

A photograph of Rodolfo Zapata, a man with curly hair and a beard, smiling broadly while holding a large, reflective silver trophy. He is wearing a dark jacket over a blue shirt. In the background, another man in a blue shirt is also smiling. The scene is set outdoors, likely at a stadium, with a blurred crowd and green field visible.

# RODOLFO ZAPATA

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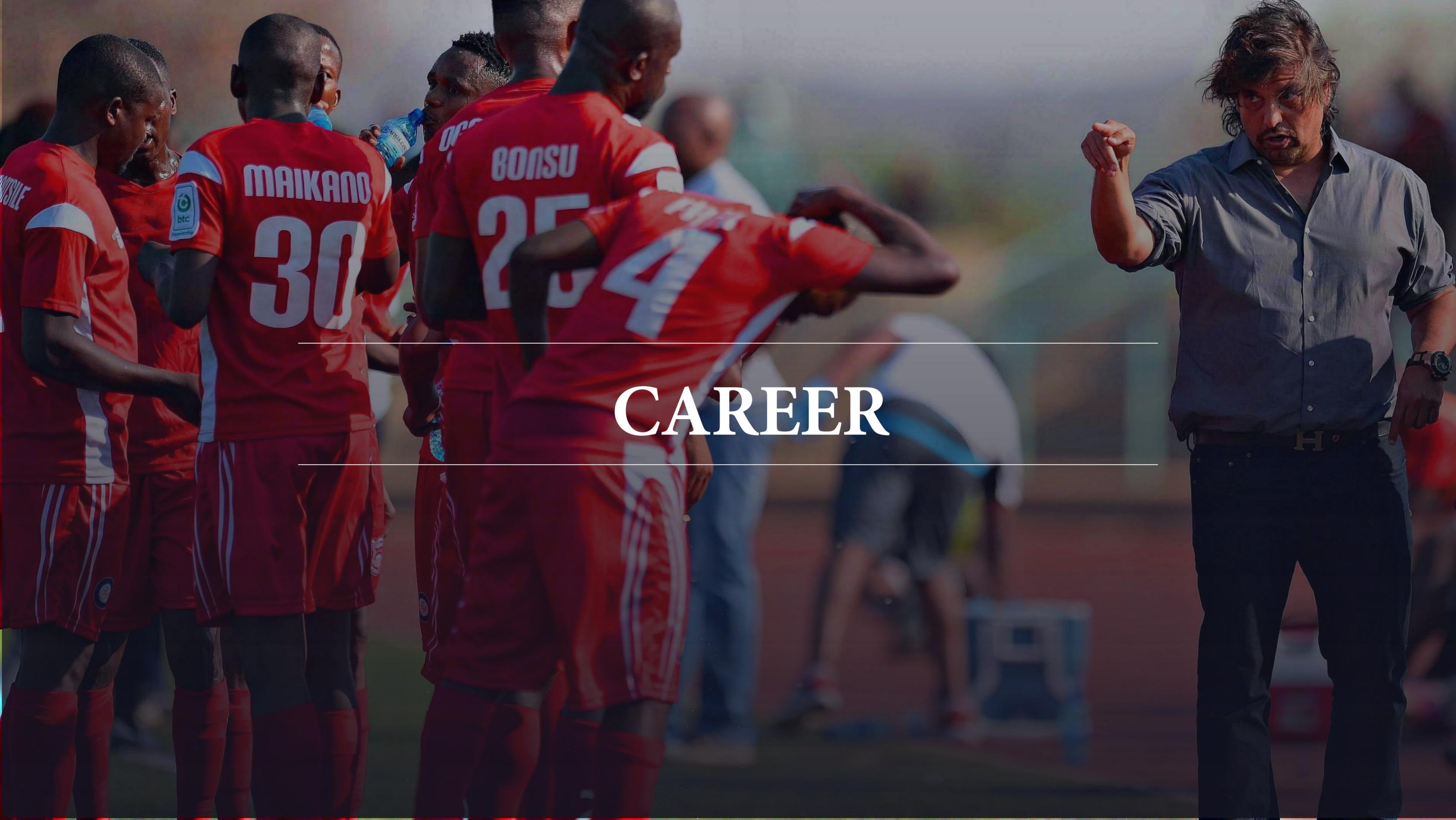
COACH



"We, as coaches, are judged by many criteria. By their impact, influence, accomplishments, reputation and so forth.

I coach because I love the challenge of building a winner teams..."

