



Coaching Department Study Visit

UEFA Under 21 Championships

Sweden 2009

Spain v England

18th June 2009

Gamla Ullevi 20:45 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
06	Chinedum Onuoha	12.11.86	Manchester City
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
11	Adam Johnson	14.07.87	Middlesborough
9	Gabriel Agbonlahor	13.10.86	Aston Villa

Subs			
21	Fraizer Campbell (for Agbonlahor)	13.09.87	Manchester United
14	Theo Walcott (for Johnson)	16.03.89	Arsenal
08	Craig Gardner (for Milner)	25.11.86	Aston Villa

Attacking

At the start England's plan was one of direct approach - trying to get Agbonlahor (9) behind the Spanish defence especially in any space between their central defenders and full backs. Passes mainly from Hart (1) were invariably directed to the side on which Milner (7) took up. Milner seemed to be given freedom to roam and he drifted into most areas of the attacking third. Muamba (12) played a holding role in midfield and his success in this area enabled Noble (10) and Cattermole (4) to get on the ball and begin to play a more attacking role through midfield.

When England lost possession both Johnson (11) and Milner dropped to make a 5-man midfield, however, once possession was regained they soon became a front three. Johnson, Milner and Agbonlahor also occasionally interchanged positions. Gibbs (19) playing at left back worked to get forward and join in the attacking play whenever he saw the opportunity. This resulted in some good, quick combinations with Johnson down the left side. After 30 minutes Agbonlahor came off (injured) and was replaced by Campbell (21).

In the 2nd half, England's attack took much the same shape and they took the lead though Campbell taking advantage of a bad back pass to shoot home, left footed from eighteen yards. England's second goal came down their left side provided by Walcott (14) who had come on for Johnson in the 60th minute. Walcott's pace, a constant threat, took him past the Spanish defence and he cut the ball back for Milner to score from 6 yards.

Defending

England began this match with the same formation as they employed in the earlier match against Finland. When defending, they adopted a back four, a midfield five leaving Agbonlahor (9) as a lone target striker. Both Johnson (11), who replaced Walcott (14) and Milner (7) retreated to midfield when Spain gained possession to double up in wide positions with England's full backs if needed.

With both of the wide men tucking in, this gave Noble (10) the opportunity to push on to the Spanish holding midfielder who was also their play maker. This tactic enabled England to nullify Spain's dominance in the central midfield areas. During the early part of the match Spain caused England problems in midfield, however, England worked hard and in fact looked strong in this area for the rest of the match.

England also made the enforced change of Onuoha (6) for Mancienne (18) in the back four. In a similar strategy to the previous match, Richards (17) seemed to attack the high balls with Onuoha giving cover whenever possible.

Muamba (12) in the holding midfield role played mainly in front of the two central defenders, screening, intercepting and breaking up much of Spain's central attacking play. Along with Onuoha and Richards these three England players formed a strong central defensive triangle that Spain found difficult to break down.

England pressed the ball high up the pitch, in the attacking third, whenever possible. They tried to keep a high tempo to the game which caused Spain problems, in fact it was as a result of Milner 's pressing then winning possession that set up the goal for Campbell (21).

In the second half and 2-0 in front, England Spain did have some possession but England's work rate restricted them to nay clear cut openings.

England Starting Formation



England Head Coach

For England U21 Head Coach Stuart Pearce it was good to get to six points but there is still work to improve on. As he says on the UEFA website;

"In our squad, we've got pace and power; we've got pace on the counterattack and the modern game is based on that. We've got a strong mentality, but what we didn't do once again was pass it as well as we can. We have to be a little more brave; as the game went on we gained confidence in passing the ball. We just need to keep building that because guts alone won't get us over the line. We've got that in abundance, but we need to pass the ball better."