

### Art of Learning Assignment #3 (chapters 7, 8)

**What did Josh finally discover about his life that was making it so he couldn't keep pace with shifts in momentum during a game? Has anything like this ever happened to you?**

- When Josh became famous, he felt himself distancing himself from the game. There was no longer this thrill and passion that he had once before, so his mental game began to slip. This sometimes happens to me at the end of club seasons because it's felt like an eternity that I've been playing soccer and it seems to have become routine. My mental processing for the game becomes a little slower and I'm not at my 100%.
- Because Josh was so homesick and having a hard time adjusting to the changes in his life, it made it hard for him to keep up with the momentum during his chess games. A similar situation happened to me when my brother left for college last fall. After that I was having a really hard time adjusting to the life as an only child and because I wasn't able to adjust it created conflict between me and my parents.
- He realized that he was fighting change, and the stress of dealing with constant transitions was preventing him from finding the clarity in his personal life and in his chess performance that he needed. I honestly cannot think of a good example of something like this in my life, but I know that feeling overwhelmed outside of soccer, like with school or family or something, definitely affects my performance. I think I am still learning how to maintain focus during training and games to let soccer be that "happy place" for a few hours.

**What deeply buried secrets or psychological nuances of yours tend to surface under intense pressure during a game? *As an example for me; I am slightly claustrophobic and I tend to feel little tiny bits of panic when I am on the ball in tight spaces due to this. Doesn't seem to bother me when I am defending tightly though. Of course you need to come up with your own examples, whatever they may or may not be :)***

- When under intense pressure during a game my eyes tend to look really quickly around the field, really too fast to really take in any information. Another thing is I have a habit of cracking my knuckles or popping my joints as if that would relieve the stress on the field.
- I used to be a total head case when it came to playing soccer. If I was having a bad day at school, I knew I would play poorly at practice that day. I used to genuinely believe there was nothing I could do about it. Eventually I just grew out of being such a mentally unstable player; however, I did have a hard time

staying focused in practice earlier this season, but luckily I've found that music can be the cure to that.

- I can sometimes be apprehensive about contact with another player, like in a one on one situation, because I am afraid of getting hurt. This might prevent me from making a quick enough decision or going out confidently. However, whenever I do end up getting hit in the face or kicked, I stop and think “okay, see, this isn’t so bad, is it?” because it never hurts as much as I think it will, and it is WAY better than digging the ball out of the net.

**If your opponent knew of these secrets or nuances, how do you think they would use them against you as a player?**

- As a player, they would play the ball or pressure quickly because I’m not taking in information as quickly as I could. So that would be very easy to take advantage of if the pressure is high and things seem to be moving slowly in your head during the game.
- They could purposely try to get in my head and throw off my game.
- They would probably be more aggressive in the box on corners and crosses, and pressure me more on all the through balls that come to me, hoping that having a striker running at me would cause me to mishandle a simple ball.

**Describe one (or more) very powerful things/events/opportunities that have pushed you to grow as a player over the last year or so.**

- During the last club season we usually had only about 12-14 players available to play so about every game starting in December I would play the entire game. This really pushed me to maintain my focus and intensity the entire time and become more vocal because it was easier for me to call back for cover rather than burning out in the game and then having to have a sub out.
- When our club team lost in the quarterfinals of State because a girl on our team got a red card and we had to play a man down for 70 minutes. That made me want to get better so we could come back this year and there would be no question that we deserve to be in the State Finals.
- I took a break from playing goalkeeper starting the end of Spring and lasting through the Summer, and it was a good chance to remind myself of where I belong on the field and what I love about playing keeper. I was able to refresh my perspective on the game and on my role on the team.

**Think ahead about our upcoming week with games on Tues/Thurs/Sat and training on Mon and Wed. Describe how you will make sure your game harmonizes and blends (to create effective soccer for our team as a whole) with the likely positional group you will be a part of. What kinds of cues and tendencies will you have to pick up on from the players in and around you so that you can better predict or support them as players, thus, harmonizing our team as a whole?**

- In the back four I, need to pay attention to the position on the field that everyone is. This is crucial so when I see Z going in I know to create that drop or having our outsides pinch in to close a gap. The defensive four isn't really too in sync at this point so it's very important to see everyone's playing style to make a more coherent back four.
- For defense, communication is key! In terms of cues and tendencies, if I see O starting to shift over, I have to make sure I cover/shift with her. Also if she starts stepping up the field to get our defense up when the ball is in our attacking 3rd, I have to quickly step with her to show our defensive line that we are stepping.
- The players that I interact with most during games are the defenders, and this can be tricky because each defender has their own style of play and personality. The first game helped me to see where my defenders' confidence levels are, the kind of communication they need from me, and the habits they have when faced with different types of pressure. I know that some of my defenders are still learning how to play their positions, so I will try to give lots of positive affirmations to build their confidence, and make sure to communicate extra with them so that they can learn the position. In general, I will try to make their lives easier by being open for drops, getting to through balls, communicating often, and taking care of crosses/corners. Basically, anything I can do to lessen the running or stressing that they have to do during the game.