COACH RODOLFO ZAPATA



# CAREER

# PROFESSIONAL PLAYER



CLUB ATLETICO  
HURACÁN



RACING CLUB  
(Olavarria)



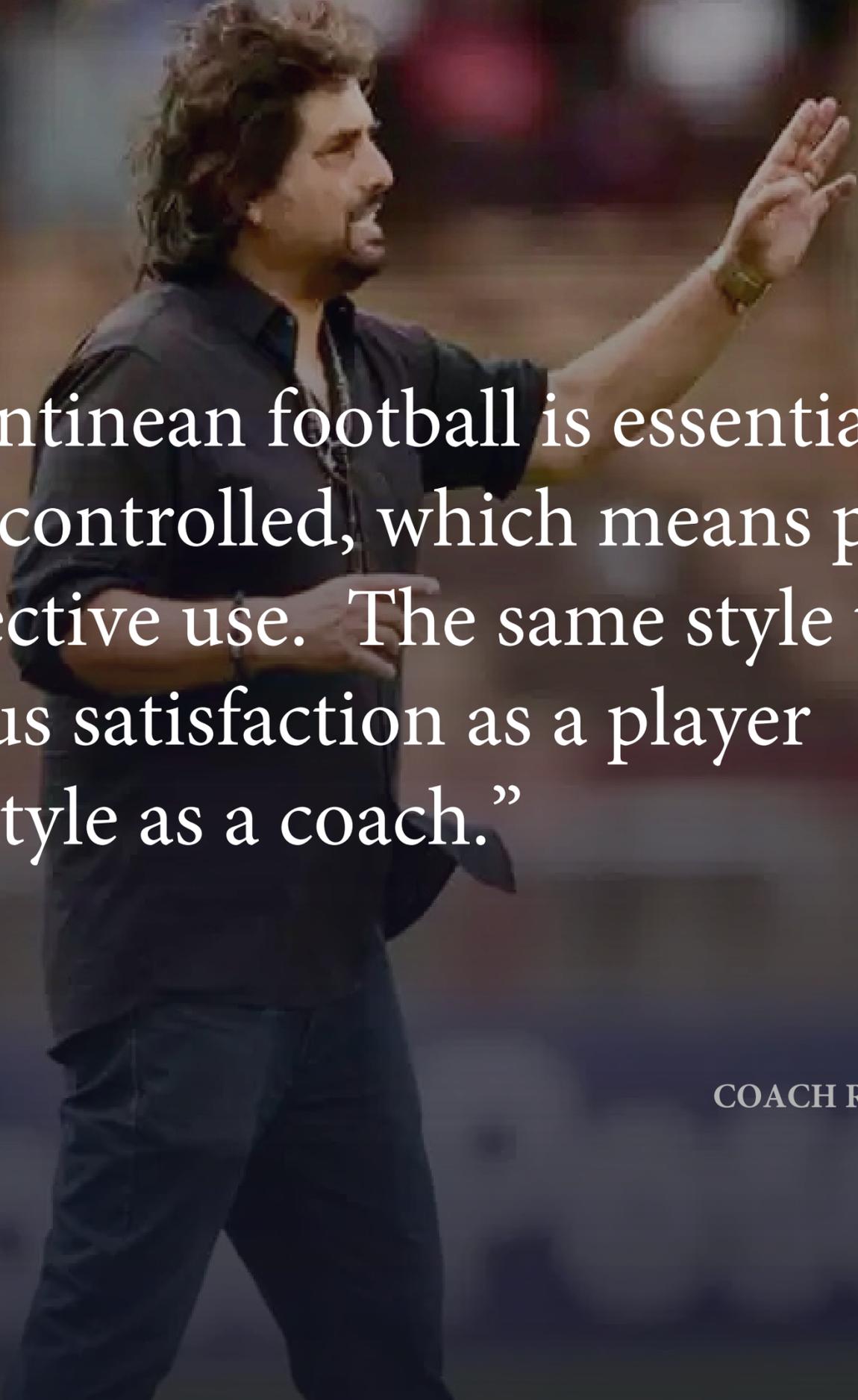
SPORTIVO  
ITALIANO



CIPOLLETTI  
(Rio Negro)



CLUB ATLETICO  
SAN MIGUEL

A man with curly hair and a beard, wearing a dark shirt and pants, is gesturing with his right hand raised and left hand pointing forward. He appears to be on a football field, with a blurred crowd in the background.

“The style of Argentinean football is essentially based on how the ball is controlled, which means proper technique and effective use. The same style that has given me enormous satisfaction as a player characterizes my style as a coach.”

