

LEYTON SMITH

Football Management | Whole-Game Tactical Analysis | Team Performance

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Former New Zealand National League footballer with a background spanning youth representative football, senior provincial competition, national-level club football and international playing experience in China. My playing career began at 15, included selection for the Bay of Plenty men's team at 16, a New Zealand National League debut at 17, and participation in the Chatham Cup quarter-finals at 18. At youth level, I reached the final three shortlisted players in a New Zealand Under-19 trial at 16, competing against players up to two years older.

I bring a structured, analytical approach to football performance, combining whole-game tactical analysis, individual player assessment and detailed evaluation of positional and functional units. My approach examines how teams perform across every phase of play, how individual capabilities contribute to collective performance, and how tactical organisation can be strengthened through targeted development.

Alongside two years of experience in youth player development and club coach development, I bring professional management experience from other industries. This combination informs my approach to leadership, communication, organisation and performance improvement.

My objective is to progress into first-team football management, applying my playing experience, tactical methodology, coaching background and wider professional management skills to build an organised, adaptable and competitive team.

FOOTBALL EXPERTISE

1. Whole-Game Tactical Analysis

I analyse football as an interconnected system, examining how the team performs across every phase of play and identifying opportunities to strengthen its collective capabilities.

Areas of focus include:

- Assessing team performance across all phases of play.

- Identifying recurring tactical patterns, strengths, vulnerabilities and breakdowns.
- Evaluating organisation in and out of possession.
- Analysing transitions and the team's responses to changing match situations.
- Examining positional discipline, spatial relationships, compactness and coordination between units.
- Identifying the causes of tactical problems and translating findings into practical improvement priorities.
- Evaluating how pressure, fatigue and limited time influence decision-making and execution.

The objective is to develop a comprehensive understanding of team performance and establish practical ways to improve the team's effectiveness throughout the game.

2. Individual Player Analysis and Development

Structured individual player assessment is a central component of my approach.

I apply SWOT analysis to individual players to organise the assessment of their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for development and potential threats to performance.

My approach includes:

- Identifying individual strengths and areas requiring improvement.
- Assessing tactical awareness, positional discipline and decision-making.
- Evaluating a player's contribution to the team's tactical structure.
- Considering suitability for particular roles within the team's system.
- Identifying individual development priorities.
- Connecting player development with team requirements and collective performance.

The purpose is to understand each player's capabilities and determine how individual development can contribute to stronger team performance.

3. Unit and Positional Analysis

I examine how individual players function within their respective units and how those units contribute to the overall team structure.

Flank Analysis

- Width, attacking penetration and combinations in wide areas.
- Coordination between wide players and supporting teammates.
- Defensive coverage, recovery and protection of wide spaces.

Central Area Analysis

- Spatial relationships and organisation through central areas.
- Coordination between players operating in central positions.
- Control of space, progression and vulnerabilities in central areas.

Attacking Unit Analysis

- Movement, combinations and coordination in attacking areas.
- Penetration, chance creation and opportunities in the final third.
- Relationships between attacking players and supporting units.

Midfield Analysis

- Midfield structure and connections between defensive and attacking units.
- Possession management, progression and support.
- Coordination during transitions and changing phases of play.

Defensive Unit Analysis

- Defensive shape, compactness and coordination.
- Pressure, coverage, recovery and protection of space.
- Collective responses to opposition attacks and breakdowns in defensive organisation.

Goalkeeper Analysis

- Positioning, shot-stopping and decision-making.
- Distribution and contribution to build-up play.
- Communication and coordination with the defensive unit.
- Integration of the goalkeeper into the team's overall tactical structure.

This unit-based approach helps identify where coordination breaks down, how weaknesses develop, and where improvements can strengthen the team as a whole.

4. Tactical Systems and Team Organisation

I focus on establishing a clear relationship between tactical principles, player responsibilities and collective behaviour.

Areas of focus include:

- Tactical structure and positional responsibilities.
- Relationships between individual roles and team organisation.
- Coordination between units.
- Adaptation of tactical systems to the players available.
- Transition behaviour and responses to opposition strategies.
- Clear communication of tactical instructions.
- Identification of practical training priorities from match analysis.

5. Performance Improvement and Decision-Making

My approach connects analysis with practical action.

I seek to identify the most important performance issues, distinguish structural problems from individual errors, and establish clear priorities for training and tactical development.

The aim is to turn complex observations into understandable instructions, repeatable behaviours and practical objectives that can be evaluated over time.

MANAGERIAL PHILOSOPHY

My managerial approach centres on building a clearly organised team with a defined tactical identity, clear individual responsibilities and coordinated behaviour across every phase of play.

Tactical decisions should reflect the capabilities of the players available, the strengths and weaknesses of the opposition, and the demands of the competition. Systems should serve the team's performance rather than exist for their own sake.

My approach is built around five principles.

1. Establish a Clear Tactical Identity

Define how the team should behave in and out of possession, how it should respond during transitions, and how individual roles and formations support the team's tactical principles.

2. Build Organisation Around the Players Available

Assess the squad's strengths, limitations and positional balance before determining the most appropriate tactical structure. Develop a system that makes effective use of the players available while addressing weaknesses.

3. Analyse Performance at Every Level

Examine individual players, positional and functional units, and the team as a whole. Identify recurring patterns, assess performance across the phases of play, and convert observations into practical priorities for improvement.

4. Make Tactical Instructions Practical and Repeatable

Communicate tactical concepts clearly and reinforce them through structured practice, repetition and match-relevant situations. The objective is to develop players who understand their responsibilities and can execute them under pressure.

