

What makes a great team?



Throughout your career chances are you will have had a manager that used a football analogy to get across the importance of team work?

The manager will have pointed out that that the striker getting all the headlines would be nothing without the rest of the team behind him (or her), he would never be able to score goals on his own.

They may have also pointed out that it is no good scoring goals if your defence lets in more than you score. No doubt your manager will have told you how a goal keeper saving a penalty would grab headlines but for the rest of the game that keeper needs a strong defence in front of him to protect him from the opponent's attack. Maybe they told you that a safe pair of hands in goal inspires confidence throughout the team, allowing everyone else to freely express themselves?

Then there would be that 'old adage' that the mid-field are the engine of the team, linking the defence to the attack and that a superstar in this area is a play-maker that everyone adores.

However, the one point that probably didn't get mentioned would be the part that diversity plays? At top level, in this case I am referring to the English Premier League, renowned for being the most successful

league in the world and which has the highest diversity of any league's top division in football.

Here are the stats:

There are over 66% foreign players in the PL with 33% from BAME (Black, Asian & Ethnic Minority) backgrounds.

The 20 PL clubs have players from 63 countries!

The highest number are English (34%) represented by all of England's ethnicities and backgrounds. EU nations make up 30% of players. The home nations and ROI account for 10% and the 9 African nations represented make up 8%. Other European countries, outside of the EU, contribute 4%.

The top 8 countries, behind England and outside of the home nations & ROI, providing the PL with its talent are:

Spain (6%)

France (5.5%)

Netherlands (4.5%)

Belgium (4%)

Argentina (3%)

Germany (3%)

Brazil (2.2%)

Denmark (1.8%)

Those that are furthest away from home are the 2 Australian players and the 1 New Zealander plying their trade in the English Premier League. Other diversity comes from the Nordics, Scandinavia, the Americas, Asia and the Far East. There really aren't many parts of the world that aren't represented.

Wow, it's no wonder that English PL football is watched, and loved, all over the world.

So, is this the real lesson for those of us that need to build successful teams at work? Are we missing out on great talent because our searches are too narrow? If we build a team of people from the same

background are we in danger of having 11 strikers or 11 goal keepers trying to be a team?

To go back to that manager using football as the analogy, by not including diversity into their team talk they would not have been able to point out that 7 of the top 10 Premiership goal scorers are non-English and only 1 of the top 10 players with assists (playing a vital part by passing for someone else to score) is English.

Diversity Works.