

Dan Abrahams

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Soccer News: The Difference Between Motivation And Commitment - The Making Of A Champion Soccer Player Is More Than Going Pro At The MLS Draft

*Highly Respected Sports Psychologist and Author Dan Abrahams is a Regular Columnist on improving player development and soccer on both sides of the Atlantic. Here is Abrahams' latest article on the **Difference between motivation and commitment** - what it takes to become a professional soccer player.*

THE MLS Super Draft

The MLS super draft is ever nearing...January to be precise. Being



from England I'm certainly no expert on the draft system that dominates American sport ..but I do know a thing or two about 'going pro'.

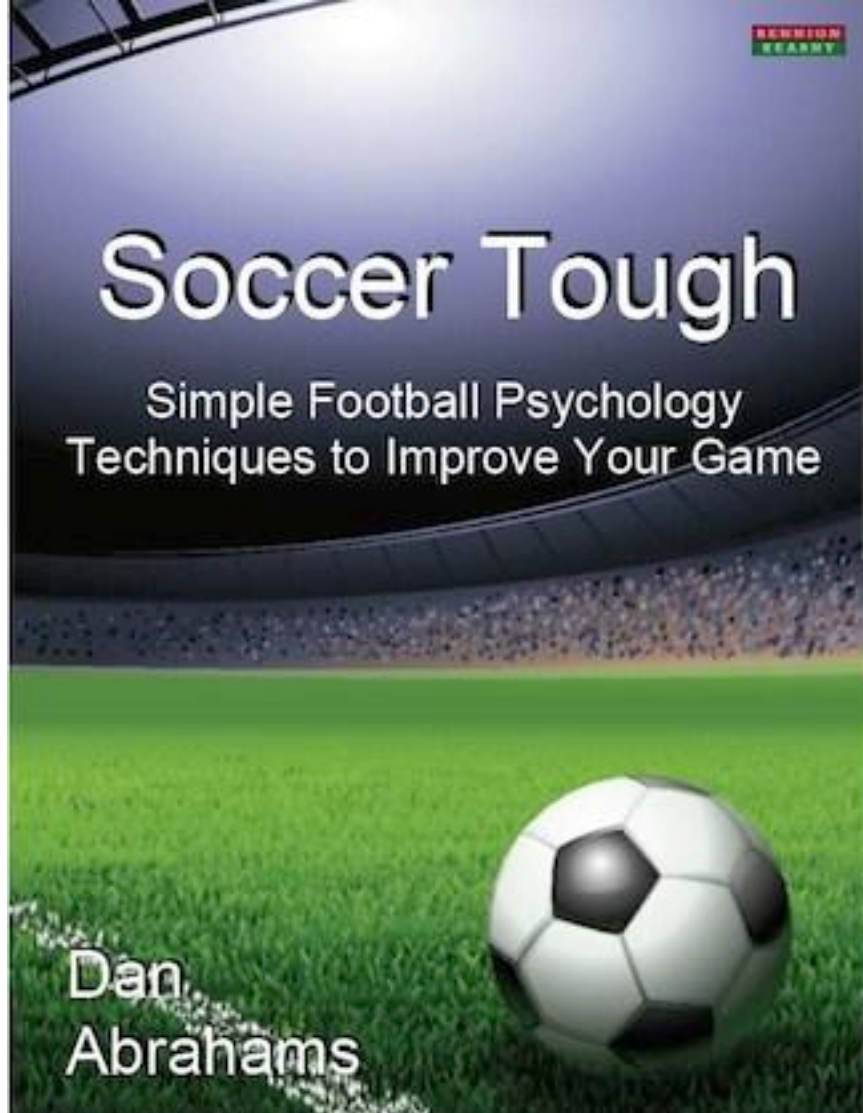
I've worked with hundreds of young players over the past decade who have the ambition to become a professional soccer player.

Here in Europe the best young players gain scholarships from the age of 16 and win professional contracts from the age of 18. It's two years of hard work, dedication, passion and desire to win that all important first year pro contract... and then the hard part starts!!!

Then the best young players start at the bottom of the ladder again.

They are the least experienced players... and unless they have enormous skill in their feet then they are going to have to work their butts off to get any chance - even just starting on the subs bench.

For those going through the drafts and turning 'pro' it's



a vital time to get mindset and mentality right. Here are three tips that they can carry with them everyday in training:

Difference between motivation and commitment

There is a massive difference between motivation and commitment.

You know I can't think of a professional footballer I've ever worked with who isn't motivated to do well. All players will get themselves out of bed for training - even on the days they don't really feel like it.

To me, all young pros are motivated. But not all young pros are committed.

Commitment is different to motivation.

Commitment crosses the t's and dots the i's.

Commitment is doing everything to the very best of your ability, every day, every week, every month. Commitment sees things through.

Commitment doesn't stop short a set in the gym, it doesn't slow down in the last lung busting few minutes of a game or training session, and it pays attention to the details. It analyses matches and considers every area for success: physical, technical, tactical, psychological.