5. Evaluate, Adapt and Improve

Assess performance against defined objectives, distinguish individual errors from structural weaknesses, and adapt tactical decisions and training priorities in response to what the evidence shows.

My objective is to develop a team that is organised, competitive and adaptable, with the collective understanding and resilience to maintain its identity when matches become difficult.

COACHING & PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

Two years of experience in youth player development and club coach development.

My coaching experience encompassed both direct work with young players and support for club coaches seeking to strengthen their coaching knowledge, practical skills and teams.

Key areas of experience included:

Youth Player Development

- Delivering practical coaching sessions with young players.
- Developing tactical understanding, positional discipline and awareness of team responsibilities.
- Connecting individual development with the requirements of collective play.

Club Coach Development

- Supporting club coaches in developing their coaching skills and football knowledge.
- Conducting practical sessions with coaches' teams to demonstrate coaching methods and reinforce tactical concepts.
- Advising coaches on ways to strengthen team organisation, tactical understanding and collective performance.
- Helping coaches translate footballing concepts into practical training and team development.

Tactical Communication and Team Improvement

- Communicating coaching points clearly and practically.
- Emphasising positional responsibilities and coordination between players.
- Identifying opportunities to improve team structure and tactical execution.
- Connecting player development with broader team-performance objectives.

This experience provided exposure to both sides of the development process: working directly with players and helping other coaches improve their ability to develop players and organise teams.

PLAYING CAREER & ACHIEVEMENTS

Youth and Representative Football — New Zealand

- Approximately ten years of structured football development through club, school, regional and provincial systems.

- Member of the New Zealand Secondary Schools Championship-winning squad at age 14, the youngest member of a squad that included players up to age 18.
- Won the New Zealand Division One National Tournament at age 16.
- Selected for the New Zealand Division One Under-17 team.
- Invited to Edinburgh at age 16 to play in the local youth league and trial with Hearts of Midlothian.
- Selected as one of five players for an elite training group. Two other members subsequently travelled to England to sign for Liverpool FC.
- Trialled for the New Zealand Under-19 team at age 16, reaching the final three shortlisted players while competing against players up to two years older.

Senior and National-Level Football

Tauranga City

- Began senior football at age 15.

Bay of Plenty Men's Team

- Selected at age 16.
- Member of a provincial championship-winning squad.

Nelson United

- Joined at age 17 and made a New Zealand National League debut.
- Competed in the Chatham Cup quarter-finals at age 18.
- Scored against a goalkeeper who had represented his country at the FIFA World Cup in a first-class match.

International Playing Experience — China

- Played one season with an international professional invitation team.
- Competed in an environment that included international and World Cup-level players.

These experiences provided exposure to different competitive environments and reinforced my appreciation of tactical organisation, positional responsibilities, team coordination and the demands of senior football.

PROFESSIONAL MANAGEMENT & INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

My professional background outside football has developed transferable skills in management, organisation, communication, operational discipline and maintaining standards in demanding environments.

Academic Manager — London School of Business and Management

- Managed MBA programmes delivered through Queen Margaret University in Scotland.
- Worked within structured academic programmes requiring coordination, organisation, communication and quality oversight.
- Developed experience maintaining standards and supporting performance within an established institutional framework.

Upstream Quality Control — Gorgon Gas Project, Australia

- Worked in upstream quality control on a major oil and gas development on Australia's North West Shelf.
- Operated in a high-accountability project environment where accuracy, process discipline and adherence to standards were essential.

Gold Process Technician — Northern Star Resources

- Worked at the Fimiston processing plant associated with the Kalgoorlie Super Pit.
- Gained experience in a demanding industrial environment requiring operational discipline, process awareness and attention to detail.

International Academic Representation

- Selected as a UK delegate to PRIST University in India for an international nanotechnology summit.
 - Participated in further academic meetings, including with the University of Madras.
 - Developed experience operating across international and institutional settings.
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ATHLETIC BACKGROUND

- Recorded a 4:15 1500-metre time at age 17 without specialised middle-distance training.
- Developed endurance capacity alongside New Zealand national champions and US varsity-level 5000-metre athletes.

This background contributes to my interest in the relationship between fatigue, decision-making, spatial awareness and technical execution during football matches.

PROFESSIONAL OBJECTIVE

To secure an opportunity to progress into **first-team football management**, applying my playing background, whole-game tactical analysis, player assessment methodology, coaching experience and wider professional management skills.

I am particularly interested in clubs seeking to improve tactical clarity, team organisation, performance across the phases of play, player development and the effectiveness of their match preparation.

I aim to build a competitive team with a clear tactical identity, well-defined responsibilities and the collective resilience to perform under pressure.

My approach combines individual player assessment, unit-level analysis and whole-team evaluation to establish a coherent picture of performance and identify practical opportunities for improvement.

STRATEGIC THINKING & ANALYTICAL APPROACH

I bring a strategic, systems-oriented approach to problem-solving, focusing on identifying patterns, anticipating developments, evaluating alternatives and understanding how individual decisions influence the wider system.

My approach to football reflects this emphasis on interconnected relationships: assessing individual capabilities, analysing unit interactions and evaluating the team's performance across every phase of play to identify opportunities for improvement.

Chess: Achieved a peak online chess rating of 1600 Elo. Chess has provided a further avenue for developing strategic planning, pattern recognition, positional evaluation and decision-making under pressure.