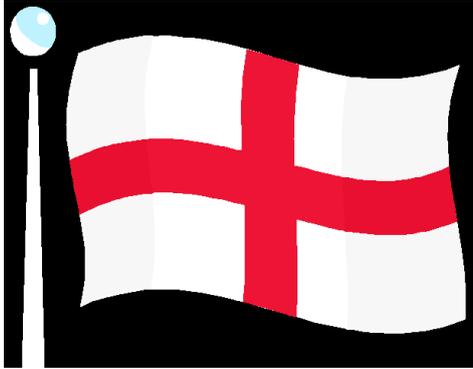


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Ineffective Teams – Topical World Cup Edition



On Friday morning this Newsletter was about France. By that evening, it became about England. In any event, it is not about sport, but about teams.

What has changed? England, with the same manager and essentially the same team, qualified well. The playing system remains in place, as does the discipline demanded of the players. Yet in the tournament itself, England have been uninspired to say the least. Now rumours spread of team dissatisfaction. Individual players are working, but the team is not functioning.

Possible Remedies

Pinpointing changes is difficult when a particular approach has worked so far. Yet recognizing when a change is necessary is vital. At the same time, a leader must not destroy his own credibility. However Sr. Capello has only a few days to rescue the position as far as he can. The possibilities are

1. Change the leader. Short of the coach resigning, this means changing the captain. It carries the risk of further demoralisation, and supposes that there is a better captain available who the players would accept.
2. Change the personnel. On one level, this means bringing in “better” players, which may in itself refresh team morale. However the coach must also consider the overall spirit of the team, so might bring in several young hopefuls, untainted by the previous games and keen to prove themselves. Connected with this, he should
3. Weed out the negative. Anyone starting from the premise that the team will not perform must be removed (contrasting those who think the task is difficult but doable).
4. Make sure they know what they are supposed to be doing – the task.
5. Make sure they are equipped for the task.
6. Change tactics if necessary.
7. Kick (metaphorically) the individuals who respond positively to that, hug those who need an arm round them. Each team member is an individual – the difficulty is knowing team members well enough to choose the appropriate approach.
8. Inspire some team spirit. Appeal to their pride. Create a siege mentality. Do some bonding, whether over a beer (as Capello did after Friday’s game) or a shared activity. Since your days as coach are numbered, unite them in hating you! Ultimately -
9. The coach does not get on the pitch, the team does. The ideal circumstance is for the solution to come from within the team and not from the coach. That will be much stronger and more effective.

All these issues affect lawyer teams as well, even if the context is entirely different. In particular, lawyer leaders will generally not have to sort out the issues by next Wednesday.

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