



The Ajax TIPS Scouting System – What Their Scouts Look For

We are always getting asked what pro clubs look for in players. One of the most respected youth academies in the world is Ajax who have produced the likes of legends Dennis Bergkamp, Marco van Basten. Among those currently playing in the Premier League - Daley Blind, Toby Alderweireld, Christian Erikson, Jan Vertonghen and Martin Stekelenburg. So what are the secrets of the Ajax Academy? We reveal to you what things their scouts look for and you can bet that if the Ajax scouts are looking for these things then other club scouts will too!

The “TIPS” system

T is for Technique. Players must be able to control the ball well and carry out football skills. If you want to play professional football then ball mastery and being able to execute the skills required for your position is essential. The scouts look for technique wise:

Ball control, dribbling, passing, ability to beat an opponent, shooting, speed of action, attacking headers, scoring ability, crosses, speed on the ball, defending, defensive headers, sliding tackles, tackling, attacking the ball

I is for Insight and Intelligence. This is the ability to observe and think ahead – often this is known as having “vision” and a “good football brain”. This means playing with your head up and being aware of where your team mates and opponents are. It is this awareness that often separates the good players from the ones who will make it as pros. The scouts look for:

Does the player seem to have an overview of the pitch with awareness of space and the position of other players, an awareness of positional play and can the player carry out assigned tasks

P is for Personality. This essentially means having a great attitude.

Players must be able to communicate and get along with others, show leadership (even if this is simply encouragement to others), be creative with the bravery to show flair and daring, be a team player, and be able to work in a disciplined manner. Equally importance is a respectful attitude to coaches and other players and a winning mentality with ability to withstand pressure.

S is for Speed. This is needed for every Ajax player. Speed off the mark, mobility and speed over long distances. If a player doesn't have exceptional speed then they need to have outstanding “I” (insight and intelligence). They would classify the following as falling under speed:

Speed off the mark, speed from 0 to 10, from 10 to 30, and above 30 yards, mobility, strength in the tackle, stamina, running skills and jumping power

What is interesting is that Ajax scouts most look out for “I”, “P” and “S” as they believe that technique is easier to improve than the other 3 areas! This is surely a lesson for all UKFT players.