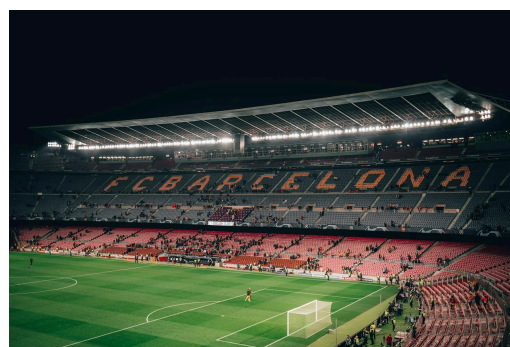


The Game that Changed Modern Football



1) Discussion

- a) What has been your favourite Champions League Final?
 - b) How has football changed over the years?
 - c) Can you think of any teams that have played with a specific style of play?
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2) Vocabulary

a) Match the vocabulary to the definition.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1) To epitomize (verb) | a) To accept or adopt something enthusiastically or willingly. |
| 2) Norm (norm) | b) Physical strength or muscular power. |
| 3) Incisive (adjective) | c) Showing sharp intelligence or shrewdness in understanding and solving problems. |
| 4) To monopolize (verb) | d) A standard or typical pattern that is considered usual or expected. |
| 5) Astute (adjective) | e) To represent or be a perfect example of something. |
| 6) To embrace (verb) | f) To have exclusive control or possession of something. |
| 7) Brawn (noun) | g) Sharp or direct in thought or expression, often suggesting intelligence or insight. |
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b) Complete the sentences with the vocabulary from exercise 2a.

To epitomise Norm Incisive To Monopolize
Astute To embrace Brawn

- 1) Bayern Munich's dominance in the Bundesliga allowed them to _____ the league title for several consecutive seasons.
- 2) Xavi Hernandez was known for his _____ passing, often slicing through opposing defences with pinpoint accuracy during his time at Barcelona.
- 3) Sir Alex Ferguson's _____ management of Manchester United led to numerous triumphs, including their historic treble-winning season in 1998-1999.
- 4) Many modern football clubs have chosen to _____ data analytics to gain a competitive edge.
- 5) While physical strength is important in football, the Brazilian national team embraces a style of play that prioritises flair and skill over _____.
- 6) In the history of world football, Barcelona's possession-based style under Pep Guardiola _____ a new era of tactical sophistication.
- 7) Harry Kane scoring over 20 goals a season became the _____ during his time at Tottenham.



3) Quick Read - Read the article quickly and answer the question.

- a) How was Barcelona's style of play different to Manchester United's in the 2009 Champions League final?

The Game-Changing 2009 Final

The 2009 UEFA Champions League final witnessed a clash of footballing ideologies between Pep Guardiola's Barcelona and Sir Alex Ferguson's Manchester United. Barcelona, under Guardiola's guidance, epitomised a new style of play centred around possession, intricate passing, and positional fluidity. Led by Lionel Messi, Xavi Hernandez, and Andres Iniesta, Barcelona's relentless emphasis on dominating possession signalled a departure from traditional footballing norms.

On the opposing side, Ferguson's Manchester United represented the traditional English style of football - direct, aggressive, and incisive. With talents like Cristiano Ronaldo, Wayne Rooney, and Paul Scholes, United posed a formidable threat on the counter-attack.

The final unfolded as a tactical battle, with Barcelona's possession-based approach stifling United's attacking opportunities. United had the early chances, but after 10 minutes Barcelona opened the scoring through Samuel Eto'o. Guardiola's side monopolised possession, leaving United chasing shadows and struggling to regain control. Despite Ferguson's attempts to exploit spaces on the break, Barcelona's astute pressing and defensive organisation limited United's chances. In the 70th minute Leo Messi added a second, killing the game and ending any hope United had of a comeback.

Barcelona's victory not only secured their place in footballing history but also heralded a seismic shift in tactical approach. Guardiola's innovative style emphasised technical proficiency and intelligence over physicality, inspiring a new generation of players and coaches to embrace possession-based football. The triumph of smaller, more agile players like Messi, Xavi, and Iniesta underscored a departure from traditional reliance on strength.



In essence, the 2009 Champions League final was more than just a match; it was a defining moment that reshaped football's tactical landscape. Barcelona's victory signalled the arrival of a new era in football, one characterised by intricate passing, intelligent movement, and the triumph of skill over brawn.

4) Discussion

- a) What are your thoughts on the 2009 Champions League Final?
- b) Do you prefer direct or incisive passing?
- c) Can you think of any other finals that have been a clash of styles?
- d) What do you think made that Barcelona team so difficult to play against?