COACH RODOLFO ZAPATA

# HEAD COACH

2000



ALBERTA  
SOCCER  
ASSOCIATION

CANADA

2001-2009



USA OLYMPIC  
DEVELOPMENT  
PROGRAM

UNITED STATES

2010



SUNSHINE  
STARS FC

NIGERIA

2011-2012



MP BLACK  
ACES FC

SOUTH AFRICA

2012-2015



US YOUTH  
SOCCER  
ASSOCIATION

UNITED STATES

# HEAD COACH

**2016-2018**



**GABORONE  
UNITED**

**BOTSWANA**

**2018**



**AFC  
LEOPARDS**

**KENYA**

**2019**



**TOWNSHIP  
ROLLERS FC**

**BOTSWANA**

**2021**



**MUKURA  
VICTORY**

**RWANDA**

A photograph of two men in blue polo shirts. The man on the right has dark curly hair and a beard, looking thoughtful with his hand to his face. The man on the left is seen in profile, looking towards the first man. The background is a soft, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

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# COACHING PHILOSOPHY

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The question is: How we can build a successful team?

If you want to build a winning team, you must first establish a culture of winning. To do that, **set high standards** for yourself, staff and players in every aspect of the operation, and then start to chase them.

These goals should be specific, difficult and challenging, but realistic.

Two common goal-setting problems are setting too many goals too quickly, and setting unrealistic goals based on current level of performance.

Continuity, consistency and ambition are particularly important to create a successful program. Ambition must be coupled with hard work for success to be achieved.

Hard work is a necessity if you want to improve, and it cannot be sporadic. If you can have the best tactics plans, the most perfect offensive and defensive schemes, and even a great amount of talent.

But if you and your team are not willing to put in hard work, your plans will never be realized.



Then we need to work progressively and try not to confuse the players, until the main goals and objectives have been achieved.

Our job as coaches is to impart and hold players accountable to the highest standard they can reach. The way a team or player's practice is often reflected in how the team or player plays in each game.

In coaching, no group or individual is the same as who you coached the day before, the year before, or even the decade before. Every player is different, every team is different, and to merely apply a formula is not fair to those players or those teams.

Some tactics and drills are a necessity for some teams, and they may not be appropriate for other teams. This is the reason why I write different practice plans for every single practice for the many different teams I worked with.

I want each player to work to improve himself and his teammates. If they do that, the team benefits, and that is my chief concern.

A photograph of Coach Rodolfo Zapata, a man with curly brown hair and a beard, wearing a dark blue shirt. He is being interviewed on a football field at night. Several people are holding microphones and smartphones towards him. In the background, a woman in a white cap and a person in a purple shirt are visible on the field. The scene is dimly lit, with some lights visible in the distance.

"To create a winning team takes time, effort, patience and skillss. There are not miracles and shortcuts in football..."

COACH RODOLFO ZAPATA



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# TACTICS & STRATEGIES

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Everything I do is with a view to try and make my teams believe they could win.