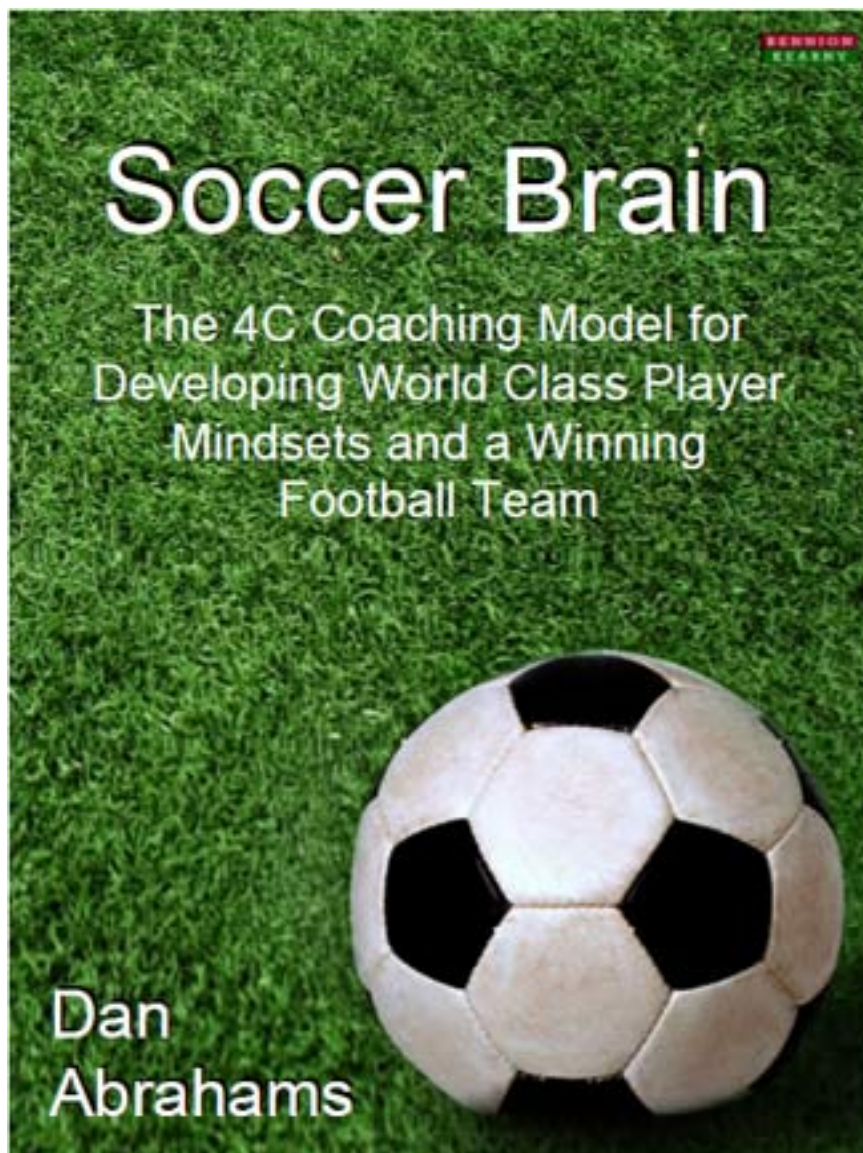
It's easy to be motivated. It's tough to be committed. But commitment earns and keeps the longed-for career that is emblazoned on the mind of young players.

Don't let 'good' get in the way of 'great'.

I work with many players who feel they are good enough. They feel they do just enough. They feel good is acceptable. "Yeah my focus was good...I didn't get distracted much". "Yeah I worked quite hard in that game", "Yeah I trained good enough this week"

For the go pro players in January good isn't good enough, because good isn't great. Good isn't world class. Good is just average. Good warms the bench. Good eventually dissipates to ok...to average.

World class players like Xavi Hernandez, Lionel Messi, Iniesta, Ronaldo, and Gareth Bale are constantly



analysing their game for things to improve. This isn't negative...this is practical. They are students - of their

game and of THE game. They love getting better. They love coming out of their comfort zone and striving to execute skills they find difficult. In this way they keep working towards great. They get to stay World Class.

Young pros shouldn't be thinking good. They should be thinking great. They should be restless and fidgety when it comes to their ability.

Train AND Practice... Deliberately.

Soccer players shouldn't just train. It's not just a physical endeavor. They should practice. They should practice their skills. They should practice their technique. They should practice their mindset and mentality. They should work with intensity AND focus.

The new pros should focus on one or two areas per week to improve upon. Don't just go blindly into training and announce that you intend to train with intensity. Train with an eye on your skills. Pick specific skills related to the technical and tactical sides of the game you can improve.

Good players train with intensity, great players train with intensity and focus. They OWN their game. They know that their soccer brain is wired and re-wired through the goals they hold for themselves everyday in practice. They are intentional and deliberate with their practice. If they feel their first touch needs improving they hold this as a goal for a few weeks. They intentionally focus on their first touch before, during and after practice. It is this kind of focus that makes a champion. It is this kind of focus that finds success in the MLS.

Who is Dan Abrahams? Dan Abrahams is a global sport psychologist specializing in soccer. He is based in England and has some of the leading turn-around stories and case studies in English Premier League history. He is sought after by players, coaches and managers across Europe and his 2 soccer psychology books are international bestsellers. He is formerly a professional golfer, is Lead Psychologist for England Golf and he holds a degree in psychology and masters degree in sport psychology.

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