



Exclusive: Non-negotiables with Frank Lampard - "There's a direct correlation between enjoyment and performance"

We sat down with the Everton manager to discuss the key coaching values and philosophies he won't compromise on and how they influence his management style.

By James Descombes Published: 9 October 2022 - 4.33pm



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Frank Lampard is undoubtedly one of the greatest midfielders in the Premier League history. With Chelsea, he won three league titles and a Champions League. And in 2014 he left the club as their all-time top goalscorer.

But as we've seen time and time again, being a great player doesn't automatically mean you're destined for the top when it comes to being a coach.

That said, having Harry Redknapp as your uncle and playing under the likes of Jose Mourinho, Rafa Benitez and Carlo Ancelotti is some education for anyone looking to lead a successful team.



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Lampard has been managing clubs since 2018, when he guided Derby County to a Championship Playoff final. A move back to his beloved Chelsea in 2019 saw a turnaround in the club's fortunes and a top four finish before a poor run of results saw him sacked in 2021.

Now at Everton, the former England international helped the club survive relegation last season, a moment which he described as "one of the greatest nights of my career."

We sat down with Lampard to discuss the key coaching values and philosophies he won't compromise on - his non-negotiables - and how they influence his management style ahead of Sunday's clash with Manchester United - live on BT Sport.

What are your key non-negotiables and how do you apply them at Everton?

The first one is always hard work.

It was something that probably stood me in good stead as a player and something that I was ingrained with at a very young age through being in a footballing family.

I took that from my playing career into my coaching career and expect that from everyone, not just players but staff too.

We have to work hard and give everything to the job, otherwise I'm not sure how you expect to improve and get better without putting those hours in, so that's quite an easy one.

Second one, I think would probably be respect.

It's a value that's bigger than that just talking about football. You need respect for your team-mates, the staff... it creates an environment.

It's hugely important the players respect the people working in different departments within the club, because we're all working in the same direction. I think if you lose that then you lose a connection throughout the club.

The third one is enjoyment.

I think it's really easy to focus on words like 'discipline', 'hard-work ethic', and all these things. I think if you're working as much as we are together, and doing the job that we love, you have to try and enjoy big parts of it.

That's something I learned as a coach pretty quickly, because I always look back on my playing career and the phases of success, and I remember enjoying good phases and good moments more – enjoying my football, enjoying my team-mates and enjoying going to work every day. And when you're not, you're not. I think there's a direct relation sometimes with performance.

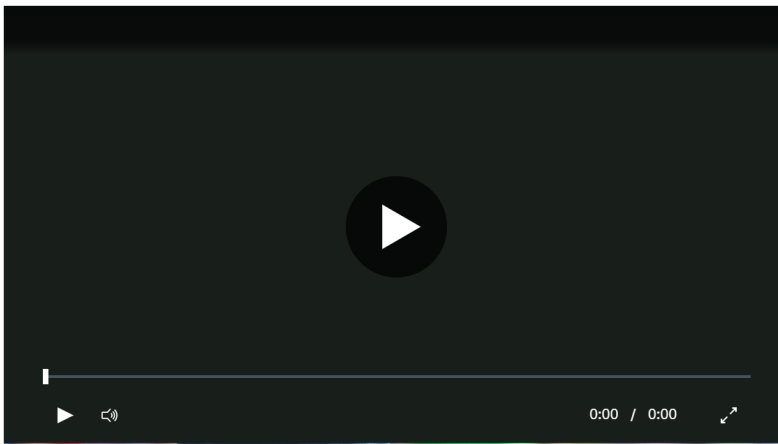
Coming from a football family were your values already there from an early age or were they developed over your coaching career?

I think with me it was probably there from the start, but I think when you become a coach you have to understand that everybody's different. So even the casual phrase of hard work looks different for everybody.

There was some people for whom it's really natural. Perfect example – Seamus Coleman. He comes in everyday and gives his everything. You don't even need to tell him that.

And other players are maybe not quite as dedicated on the training levels as Seamus, but hard work looks different to them. It might be how they approach and get ready for games, how focused they are in games.

I actually consider that as hard work as well, in terms of how you carry yourself all the time – how many kilometres you run and how focused you are on the work that you have to do to get the best out yourself for the team.



As a player you had a reputation for being incredibly hard working, as a coach does it bother you to see players who aren't giving it their all?

Yeah, it would frustrate me. I don't think in the modern day so many players can just turn up on a match day [and put in a performance].

I can't remember any in my career and I played with some great players. There's always a sliding scale. Seamus Coleman and John Terry are incredible professionals and then there are the other ones, normally players at the attacking end of the pitch, that are maybe not quite so into the training and the hard side of it.

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It's just natural, but the best players, the ones at the elite level that manage to play in the Premier League and the Champions League and all these things, generally there is so many levels of hard work.

