

# Race on Track?

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**When England's footballers line up for their first World Cup game against Italy in Manaus on June 14, there'll probably be more black defenders in the team than there are black managers in the whole of the English professional game.**

England could – but probably won't – play a back four consisting of Ashley Cole, Glen Johnson or Kyle Walker, Chris Smalling and Joleon Lescott.

In January, Paul Ince was sacked as Blackpool manager and Edgar Davids left his job with Barnet. These two departures followed that of Hope Powell as England Women's Head Coach last summer after more than a decade in the role.

At the time of writing, Chris Hughton's Norwich were in the middle of a scrap for Premier League survival while Charlton, in a similar plight in the Championship, decided to dispense with the services of Chris Powell.

By the time England kick off in Brazil, a country that gave us Pele, Jairzinho, Ronaldo and Ronaldinho, it's possible that there won't be a single black manager in a top English job.

According to Dr Colin King, founder of the Black and Asian Coaches Association (BACA), institutional racism makes it difficult for black players to become managers in England.

'Assumptions and beliefs are embedded, often unconsciously, in the value systems of decision makers,' he says.

In 2012, Staffordshire University research showed that 56% of fans think that football is institutionally racist, an opinion shared by 73% of the black and minority ethnic fans surveyed.

'So many black players are motivated to compete and play at all levels of the game, it doesn't make sense that they should suddenly switch off and have no interest in continuing in the game once they retire,' says report author, Dr Ellis Cashmore.

'You have a person who has been in football all their life, who has little experience outside the game. He has picked up ideas about how to coach, organise and motivate players. Why would that person not want to go into coaching? Seems to me there's something going on there.'

Cashmore's fellow report author, Jamie Cleland, now at Loughborough University, adds:

'The significant majority of people running football clubs are white, middle class and middle aged.'

Matt Alexander, Notts County's chief scout, and son of the late Peterborough United, Lincoln City and Macclesfield Town manager, Keith Alexander (who we featured in Coaching Edge issue 21), agrees.

'It's jobs for the boys,' says Matt. 'People who run football clubs get managers and coaches they can trust. It won't change until a high profile former (black) pro buys a club.'

Ellis Cashmore explains that club owners take an extremely conservative approach when appointing a football coach. Manchester United, he argues, appointed David Moyes because he appeared to be the

closest candidate to Sir Alex Ferguson.

'Arsene Wenger, Pep Guardiola, Fabio Capello and further back, George Graham, Brian Clough and Alf Ramsey. There's a prevalent image of what successful manager looks like,' he says.

Cashmore thinks it will just take one high-profile black manager to be successful to change this image. Maybe a Paul Ince or an Andy Cole. Perhaps a Patrick Vieira or Didier Drogba coming back into the English game. Dr King thinks that this is the worst thing that could happen.

'He'll be judged as a successful black manager as opposed to just a successful manager,' Dr King says. 'If he fails does that mean black people make bad coaches?' He adds that if a white manager does badly, it's about the individual and his qualities. Nobody has general thoughts about white people and their ability to coach.

Across all levels of football and across all sports the picture is less clear-cut. Last year, the Professional Footballers' Association said that 18% of the people on its coaching courses were from black and ethnic minority backgrounds, and that 14 out of 192 UEFA pro licence holders are black.

In 2013, the Department for Culture Media and Sport said that across all sports 11% of coaches and 5% of qualified coaches were from black and minority ethnic groups. Two years earlier, Sporting Equals found that only 3% of coaches and 1% of qualified coaches were from BME groups... while 8% of the population is listed as BME.

'We need more black and Asian coaches working at the highest level across all sports,' says Ali Jaffer, a professional cricket coach from Hampshire. This will show others that coaching is a viable career path for them and that they can get to the top.'

Since 2003, the NFL in America has operated an affirmative action programme called the Rooney Rule. Named after Pittsburgh Steelers chairman Dan Rooney, who has a long history of appointing black coaches, all NFL clubs must interview at least one African-American coach for every vacancy. There's no quota system for hiring, and although it has had an impact in the USA, Cashmore thinks British culture is less tolerant of positive discrimination.

'It might be an idea to run something like this to give people who've been discriminated against in the past a leg up,' he says. 'Run it for say, 10 years, see what impact it has, and then try something else.'

Matt Alexander thinks a UK Rooney rule would create a divide between black and white.

'The answer is for people to get as qualified as they possibly can so that they can be considered on merit,' he says.

Dr King insists that black people, however well qualified, are still put off from applying for coaching jobs by the cost of coaching courses, according to research carried out by Sporting Equals in 2012, so too if they have to travel too far. There's also a lack of understanding around where to start and who to talk to, to get involved.

Before the Rooney rule, the NFL helped aspiring black coaches market themselves, paying for them to make a promotional video of themselves.

'Actually seeing someone talk about themselves and about their sport can help break down stereotypical assumptions about their suitability for the job,' says Cashmore. In 2011, the FA, with the PFA, Premier League, Football League and League Managers' Association, set up the coach bursary programme, designed to help black coaches aspiring to work at the highest level. A Level 2 coach or above can get help with coaching costs, a placement at a Premiership, Football League club or centre of excellence, if they commit to a year-long programme of work. In February 2012, the government gave the FA's

National Football Centre at Burton on Trent, £3million to develop black and minority ethnic coaches.

The BACA also helps BME coaches find and apply for jobs, but Dr King thinks that even with this support, the system itself disadvantages black people. Coaching courses, he argues, have traditional syllabuses written and taught, in the main, by middle-aged white men.

'People who design coaching courses need to do more to understand the needs of black and ethnic minority coaches,' he says.

He believes sports governing bodies should consult with people who work in equality and diversity when designing their courses. This is something that Cleland believes many local authorities are reluctant to do. Jaffer thinks it can be a challenge for Asian coaches to get involved in cultures that revolve around after match socialising and alcohol.

'Black people have to play the white man if they want to get on,' Dr King says. King would like to see traditional county coach recruitment structures dismantled and more black people involved in decision making. 'We have to challenge the stereotypes that black people in sport can only function through their bodies,' Dr King adds, and 'show that they can also contribute through their intellectual capacity.'

tags : inclusive-coaching