



## THE SYSTEMS' ANALYST

This Englishman Les Cusworth, the UAR (Argentinian Rugby Union) rugby director, is Loffreda and Baetti's (the Argentinian team's coaches) right-hand man; he studies rivals and suggest the most appropriate strategies

Tuesday October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 / Published in the printed edition  
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ENGHIEN-LES-BAINS, France - Those people who generally are valuable for their analysis ability, their teaching and their encyclopedic intellect, remain quite and discreet behind huge projects. They are decisive links in the chain and in the stating of objectives to reach; and when awarding and acknowledging, they always appear in the corner of the glorious picture. Les Cusworth is this person for the Argentinian team.



Cusworth with the computers he's using in his job

A symbol and well-known person in English rugby during the 70's and 80's, this 52-year old man is the UAR's (Argentinian Rugby Union) director and is partly responsible for Los Pumas's current position. Connoisseur of all the oval universe's secrets and a rigorous sport specialist, he easily seduced

Marcelo Loffreda 6 years ago, when he was tempted to join the technical staff. He was familiar with the local market as in 1998 he worked together with Raul Sanz, general secretary, in the team Under 21.

Beyond his high position in the UAR, within the group, his role consists in assisting Loffreda and Baetti in building an appropriate strategy, organization and defense according to the opponents. He is an excellent game analyst and is able to compile Scotland's strengths and weaknesses in a 5-minute video; Scotland being Los Pumas quarterfinals' rival next Sunday in Saint-Denis.

"I analyzed the last 10 games played by Scotland, but we haven't prepared any detailed report yet" apologizes Cusworth, articulating a few words in a pleasant Spanish, rather speaking his native language.

The routine of analyzing video is intense. It is a 45-minute super relaxed session during which players and technical staff are participating. Following technological advancements, Nicolas Basdedios Molina, Cusworth's right-hand man, is using a new analysis system. The brand-new software is Australian and allows identifying all the moves of a certain player, but also fixed formations and statistics. Similar systems are used in other high level sports such as Soccer, Basketball and Volleyball.

"Images never lie, and help avoiding mistakes. It is good to avoid surprises once on the pitch. Heart and passion are not enough qualities to win a game. Analysis is also fundamental", advises Cusworth, married with an Argentinian woman and father of a 4-year old girl called Helena.

It was not easy to gather a team responsible for opponents' analysis with a team based on amateurs' foundations. An anecdote: 3 years ago and without the technological support like we have today, Basdedios Molina, who was press director at that time, helped Cusworth with editing a video about how to attack and defense against France, the typical rival. "It was like cutting your garden's grass with only a knife and a fork", remembers Les, halfway between laughter and irony.

During the months preceding the Rugby World Cup, Cusworth was regularly traveling to Europe in order to observe closely France and Ireland in the 6 Nations tournament. He also spied on Italy and Scotland, knowing that they could also be one of the Argentinians' rivals during the World Cup. His mission consisted in combing the area and collecting as much information

about these teams' strengths and weaknesses. In order to succeed, it was fundamental to see the game's images shot from the highest location of the stadium. This allows identifying the game's channels and attacking directions, a better analysis and building a strategic defensive and offensive system.

"Rugby is simple: you have to run straight and pass the ball. And images help us showing this. It is no magic, but it is a key contribution. But do not go too far about analysis because a player is not a robot and he will have to make decisions once on the field" suggests Cusworth.

You will rarely see Cusworth as angrier as the day after Argentina beat France at the beginning of the World Cup. The organization didn't provided him with videos of the game's images and the analysis session had to be cancelled. " In this point of view, Loffreda is more English than I am. He is so organized and prolix, none of the 2 could think of changing plans" says Cusworth. Both he and Basdedios Molina are responsible for the good situation of Los Pumas. They are the ones suggesting to Loffreda the best tactics and strategy according to the opponents. They are playing the game through their laptop.

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