If players aren't able to attain that day-to-day, you will find that they don't make it. They don't reach the levels that they individually should reach and that is a frustration and I think something that maybe the player themselves will be frustrated with at the end.

Your job as a coach is probably trying to cajole and find the motivation and inspiration to get the best levels out of players and that looks different for every player.

How important is it to have players that embody your ethos on the pitch? Is that why you've signed players like Conor Coady?

Absolutely, I think it's imperative. I understand it even more as a coach.

I was lucky enough to play in really strong dressing rooms where it felt natural. At Chelsea, in my time, we recruited big personalities who led the dressing room and they pass the message on. You find that even more so as a coach because you can't spend every moment in the pocket of the players.

You have to have an impact as a coach when you deliver meetings, but there's probably another 70% of the time where you're not with the players, so Conor Coady is a fantastic example, and James Tarkowski.

They've both come in and straight away injected personality and dedication. They're infectious in the way they communicate, and that's gold dust for a team.

I think if you look around a successful team it's quite evident. You look at teams like Liverpool who've been successful in the modern day and you understand that Jordan Henderson and James Milner are the leaders of the group and things rub off from them, and so I think as a coach you try and find those leaders as soon as you can.

“Seamus Coleman and John Terry are incredible professionals and then there are the other ones, normally players at the attacking end of the pitch, that are maybe not quite as into the training and the hard side of it.”
- Frank Lampard

Do your non-negotiables change depending on the club and what you're fighting for?

I've had all those experiences in my short time coaching in terms of feeling like you're really flying and in a good place and fighting for promotion, playing in the Champions League at Chelsea, then leaving the job at Chelsea and coming to Everton where probably the players were in a bad moment and lacking confidence.

Those things all test you in different ways and they're interesting in different ways and all great challenges.

You have to understand that all jobs give you problems to find solutions to daily, and I get to embrace that.

Whether it's a fight to get into the top four or a fight to stave off relegation, I think they can all be fulfilling challenges if you approach them in the right way.

I can get as much pleasure staying in the Premier League as qualifying for the Champions League, for instance – actually more, if I'm honest.

As a coach you have to be very stable with that, you don't always shoot for the moon and wish that you could be playing Champions League finals every day, you understand the grind of the job and understand that small gains sometimes add up to big gains and victories in the end, no matter which club or situation you're working in.

Can you give special players some leeway when it comes to your non-negotiables?

Compromise is important and that's why 'non-negotiables' is an important word.

It's something that as a coach you have to understand what you're going into. If you're dealt the hand of having a maverick type of player, sometimes you may have to use him to get the best out of the team. The important thing for me is that they deliver.

Frank Lampard is a great example. He's defined what the non-negotiables are for me.

[FRANCIS] DI CANIO is a great example, he delivered at West Ham when I was there for one season and we came fifth or sixth because of his performances, and the rest of the team works around it.

The manager at the time was Harry [Redknapp], and Harry was fantastic at dealing with those sort of players, because he gave them some leeway and they produced for the team, not just Di Canio but many a player of that type.

When you come into the job you have to compromise and if you find a talent that could help win you games it's also your job to get the best out of them.

Is it easier to get younger players aligned with your non-negotiables than experienced ones?

Yeah, it is. It's funny because I was that player.

You remember your career, remember being young and you're a sponge. And then I remembered being old and you're kind of more cynical or stuck in your ways.

I found that when I went to Derby in the beginning and I had a really good group, and it's not a criticism actually, it was just an observation that the younger players are much more aware of wanting to watch themselves back, watch clips and review and try to improve.

The older players didn't want to watch it back, didn't want to talk about how they'd been in the individual games. And I understood it, because that was me as a player.

But I do think that you have to have a balance as a coach.

I really enjoy working with young players because you can mould and change them and give them information that maybe they haven't heard before, but also you rely on the experienced players and you have to find the right way to get the best out of them and motivate them.

That's actually sometimes a staff issue, not just myself, it's how we as a staff work with the players and understand what turns them on in a football sense to get the best out of them.

Have any managers offered words of advice that stuck with you?

I spoke with Walter Smith before he passed away after I left Chelsea. He gave me some fantastic advice, and so did Carlo Ancelotti and Sir Alex Ferguson.

The main gist I got was to find perspective. Maybe they can say this because they've been through so much in their own ways, good and bad.

As a young coach you can feel every defeat really heavily, maybe celebrate every win really heavily, and get very drawn into it and consumed by the job.

I've always found that these managers who've achieved such great success have that calmness in all situations, and they passed it on in their words to me and their manner.

You can only learn from people like that. And in the race to the top for all us young coaches, you can want to get there really quickly and that can be energy sapping if you're not careful.

The experienced coaches that I've been fortunate enough to be close to always give you that perspective. Whether it be more family time, whether it be how you deal with certain situations – I always find that very helpful.

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