



Original Interview with Morelos

★We all may be aware of your deep affection for Mexico. Could you share the reasons behind these special feelings?

This is family related. I am just back from Morelia where we celebrated the Quinceañera of my older daughter. On my way back I have been in the same plane to Amsterdam with Chucky and his family :-)

★What do you consider the most prominent characteristic of Mexico's HT community?

Well, I am mainly interested in the NT part of the communities that I follow. I would call it rather calm in Mexico with some actions during elections.

During my term I tried to engage some more managers. But I can fully understand that we all have a RL as well with the respective commitments. Btw that's why I am always very carefully assessing my time schedule for the next 6 months before I run for a candidature. What I really find not ok if you run for DT position and then do not spend all the necessary time for it. And believe me, it is a lot.

★Your coaching tenure has seen remarkable success for the NT, including medals in major tournaments. Could you share your perspective on the strategies that have contributed to these achievements, particularly focusing on the recent Americas Cup?

First of all for the Americas Cup we benefited from a well scouted generation of players. This goes back to the time when Alberto was the coach. Too bad, that we could not make even more out of it in the following two World Cups. I guess we will talk later about this.

So, there are players and as mentioned above as a DT there is a lot of time you need, e.g. you need to monitor the training plans of the most important players and stay in touch with their owners. This does also includes also all potential back-up players which means in total around 60-80 players. Btw for this reason I find it not realistic that a DT in addition should also take care of all the other scouting activities of the younger players between 21 and 26.

In addition to time there are of course the tactical skills and the capability to read opponents. A good formation is in my opinion not done in a few minutes. On NT level with the higher number of available players you have much more options and opponents as well.

In my opinion the most important skill is to read the opponents and here mainly the proper predicting of the opponents midfield. If you do this right you significantly increase the chances to choose the correct own

formation and to win the game. Sounds easy, but many managers fail already here, because they do not spend enough time for it or do not have the skills (and tools) to calculate it.

Other point is, don't be shy with defense formations. They are strong and important on NT level. Just make the right choice between 4-4-2 where you can also generate some own chances in addition to the CAs and the ultra defensive formations where you fully rely on counter attacks.

★Could you elaborate on how the current coaching staff was formed and the roles each member plays in supporting the NT?

The current staff around Astrero has mainly been Alberto and myself. Alberto and I already worked together when we scouted a big part of the current team and when I took over the NT after the retirement of a former coach. The roles have been pretty clear. Astrero had the overall responsibility and Alberto and myself supported on the formations whenever there was time available.

★As a member of the NT Staff that participated in the WC, could you share whether the Coach and the Staff were satisfied with the outcome or if there was a feeling that the team deserved more?

No, we have not been fully satisfied. On the other hand, let's not forget when I took over a few seasons ago we have not even been able to qualify for the World Cup. Since then we advanced regularly up to Round III. But of course after a Silver Medal in the Americas Cup the ambition in the World Cup gets also higher, although a Round III for Mexico is really a good result. In other words Mexico finally ranked on the 24th place out of 144 countries. And let's also consider that our Round III group was really extraordinary strong.

Btw I forgot to mention before when you asked me about the success factors. An important one of course is also certain luck. Nobody will ever go really very far without having the necessary luck in the one or other phase. Even Argentina, who played an incredible good World Cup, needed quite some in the Half Final which has been the basis for the Championship.

★In Round III of the last WC, it appears we played PIC against both the Dominican Republic and France, and MOTS against the USA. Could you elaborate on the Spirit management plan for Round III?

Well, you need to consider with which TS Mexico entered into Round III compared to the others.

On the first game we had quite of a TS advantage that justified the PIC. Unfortunately there has been a bit of miscalculation of the DomRep midfield. Nevertheless it was a 50/50 game and after the loss it became already very difficult in a group of four.

Against France we lost because of two PNF goals against us (similar like in game one where a PNF goal of DomRep decided the game). This shows the importance of this type of player on NT level and we can be happy that Manolo Bárcena is getting better and better. In the end it was also almost a 50/50 game. After the game we could also argue for a PIN. But who knows if we would have scored against their strong defense

and we would have had a TS disadvantage for the last game in which Mexico needed points as well.

Finally the MOTS against USA. This obviously needs to be seen in the light that USA has been expected with PIC. After they came with PIN, the game plan was destroyed. But honestly, any other formation would most likely also not bring us the necessary three points. Looking back, we lost this round mainly in the first game.

★Is there anything you think could have been done differently or better during the last WC?

This would be the question for Astrero :-)

★Do you believe it's possible for Mexico's NT to achieve a WC medal in the future?

Yes, I do believe it is possible. Even if we are not the biggest country, it is big enough to matter. But the work begins much time before a DT takes over the team. Scouting (and potentially also farming) are the key words to ensure that our top talents are perfectly trained without compromises and for a long time of period.

★What advice would you offer to anyone who aspires to contribute to the NT's success in achieving this dream?

My advice would be to first think about what would be most interesting respectively what is the passion. This is very individual. Some like scouting, some like to organize things (e.g. as head scout), some like to put their efforts in training players in the most perfect way, some like to write and contribute with some interesting stuff to attract more managers for the Mexico NT, some others are more interested in the games and tactical aspects and so on.

Most important advise is: Whatever your do, keep in mind that all your contributions to the Mexico NT should be of mid or even better of long term perspective. NT's can be a lot of fun if you look at it from a community project perspective. But there are no quick wins when it comes to NT's.

There are many things to do. I would first think

Finally, there is an ongoing debate in the Forum about the NT and its results. I wanted to pass on some questions from 'good-old' Balero, which I find quite intriguing:

► How many 'farm' teams does Mexico have?

I do not know exactly the number. These farm teams can have an incredible value for the community if the commitment is high and perspective long term. Important is not to mix U21 and NT players because they need a total different stamina management.

► Do prospects emerge spontaneously?

Mostly not. Prospects need to be identified in young ages and be perfectly trained without compromises. But no rule without exception. When I coached Switzerland to the Championship we identified 4-5 mature players that have not been on the radar of any scout.

► What training programs are they following?

I guess this depends on the position, no? I posted in the Mexico Federation a while ago the potential training plans per position. This is not a secret anymore and most nations follow pretty much the same plans. Important is also keep an eye on specialities. In this aspect Mexico has been a bit lacking in the past compared to top nations.

► How do you assess the capabilities of a DT (Director Técnico, or Coach)?

This is a good question. I think most important is that a good Club coach can be a good DT but must not be necessary.

What is important?

- a) Have enough time, time, time.... Doing changes in the team, work on formations, speak to the owners of the players, speak to other coaches etc. All not comparable to a club team, but absolutely necessary
- b) Be able to read and assess opponents that you do not know so well like in the club competition. This includes both opponents DT (including psychological aspects) and also their teams and players
- c) What I mentioned above. Be able to predict opponents formation correctly, especially the exact midfield. This will allow you to select the right own formation. Keep in mind that you have with 26 top skilled players usually many more options than with a club team
- d) It goes without saying that all the above only goes with a good communication style and a lot of passion.