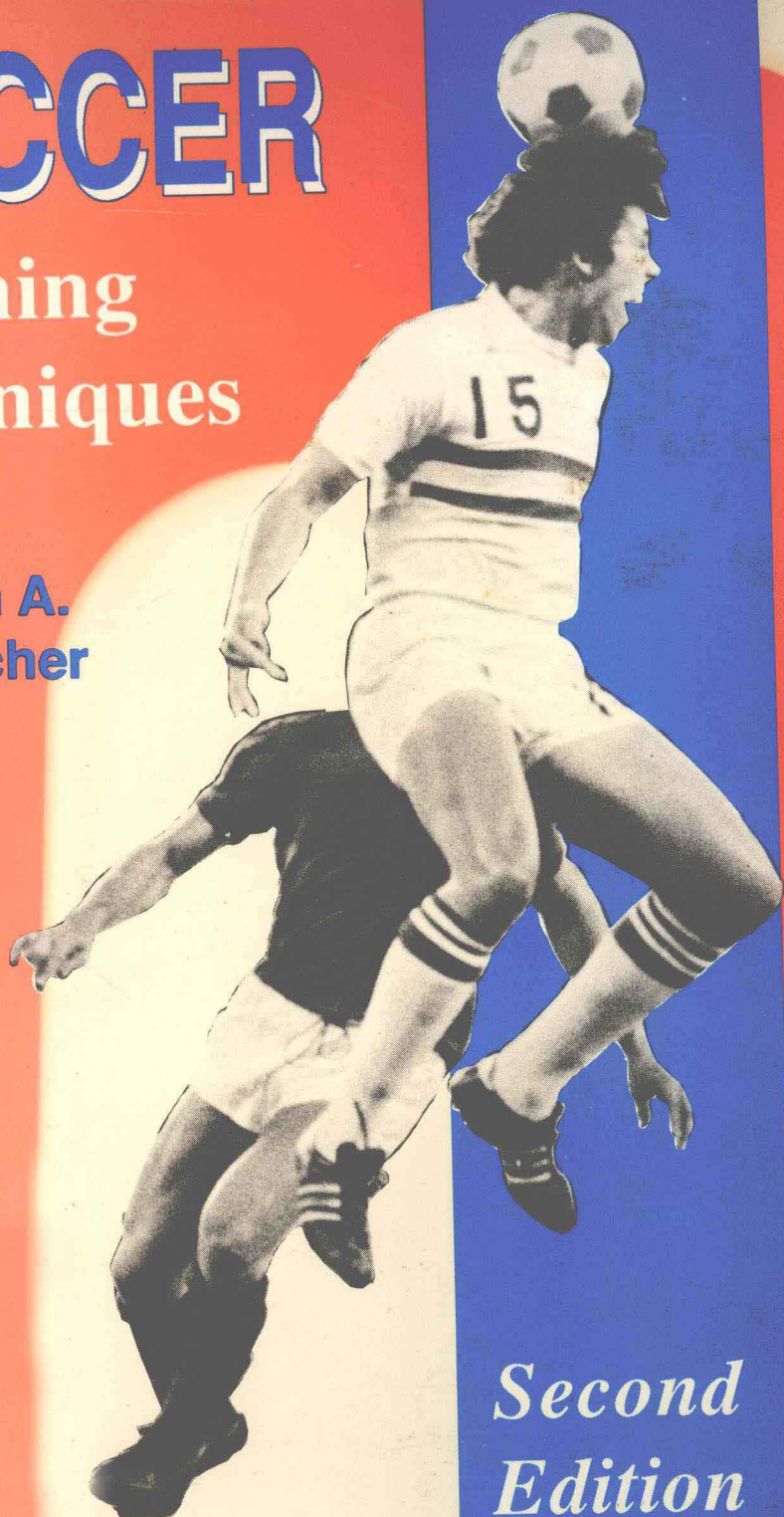


# SOCCER

## Winning Techniques

**Joseph A.  
Luxbacher**



*Second  
Edition*

# **SOCCER**

## **WINNING TECHNIQUES**

**Second Edition**

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Department of Athletics  
University of Pittsburgh

***eddie bowers publishing, inc.***

2600 Jackson Street  
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## **Dedication**

*This book is dedicated to three individuals who have had an enormous impact of my life.*

*To my father, Francis Luxbacher, who introduced me to the sport of soccer and taught me how to play the game.*

*To my mother, Mary Ann Luxbacher, who has consistently been my strongest supporter in everything that I do.*

*To Ruth Kohlmyer, whose enthusiasm and love for the game touched my life as well as the lives of countless other young players.*

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# PREFACE

Soccer is truly an international passion, the national sport of nearly every country in Asia, Africa, South America and Europe. The game provides a universal language, a common bond among peoples and nations that transverses political, cultural, economic and religious barriers. The emotion and excitement that surround soccer is unparalleled within the realm of sport.

