



Coaching Department Study Visit

UEFA Under 21 Championships

Sweden 2009

Spain v England

18th June 2009

Gothenburg, 20:45 KO

Report on Spain

| Squad | Name | D.O.B | Club |
|---------------|--------------------|----------|------------------|
| 13 | Sergio Asenjo | 28.06.89 | Real Valladolid |
| 3 | Nacho Monreal | 26.02.86 | Osasuna |
| 4 | Javi Garcia | 08.02.87 | Real Madrid |
| 5 | Marc Torrejon | 18.02.86 | Espanyol |
| 12 | Cesar Azpilicueta | 28.08.89 | Osasuna |
| 6 | Javi Martinez | 02.09.88 | Athletico Bilbao |
| 8 | Raul Garcia | 11.07.86 | Athletico Madrid |
| 18 | Mario Saurez | 24.02.87 | RCD Mallorca |
| 9 | Bojan Krkic | 28.08.90 | Barcelona |
| 10 | Jose Manuel Jurado | 29.06.86 | Athletico Madrid |
| 21 | Adrian Lopez | 08.01.88 | RCD de la Coruna |
| Subs | | | |
| 17 for 9 (57) | Diego Capel | 16.02.88 | Sevilla |
| 19 for 6 (68) | Xisco | 26.06.86 | Newcastle United |
| 22 for 18(80) | Pedro Sanchez | 24.11.86 | Real Valladolid |

Attacking Strategy

None of us could have predicted how much the attacking strategy of Spain would be forced to change during this game against England. In the first 20 minutes there was a positive, quick tempo to the Spanish play, lots of possession, short passing, positional exchange and quick play in the England half. Martinez (6), Jurado (10), Lopez (21) and Krkic (9) were continually on the move, exchanging positions and causing problems particularly in midfield and England's defenders were at full stretch.

Clearly, England had planned to prevent the Spanish goalkeeper, Asenjo (13), from playing out to his defenders. They did this by pressing high up the pitch, forcing him to kick. This temporarily knocked Spain out of their stride, but they did eventually initiate attacks mainly from deep positions and early on they had control.

However, for all the quick and fluid play in the central third of the pitch, Spain produced little threat. As England grew in confidence the momentum turned and surprisingly Spain reverted to more direct attacking options, eventually bringing on (Xisco (19) as a central target, which seemed to suit England more than Spain. From the initial fluid 4-4-1-1 they ended with a very predictable 4-4-2, which must have delighted the England defensive unit.



Defensive Strategy

Spain were very comfortable with England having possession in their own half. They did not press in the early stages of the match, and seemed to use the half-way line to initiate a press once the defence was in place. Although this led to lots of turnovers in the Spanish defensive half, they did not have enough pace on the counter to trouble England.

Later in the game this changed with Spain trailing 1-0, then 2-0: they had no option but to press forward in search of possession. By this stage England were playing with confidence, and countered to some effect using the width and pace of Walcott to isolate Spain's right-back, Azpilicueta (12). In fact this was the source of the second England goal.

In wide positions there was no discernable policy of fullbacks showing inside or outside to deal with their winger. In most cases the fullback attempted to delay, allowing the covering wide midfielder on that side to support.

Transition

Spain defended deep in the early part of the game, employing two defensive midfielders in Saurez (18), and Garcia (8). They were quite successful, England at times lacking quality passing. They looked to play forward when possible, but did not have the pace in attack to trouble England.

As the game progressed In fact, they looked vulnerable to the counter attacks and they looked uncertain when trying to defend without their regular cover and disciplined defensive shape.

Set Plays

The Spanish set-up to defend England corners was interesting. 2 players patrolled the zones on the near post, and the area in advance of the near post. They then employed 3 in a provisional zone across the 6-yard box, centrally, who occupied the space but were fully aware that England runners would come into their zone. 3 other markers identified the major England threats and marked them man-to-man wherever they moved within the box. Spain also employed 2 attacking players to spring a counter, one just outside the penalty area and the other on the halfway line.

Game Management

The Spanish quickly solved the early England press, and managed to develop attacks from their goalkeeper within 10 minutes of the start. This showed good confidence and patience.

However, it was unusual to see the Spanish break with their traditional short passing and movement style to become more direct, and increasingly desperate, as the game progressed with England winning. The substitutions made little impact, and seemed to play into the hands of the English.

Juan Ramón López Caro, Spain coach

"We started well, we had some chances but unfortunately we couldn't take them. Then we made too many mistakes and England took advantage of them. We just did not take our chances, we made too many mistakes in defence. If you look at the game England were not that superior – they just scored twice." ©uefa.com 1998-2009.

Juan Ramón López Caro, Spain coach

Background (Information sourced from UEFA.com)

Date of birth: 23 March 1963

Managerial career: Unión Balompédica Lebrijana (1992-93), Lebrija CD (1993-95), UD Los Palacios (1995-97), Dos Hermanas CF (1997-98), UD Melilla (1998-99), RCD Mallorca B (1999-2001), Real Madrid CF B (2001-05), Real Madrid Castilla (2005), Real Madrid CF (2005-06), Real Racing Club (2006), Levante UD (2006-07), RC Celta de Vigo (2007-08), Spain Under-21s (2008-)

Prior to leading Spain into the 2009 UEFA European Under-21 Championship, Juan Ramón López Caro would have pointed to his brief stint at the helm of Real Madrid CF as his proudest moment in coaching thus far. It was during a successful period at RCD Mallorca's B side that the Sevilla-born tactician began to forge his reputation by leading the young islanders to success in Spain's lower ranks. López Caro was subsequently handed the task of improving the fortunes of Madrid's B team and his no-nonsense, disciplined style – which earned him the nickname 'The Iron Sergeant' – helped the side reach the Segunda División play-offs three times, the last of which brought promotion.

After an unbeaten start in the second tier, López Caro was appointed caretaker coach to the first team following the dismissal of Vanderlei Luxemburgo. In his first match in charge in December 2005, Madrid lost at Olympiacos CFP in the UEFA Champions League and although his team qualified for the first knockout round, they were subsequently eliminated by eventual runners-up Arsenal FC. Finishing second to FC Barcelona in the Liga brought to an end López Caro's brief reign, which featured 12 wins and just three defeats in 24 Liga matches.

Unsuccessful spells at Levante UD and RC Celta de Vigo followed before it was announced in May 2008 that he would be eased into the Under-21 job alongside former boss Lñaki Saez. On his debut in sole charge he guided Spain to an impressive 2-1 win away to Russia, and his side went on to top Group 8 with the only 100 per cent record before squeezing past Switzerland in the play-offs. ©uefa.com 1998-2009.