



## **MANNY SCHELLSCHEIDT: A COACH FOR ALL SEASONS**

Manfred Schellscheidt, who has collected pro, amateur and youth national championships and now heads U.S. Soccer's U-14 boys development program, lets the game do the teaching.

By Mike Voitalla

(From the March 21, 2005 issue of Soccer America Magazine)

It was 34 years ago when Manfred "Manny" Schellscheidt became the first coach granted an "A" license by the U.S. Soccer Federation. He has since coached at every level of the U.S. men's national team program and is now thoroughly enjoying his role as technical director of U.S. Soccer's U-14 boys development program.

"These are the babies," he says. "Most of them are only 13. They are so enthusiastic and excited. Our goal is to create a stress-free, comfortable soccer environment. It's all about playing, not about results or suffocating them with tactics and systems. It's just one step away from the playground."

Schellscheidt welcomes more than 100 boys from around the country into camp each year, and from that group chooses about 36 to form two teams for a trip to Mexico to give them their first taste of international competition.

**"There's plenty of room for the little guys, the late bloomers," he says.**

**"There's always a few who are physically ahead, but we look for the guys who have something going on upstairs, and that you can tell at any age or size."**

**Schellscheidt looks for players**

**with "soccer brains"**  
and "good feet." When it comes to  
coaching, he believes less is more.

"The coach is really a substitute voice,"  
he says. '

**'We want the players to hear the silent voice,  
the game.**

**The game is actually talking to you."**

Schellscheidt, who considers 5-v-5 games a key component to training sessions, has had a major influence on some of America's most accomplished coaches, such as Bruce Arena, Bob Bradley and Dave Sarachan.

"I think everybody who runs across Manfred learns something," says U.S. coach Arena. "He provokes a lot of thought on how players think and the role coaches play. He is very good at trying to keep things simple and not making a meal of things.

He doesn't make a big deal about the influence  
coaches have on players.

He believes in making sure players are in

**a good soccer environment**

and that they

**learn from the game."**

Chicago Fire coach Sarachan says, "He showed me constantly that **it's an art, not a science.**"

Schellscheidt, a native of Germany, came to visit his aunt in New Jersey at age 23 and hooked up with Elizabeth SC of the German-American League.

"I arrived in the country on a Monday, went to practice at Farcher's Grove on a Wednesday, and they gave me a player's pass in time for the Saturday game," says Schellscheidt, 64. "Only in America!"

Schellscheidt returned to Germany, but was enticed back by the club, which provided him an immigration sponsor and a tool-making job, which he held for 18 years while playing and coaching before taking his first full-time soccer position, Seton Hall head coach, in 1988. He won two U.S. Open Cups with Elizabeth SC. As player/assistant coach, he won the 1973 NASL title with the Philadelphia Atoms. He was player/coach of the 1974 ASL-winning Rhode Island Oceaneers and coached the 1977 ASL-winning New Jersey Americans. He coached the Union Lancers to McGuire Cup (U-19) titles in 1987 and 1988.

**"Our training sessions were basically just playing,"** says Richie Williams, a member of the McGuire Cup winners, who won two NCAA titles at Virginia and three MLS titles with D.C. United. **"I always looked forward to playing for Manny, because I always knew it would be fun. We enjoyed and we learned, and**

**we played good,  
attacking soccer."**

Schellscheidt's resume includes a stint as U.S. head coach in the 1970s and as an assistant with the U-20s. He was the Olympic coach until the eve of the 1984 games when the Federation disbanded his team of amateurs and replaced them with pros. He coached the U.S. team at two Pan American Games and coached the U-17s in the early 1990s. He was inducted in the National Soccer Hall of Fame in 1990.

While Schellscheidt hails the progress American soccer has made -- the national team he headed in 1975 didn't even train before meeting in Mexico City -- he's not happy with all the changes.

**"Paying \$5,000 to \$10,000 to play youth soccer  
, that's not good,"**

says Schellscheidt. '

'And because a player at some super club shows up for every practice, plays in every big tournament and has a boatload of trophies doesn't tell me anything.

**What matters is the skill level of the player,  
which doesn't come from organized soccer.**

It comes from a  
**love affair with the ball  
and playing games**

with and against players of all ages."

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