



The Art of Tour – Bangkok 2010

In his seminal work written in the 6th century BC, the General Sun Tzu explained the five constant factors that govern the art of war – the moral law; heaven; earth; the commander; and method and discipline. As we found during our recent Bangkok trip, similar factors govern the art of successfully negotiating a football section weekend in Bangkok.

According to General Sun the moral law: “causes the people to be in complete accord with their ruler, so that they will follow him regardless of their lives, undismayed by any danger”. Undismayed by the danger of ending up in the swimming pool in the case of an unfavourable verdict in the corrupt court of Judge Mally Leigh, all 31 members of the touring party showed up for the Saturday night awards dinner at “Livingstone’s”. Winners included Jim Down (special effects), Dave Hadcroft (best performance in a dramatic or comedy role) and Antonio Castano (Meryl Streep award for multi-lingual profanity).

Sun says: “Heaven signifies night and day, cold and heat, times and seasons.” The rainy season arrived when the heavens opened a few hours before the Friday evening Royal Bangkok Sports Club vs. KCC Interport match. As a result, the RBSC pitch was dotted with puddles and moist underfoot. Ideal conditions for the KCC to defend the Bruno Ruegg Trophy, and we sailed into a 2-0 lead thanks to a zipping drive and a close-range finish, both from Mally Leigh. RBSC pulled one back, but were finding it surprisingly hard to penetrate the back-line of Laxton, Castano, McKinley and Down – probably because the ball kept stopping in the water. Wakey added a third, and although RBSC hit back again, Wakey’s second made us look likely candidates to retain the cup.

But we were finally undone by RBSC’s skill and determination – and the fact that each half was 45 minutes. Our hosts chipped away at our lead, and minutes from the end scored a beauty to go 5-4 up. Managers Shyam Nainani and Jim Gough threw players forward, but we were unable to



draw level. At the post-match dinner, Tony Smith made a heroic effort to wrest the Bruno Ruegg Trophy back via a “boat race” beer-drinking contest but to no avail and we had to say goodbye to the trophy for another year.

Earth: “comprises distances, great and small; danger and security; open ground and narrow passes; the chances of life and death.” Saturday saw day one of the RBSC International 7s. KCC fielded two teams, the Dragons and the Knights in the main tournament as well as the Royals in the Veterans’ Division.

The Dragons were up first, and after a narrow defeat in their first match went on to record two victories, finish second in their group and progress to the tournament first division knock-out. Next up, the Knights also faltered early on, but then had a 0-0 draw and a 2-0 win to finish third and go through to the second division knock-out. Finally came the Royals, who in their first two matches had difficulty with the open ground and the narrow passing game of skillful Thai opponents. But in their last match the veterans salvaged a 1-1 draw when a neat cross from Jim found the oldest player in the party, Hernan Vaca who slid in at the far post to direct the ball into the corner of the net.

“The Commander stands for the virtues of wisdom, sincerity, benevolence, courage and strictness.” On the Sunday morning, the managers of the three KCC teams faced a test of their wisdom. In the knock-out stages, Shyam, Ravi Sujani and Mike Trayford had to coax match-winning performances out of their bottle-weary and sleep-deprived charges. First up, the Dragons took on one of the tournament favourites, Singapore Cricket Club, and with little regard for their own or their opponents’ safety battled to a 0-0 draw. Sudden death

penalties saw heroics from ‘keeper Richard Young and composure from Luca Merlone, and we were through.

Next, Ravi breathed sincerity and courage into his Knights players who responded with a sevens master class, two goals from the irrepressible Wakey taking them comfortably through. The Royals were not so lucky, and despite Trayfs’ benevolence in giving everyone a run-out, the local opposition was quicker, stronger and younger, to the tune of 6-0.

Method and discipline – come on, this is a football tour! Sunday got hotter, heads got heavier and the poolside at RBSC Polo Club beckoned. The Dragons and Knights bowed out in their respective quarter-finals, and we decided to relax and enjoy the afternoon’s finals and the free refreshments (courtesy of Chang beer). We wrapped up with dinner at “Little Italy”, after which everyone made a point of not following Graham Archer back to the hotel via Ormskirk. After all, we had a better offer, a party with our RBSC friends in a swish club on Soy 63. They even had a comfy sofa for Smithy to sleep on.

We may not have touring down to a fine art yet – but this was certainly close. A big thanks go to RBSC for making us welcome as always and putting on a great tournament. Smithy’s logistics were impeccable and Goughie’s add-ons were sensational (respect due to Anthi also). Captains Nainani, Sujani and Trayford led with distinction and on the playing side Luca, Antonio, Wakey, Richard and Mally were stand-outs all weekend. Finally, recognition goes to former KCC stalwarts Hadcroft, Dave McCulloch and Steve Baldock who flew thousands of miles just to join the tour. As Sun Tzu said (probably): “On a KCC football section tour there are only winners.”

“M”



Dragons Repel Knights in KCC Derby

Late January saw the KCC Dragons and KCC Knights face to face for the second time in the Yau Yee First Division, with the Knights looking to improve on their 4-0 defeat in the earlier fixture.