As do most sports, soccer has experienced a variety of changes as it evolved from its earliest form into the modern version of the game. The rules governing play, methods of coaching, strategies and tactics, and the organization of players on the field have all undergone modifications at one time or another. Newer and more innovative philosophies are constantly evolving from the old. Despite these changes, there is one constant that steadfastly remains the primary objective of the coach - the preparation of players, both individually and collectively, for optimal performance in game competition. It is with that theme in mind that this book is written.

Completion of this project would not have been possible without the help and cooperation of a great many people. Although it is not possible to mention everyone involved, I would like to make note of the following individuals. I would first like to express my gratitude to the players and coaches with whom I've had the privilege of sharing thoughts and experiences. Special thanks is also extended to Ed Bowers, my publisher and friend, for demonstrating confidence in my ability to undertake this project.

On a more personal note I would like to thank Gail Ann for her constant love and encouragement of my various projects. Her interest and involvement make the writing process much more enjoyable and help me to get through the rough times. I would also like to thank my mother, Mary Ann, for her support in everything that I do. Finally, I am greatly indebted to my late father, Francis Luxbacher, my first and finest coach. His willingness to share ideas and insight regarding the contents of this book were invaluable. He was and always will be the motivating force behind my love for the game.

*Joseph A. Luxbacher*

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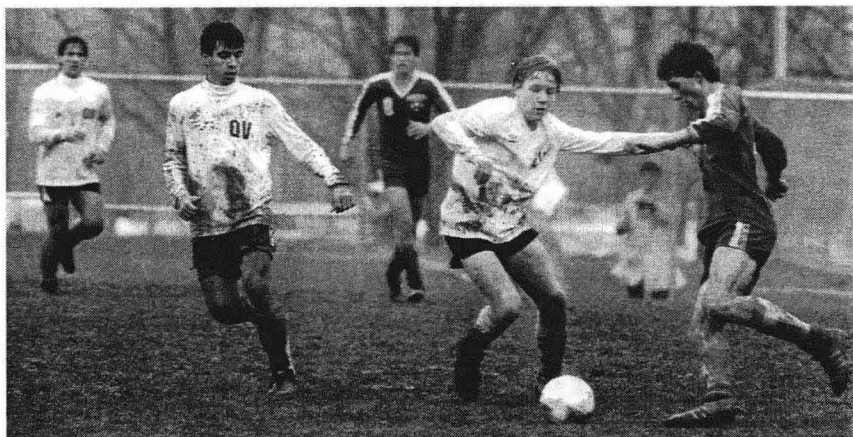
# HISTORY

Soccer, commonly known as “football” throughout most of the world, has a long and interesting history. The original forerunner of the modern sport is believed to be an ancient Chinese game called “tsu chu” which was played as early as 2500 B.C. Tzu chu involved kicking a stuffed ball made of animal skin. The game was usually played during festivals or holiday celebrations and was also used for the more serious purpose of training soldiers. Historical references indicate that tzu tzu was played extensively during the Han Dynasty (206 B.C to 220 A.D.).

Soccer-kickball type games developed in other areas of the ancient world as well. The Greek’s played a football type game called “episkyres” as early as 600 B.C. During the same time period the Romans played a similar game called “harpustum”. Harpustum was usually played between rival towns oftentimes located several miles apart. The ball, usually the inflated bladder of an animal, was kicked, punched or carried with town market places designated as goals. Matches often lasted several days and were played over rugged terrain. Both episkyres and harpustum were ball-carrying games that actually combined elements of soccer and rugby since use of the hands was permitted in propelling the ball. Although modern soccer can in some respects be considered a derivative of these ancient games, the growth and development of the game as we know it today was nurtured in medieval Britain.

The playing of soccer in the British Empire was originally limited to the celebration of yearly festivals. Gradually the game gained widespread popularity throughout all of Britain and began to touch the lives of people at all levels of society. Legend has it that King Edward III in 1349 prohibited soccer in the military after he became upset with the troops because they preferred to play soccer rather than engage in warfare. Ironically it was the British military that eventually played a major role in introducing the sport throughout the world during the late 1800's, a period when expansion of the British empire was at its zenith.

As soccer became more popular the sport began to flourish in the public school system of England. England's first soccer club, the Sheffield Football Club, was founded in 1857 and the Sheffield Rules adopted as the official laws of the game. Until that time players had been permitted to use their hands to control the ball. The Sheffield Rules prohibited use of the hands for the field players and created the initial division between the sports of soccer-football and rugby-football. Even after creation of the Sheffield Rules, however, the laws governing play still lacked uniformity throughout the country. It was not uncommon for teams to use as many as fifteen players per side. In 1870 a rule was enacted that restricted the number of players on the field to eleven per team at any one time. The adoption of the eleven player limit was an important step in the game's development since it was the first attempt at organizing players into strategic systems of play.



