



Coaching Department Study Visit

UEFA Under 21 Championships

Sweden 2009

England v Finland

15th June 2009

Halmstad 18:15 KO

Report on England

| Squad | Name | D.O.B. | Club |
|--------------|--------------------|---------------|------------------|
| 1 | Joe Hart | 19.04.87 | Manchester City |
| 2 | Martin Cranie | 26.09.86 | Portsmouth |
| 19 | Kieran Gibbs | 26.09.86 | Arsenal |
| 17 | Micah Richards | 24.06.88 | Manchester City |
| 18 | Michael Mancienne | 08.01.88 | Chelsea |
| 12 | Fabrice Muamba | 06.04.88 | Bolton Wanderers |
| 10 | Lee Cattermole | 21.03.88 | Wigan Athletic |
| 4 | Mark Noble | 08.05.87 | West Ham United |
| 7 | James Milner | 04.01.86 | Aston Villa |
| 14 | Theo Walcott | 16.03.89 | Arsenal |
| 9 | Gabriel Agbonlahor | 13.10.86 | Aston Villa |

| Subs | | | |
|-------------|------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 21 | Fraizer Campbell | 13.09.87 | Manchester United |
| 15 | Jack Rodwell | 11.03.91 | Everton |
| 16 | James Tomkins | 29.03.89 | West Ham United |

Attacking

At the start England's plan was direct, trying to get Gabriel Agbonlahor (9) in behind Finland's defence especially in the pockets of space between their central defenders and full backs. They didn't play through midfield, as Mark Noble (10) and Lee Cattermole's (4) role was to try and support in front and behind the ball at every opportunity. When England lost possession both Theo Walcott (14) and James Milner (7) dropped quickly back into a 5-man midfield. However on regaining possession they soon became a front three. Walcott, Milner and Agbonlahor occasionally interchanged positions during the first 30 minutes.

The 1st goal on 15 minutes came from a turn over in England's defending third. Michael Mancienne (18) received the ball on the left side of defence, he quickly moved the ball on to Kieran Gibbs (19) at left back who hit long in behind Finland's right back area. Agbonlahor's strength got him on the ball just outside Finland's penalty box. He held the ball up long enough for Cattermole's deep run into the box who received a square pass to side foot in from 8 yards out.

After going a goal up England started to look more confident, pushing both full backs wider and further forward when in possession giving the chance for the central defenders to play out from the back. However, they still looked for the direct option in behind if it was still on even getting the wide men to come short and then spin quickly in behind.

When Mancienne was sent off, England changed to a 4-4-1 and went very direct for the last 12 minutes of the half.

For the 2nd half England changed strategy again, substituting Frasier Campbell (21) for Walcott. This resulted in playing a brave 4-3-2 formation. Agbonlahor and Campbell played high up the pitch, occupying the Finnish defence with the midfield three remaining mostly central sliding and screening across the pitch. When Finland played into wide areas England's midfield still managed to get across and double up on the wingers.

Defending

When England were defending they started off with a very solid 4 – 5 – 1 formation with a lone striker Agbonlahor occasionally being joined by Walcott and Milner from the wings. Fabrice Muamba (12) was the holding player in midfield who rarely ventured beyond the half way line in the first 30 minutes. Muamba looked to break up play, taking up a very defensive position throughout the initial period of play.

Early in the game, England's back four rarely moved out of position. The full backs, Gibbs and Martin Cranie (2) only occasionally pushed on in support of the forwards. Micah Richards (17) and Mancienne at central defenders played both a high line and a low line depending on the situation. Richards looked to attack any high balls whilst Mancienne gave the cover.

Finland looked to attack using the high diagonal and long ball in behind the central defenders which caused Richards and Mancienne real problems and culminated in England conceding a penalty. A diagonal long ball caught Mancienne wrong side of Berat Sadik (9) who was brought down inside the penalty box.

When defending corners and free kicks, England brought every player back. Marking was a mixture of zonal and man for man, with one player on the back post.

After having Mancienne sent off England initially re-organised with Cranie playing as a central defender with Milner in at right back from midfield. Just before half time England changed it again by pushing Muamba the holding midfield player forward into a regular midfield four.

For the second half the change in attacking strategy meant the three in midfield had to cover a huge amount of ground to defend. As they tired in the last 10 minutes England were pushed deeper allowing Finland to take the initiative.

England Starting Formation



England Head Coach

For England U21 Head Coach Stuart Pearce it was a performance of great character. For as he says on the FA website; "Going down to ten men, a lot of nations would have been happy to settle for a point but we wanted to win the game and everyone had to give an extra 10 per cent".