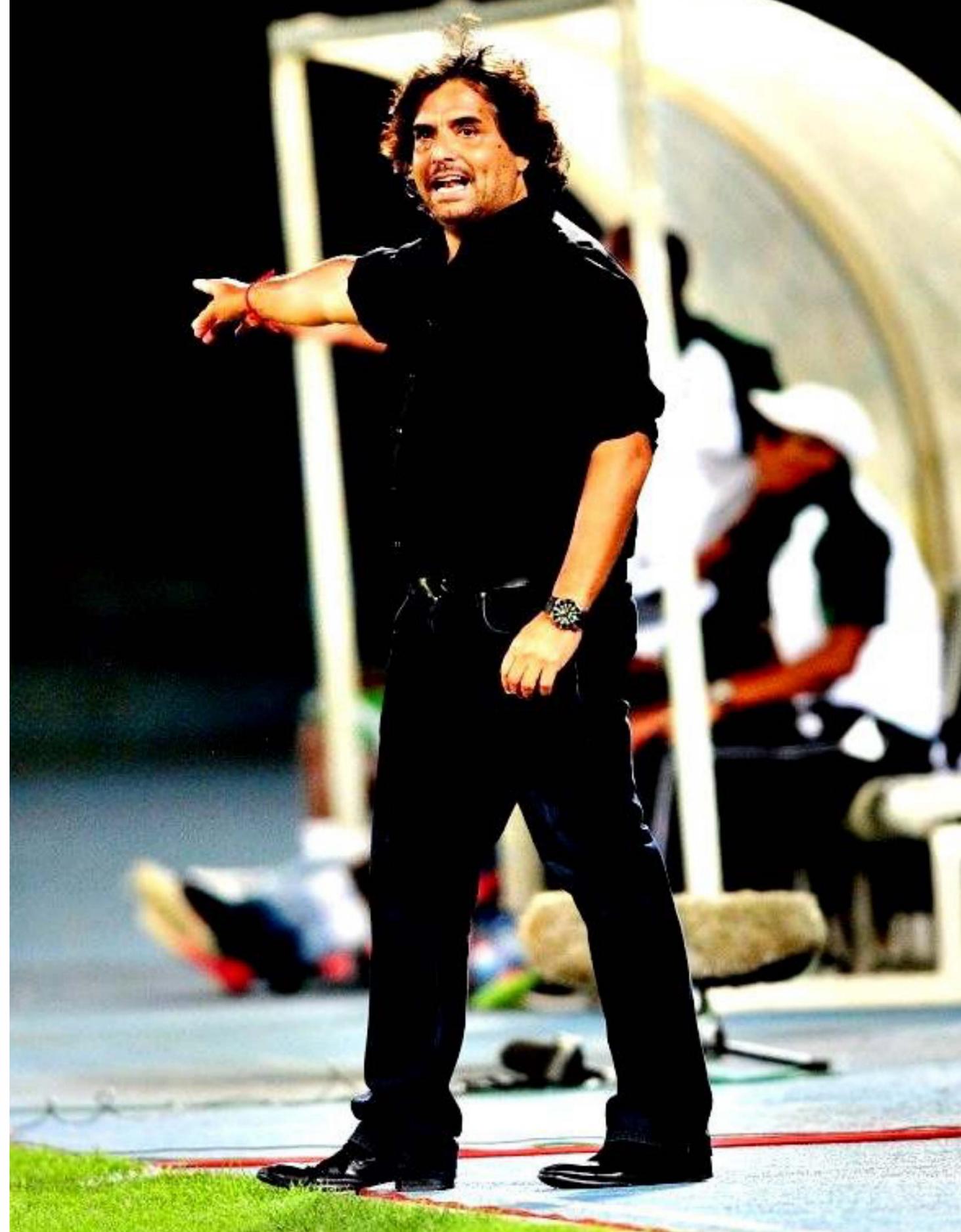
The idea is to create a DNA. A way of doing things that stretched from how we coach to how we treat players, how we warm up, how we recover, eat and travel. Everything.

The players need to know exactly what I expect of them. I set standards for them on the field and off the field.

Our job as coaches is to impart and hold players accountable to the highest standard they can reach.

The way a team or player's practice is often reflected in how the team or player plays in each game. I want each player to work to improve himself and his teammates.

If they do that, the team benefits, and that is my chief concern.



I believe in giving our players the best possible chance. That means playing them where they are most likely to end up.

One of my strengths is experience to put the right player in the right position, in the right time.

Every player has to understand his place on the team, and it's our job as coach to recruit or choose the right player to fit into each role.

With the amount of diversity in tactics, we need players who offer versatility. The more multifaceted players are, the greater flexibility you have in terms of team tactics.





I analyze a football game from 3 aspects:

- **Game style**

There are different styles: a classic 4-4-2, counter-attack, "Tiki-Taka", high pressing, "Park the Bus", long ball game, among others. My main idea is to play offensively, pressing in the opponent half side with a winning attitude.

- **Control of the game**

People want to see successful and attacking football. With the ball possession, you have more possibilities to create something and to concede fewer chances.

- **Number of goal opportunities created**

I want that my team takes 10 seconds to create an opportunity to score a goal after regaining possession of the ball. My principles to transition from defense to attack is therefore to play forward as soon as the ball is recovered, whether by a pass or a carry.



"My main idea is to play in the opponent side. This means that we are going to attack, and if we have to defend the goal our job is to pressure high to attack again..."

COACH RODOLFO ZAPATA



"That ability to press immediately, withing five or six seconds to the get the ball is very important to attack again."

COACH RODOLFO ZAPATA



Tactics are evolving and can be played out in many different ways.