Both teams came into the match on the back of defeats the previous weekend. The Knights had lost 6-0 to the League leaders, Club Albion – a result that flattered the HKFC side, but which left the Knights at the foot of the table as fellow strugglers Swiss XI beat the German All Stars 4-1. Meanwhile, the Dragons warmed up for the KCC derby with a five-goal thriller against 816, finally going down 3-2 to one of the Yau Yee's best organised sides.

Despite fielding almost a first-choice line-up for the derby, the Dragons were subdued for much of the first half, the Knights working hard in defence and midfield to limit the Dragons' chances. When the Dragons did penetrate, 'keeper Howard Leung was in fine form – although he could do nothing to stop a smart header by Sean Hurley that saw the Dragons take a 1-0 lead just before half-time.

Following coach Hernan's pep-talk, the Knights came out stronger in the second half, with Emmanuel and Matt Chow tight in midfield and Sennachi looking to open up the Dragons back line. But although the Knights kept the pressure on, they were unable to find a cutting edge, and as they tired, Paul Crompton administered the coup de grace shortly before the final whistle to give the Dragons a 2-0 win and keep up the push for a top three finish.

The Knights are improving, as reflected by the score-line when compared to the previous derby match. Adrian Geaves and Noah Ward give the defence determination and stability and the midfield is hardworking and can create openings. Vikan, however, too often cuts a lonely figure upfront, and the Knights need a regular partner for him to create more problems for opposing defences and share the goal-scoring responsibility. The Dragons continue to show flair and enterprise, but have yet to put together a good string of results. For both teams, the outcome of the season will depend on results against the teams immediately above them. The next few matches hold the key.

'Jonny Mac'



Yau Yee League Division One – 6 February 2010

| | P | W | D | L | F | A | GD | PTS |
|------------------|----|----|---|----|----|----|-----|-----|
| Club Albion | 16 | 13 | 3 | 0 | 51 | 14 | 37 | 42 |
| Club Wanderers | 16 | 13 | 1 | 2 | 49 | 15 | 34 | 40 |
| USRC | 16 | 10 | 2 | 4 | 26 | 18 | 8 | 32 |
| 816 | 16 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 25 | 19 | 6 | 28 |
| KCC Dragons | 15 | 9 | 0 | 6 | 34 | 21 | 13 | 27 |
| Club Colts | 16 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 29 | 18 | 11 | 27 |
| German All Stars | 16 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 33 | 41 | -8 | 20 |
| HKDC Mobsters | 16 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 17 | 36 | -19 | 17 |
| Antonhill | 16 | 3 | 3 | 10 | 20 | 38 | -18 | 12 |
| Swiss XI | 15 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 16 | 31 | -15 | 9 |
| HKDC Squadron | 15 | 3 | 0 | 12 | 14 | 39 | -25 | 9 |
| KCC Knights | 15 | 2 | 1 | 12 | 18 | 42 | -24 | 7 |

Junior Football – 1998s Come Close Again

Probably the most talented team among the KCC Juniors are the 1998s – yet, despite some exquisite performances in their HK Junior Football League age group, they still find it difficult to make the breakthrough to winning the regular 7-a-side tournaments.

Goals are rarely a problem for the team – Mac, Jay Cooke, Sam Down and Rahul all score regularly – and Jake Smith and Ollie Laxton are so composed at the back that ‘keeper Adrian Gough is frequently a spectator for much of the



Sahil



Sam



Finn



1999s Plate Runners Up



Emily in Girls Friendly against Sai Kung Sharks

were always in the match and showed that at their best they can compete even against one of the 1997 League’s top teams.

Earlier in the year, the KCC 1996s had beaten their HK Football Academy rivals 3-2 and were hoping to do a double that would take them to second in the 1996 League. But against a 10-man Academy line-up, the KCC team was unable to muster a credible threat, and slipped to a 2-0 defeat, leaving them still in the “big four” of the league but with dwindling prospects of silverware. Nonetheless, this team has improved considerably over the last season, and hopefully this is a good indicator for the 1997s’ prospects for next year as they build on the experience of their first season in an 11-a-side league.

‘Jonny Mac’

match. The recent 1998s February HKJ-FL tournament was a prime example, as they ripped through their four-team group and demolished their quarter-final opponents 4-0 only to succumb in the Cup semis. Next year they will be on the 11-a-side stage, and this may suit their talents more than the very small 7-a-side pitches that they play on in the King’s Park tournaments.

The 1997s have found the transition to 11-a-side tricky, and coach Ravi Punjabi has rarely been able to field his best side. But the recent return match against HK Football Academy, who had beaten KCC 6-0 in their earlier match showed how well the team can play when the options are available. With Chris Hale and Jake Smith anchoring the defence,

Krishna and Mac were able to push on and create chances for Pritham Bahra and Alex Tonks to trouble the Academy defence. In the end, the HKFA won 2-0 thanks to an outstanding header and a penalty, but KCC



Kyle



Seb in 2000s Tournament



Jake, 1998