*Many high schools offer soccer as a varsity sport.*

Another milestone in the history of the sport occurred when the *Football Association* was founded in 1863. Representatives of eleven clubs favoring the kicking form of the game gathered at Freemason's Tavern in London and agreed to limit play entirely to kicking and heading. To further differentiate between the two forms of football, one was called rugby and the other association football. Association football was later shortened to assoc and eventually to soccer. Formal organization of the game in England provided a spark for growth in other countries as well. The Buenos Aires Football Club was founded in Argentina in 1867. Association rules were first instituted in Germany in 1870 and the Scottish Football Association was organized in 1873. Many new associations formed during the late 19th century which necessitated the creation of an international governing body. In 1904 the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) met and organized in Paris. Today there are more than 140 member nations of FIFA. Every four years participating countries compete in the World Cup, soccer's international championship. First initiated in 1930, today the World Cup attracts a following that dwarfs our Super Bowl and World Series. The emotion and fervor that surround the tournament often borders on the fanatical. The World Cup is considered by many to be the ultimate sporting spectacle.



*Soccer is a popular collegiate sport.*

Soccer has been played in the United States for more than a century. Initially the majority of participants were immigrants who had brought the game from their homelands. Many towns and sport clubs organized and sponsored soccer teams, oftentimes creating intense and long standing rivalries among neighboring villages. Soccer was introduced on an informal basis at the college level as early as the 1850's. The first official college match is reported to have been played between Princeton and Rutgers in 1869. A number of eastern universities introduced soccer into their athletic curriculum during the latter part of the nineteenth century. As the sport attracted a greater number of participants, both in school sponsored programs and on the sandlots, it became apparent that a national governing body was needed to unify the various leagues and associations. In 1913 the United States Soccer Football Association (USSFA) was organized and approved as a member of FIFA. The organization's name has since been changed to the United States Soccer Federation (USSF).

The rapid popular growth of youth soccer resulted in the establishment of the United States Youth Soccer Association (USYSA) in 1974. The USYSA, an affiliate of the USSF, functions to develop, promote and administer the sport for players under 19 years of age. Millions of young boys and girls are presently playing in organized leagues throughout the country. Soccer's popularity is also evident in our high school and college athletic programs. Many high schools offer soccer as a varsity sport for both boys and girls. More than 500 NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) affiliated colleges and universities sponsor men's programs and more than 250 sponsor women's programs. Many schools belonging to the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) also field highly competitive teams.

In the summer of 1994 the United States will for the first time host the World Cup Tournament. This is a monumental step in the development and acceptance of soccer in our country. Americans will be able to experience first-hand the emotion and excitement that surrounds the World Cup. We will also have an opportunity to observe soccer at the highest level and to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the world's most popular game. For a few short weeks in 1994 the United States will be at the center of the soccer world. Hopefully the experience will provide impetus for the continued growth and development of the game here in the states.

# **TEAM MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION**

Although coaching is often referred to as a science, it is at best an inexact science. Since each coaching situation is somewhat different from any other there are no guaranteed formulas that will ensure success. Even so, several basic principles of coaching can be adapted to any coaching situation.

## **PRINCIPLES OF COACHING**

### **Be Organized**

There is no substitute for organization. A well conceived practice regimen should flow smoothly from beginning to end. The most economical use of practice time is achieved if players remain active and enthusiastic throughout the session.

### **Treat Players as Individuals**

It is important to be flexible with regard to the individual needs, strengths and weaknesses of players. Design practices so that players progress according to their own ability and level of expertise. Consider



the player's physical and mental development - individuals may be of the same calendar age but may differ in their biological age (i.e., physical and mental maturity).

## **Consider the Training Load**

Design practices to physically and mentally challenge players to reach a higher standard of performance. However, a training session that is too demanding is just as bad as one that is too easy. The philosophy of "more is always better" is not necessarily true when it involves planning of a practice session. The ultimate concern should be the quality rather than quantity of practice time. Take into account the following variables when planning a practice session:

- age of the players
- physical and emotional maturity of players
- environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, etc.).

## **Coach Yourself**

Modeling can be a very effective learning tool, particularly with young players. The coach should become proficient at demonstrating the various soccer skills to his or her players. In doing so he or she will also gain an appreciation of the difficult challenges which confront young players as they learn to play the game of soccer.

## **Simplify Drills and Exercises**

Much of the inherent beauty of soccer rests with the fact that it is basically a simple game. Try to keep it that way! Avoid using complex drills or exercises which serve only to confuse players.

## **Don't Overcoach**

Always remember that practice is for the players. Coaches should not monopolize practice time with excessive talking and frequent stoppages of play. Briefly introduce the topic of the session and then immediately get players actively involved in appropriate drills or game