Basically I work with 11 tactical systems. These tactics are:

- > 4-3-3
- > 4-2-3-1
- > 4-3-2-1
- > 3-3-1-3
- > 4-4-2
- > 4-4-1-1
- > 3-4-3
- > 3-3-3-1
- > 4-1-4-1
- > 4-1-3-2
- > 3-5-2

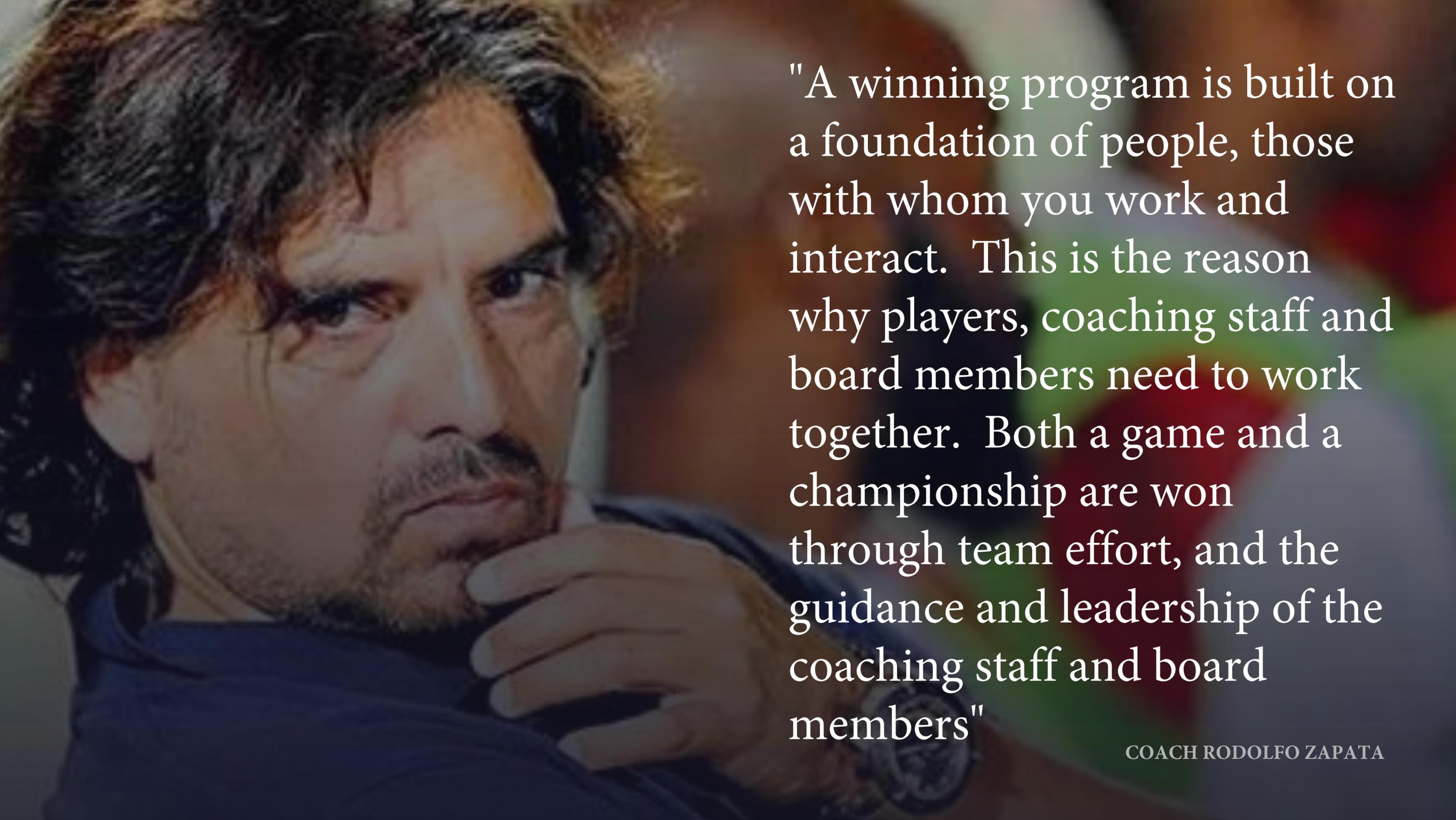
If we pay attention, we will notice that these tactics will be seen in a single game due the players' effort to attack and to defend.

However, coaches should adapt to the team that the organization has developed and to the level of their sporting abilities. We have to know our players well enough to see which tactics to apply at what times.



"Certain demands are common to all players.  
But effort is not negotiable..."

COACH RODOLFO ZAPATA



"A winning program is built on a foundation of people, those with whom you work and interact. This is the reason why players, coaching staff and board members need to work together. Both a game and a championship are won through team effort, and the guidance and leadership of the coaching staff and board members"

COACH RODOLFO ZAPATA

# VIDEOS

