

Sri Chinmoy's Comments to the UN Meditation-Flames Soccer Team after Their Loss to the Russian Team, 10 October 1976

Sri Chinmoy: Dear ones, I am sure you have placed the results at the Feet of the Supreme, devotedly, if not cheerfully. The day will come when you will all place the results at the Feet of the Supreme. Most of you have done it. I am grateful to you, grateful to you, grateful to you.

In regard to the game, I wish to say those people are not really better players than you are, but they have more team spirit and more combination power and therefore, they have won. From the human point of view, by becoming one with you I am sad; but from the divine point of view I am not sad, for this is the experience the Supreme wants you to have.

On the physical plane you are being criticised. I do not want to have enemies! In your mind and heart some of you say, "Criticise, criticise! That is what we want!" But we know that the moment criticism comes, in our heart unfortunately a rebellious attitude comes to the fore. I am offering you only mere suggestions, not criticisms.

To each of you, first of all, I wish to say that I am sure all of you happily heard what I told you a few days ago: short and quick kicks. Now I am telling you exactly the same thing. Some of you have forgotten. In the spiritual life you forget what I say, and in the sports life you also forget what I say. Right now I cannot play because I am an old man, but thirty years ago, I am not bragging, but I was excellent player. I am speaking to you from my own experience in the sports world as well as my personal experience. I was captain and team leader. I am also speaking to you from my spiritual experience and my identification-ness. On your part you have to remember what I say about the spiritual life as well as the sports life.

The first thing is that you are losing because you do not keep the ball near their box. You do not have to think of scoring at all. When you kick hard, they get a kind of fear. They do not know that you are aiming at the goal. The losers in the first half should make every possible effort to keep half of the field. But after the first four minutes you were shouting and screaming. By keeping the ball on their half, you would immediately have created in them a kind of fear, even though you were not planning to kick the ball into their goal. The ball must remain on their side. Afterwards when you continue, from time to time you may get some easy goals. But you could not do it, because most of you are not scorers.

If you want to be good players, really good players, you have to develop both legs. Your right leg may not be as good as your left. One Russian was passing like anything! He was a clever fellow. He could kick with the left, but in order to fool you people he was pretending he could not kick with the right, and you thought he could not kick with the right.

When it is a matter of (left) (...) as a corner kick, some penalty kick, the scorer must remain there. Always try to hit the ball from the forehead (forward?). The first runner went from one corner and then again he kicked. Immediately you should have thought absolutely 4, 5, 6—he is an excellent player.

The referee was excellent, but he was partial to us. He was always giving fouls to those people. Most of the time he was impartial, but when he was partial he really was partial to us.

Good football players do not shout and scream. When I became 16 or 17... In your case you had admirers: your spiritual brothers and sisters. But when you shout and scream, your attention goes away. Use your brain, use your eyes, but not your tongue. Your eyes and legs must go together.

You should be aware when the boys near you find it difficult to go around. Bend down flat to the ground and kick. That kick you should learn. When you dribble, try to be quick. Right out and right in they must act. Left in and left centre go in, go to the right. Sometimes try to bring the ball in the centre. Only when there is no other way, dribble, go out and kick. When you kick, the ball is dead. Do not kick the ball this way and that. Geometry you can study. When you run one hundred metres this way, they lose a fraction of a second. Do not kick this way; kick forward. When you (...), the ball is dead. The back should develop the power to kick the ball as hard as possible.

The goalkeeper—how many times he creates problems! Take the ball—here are the sidelines, somebody is free—give it to him. Your goal is the side. Do not waste your time at least for this side if you cannot go straight. You are lacking wisdom. The goalkeeper should develop the kick. Try to develop kick-power. The back and the forward should develop long kick, short kick, dribbling, everything, everything! The full back should develop a 40-50 metre kick.

At least five times I have watched you knocking heads. Are you playing or fighting? How can this happen? Are you using your eyes? It looks unpleasing. Some of you are running clumsily. Try to have two balls. From here you run, two groups—go like this, go straight, then go there.

When you run 10 metres and 20 metres, never bend this way for 10 metres. When you run 100 metres, take long strides. You need speed and stamina. Your steps have to be calculated. When you bend, why take (?) stop? The sooner you get up—but here you do not have the problem, so when you are running, do not bend. Keep your upper portion a little bent, not straight. Dhruvha was running bent and his legs were going from side to side. Do not bend down.

One thing I was very happy about was that they did not have any intent to kick you. Only one fellow toward the end of the game was undivine. All the rest were divine! One fault B made: he could not control his speed. I am very proud of you, very proud.

For the first goal I wish to blame the goalkeeper fifty per cent. But for the second goal the goalkeeper is one hundred per cent to blame. The third goal was dangerous; I do not blame him at all. It was ten per cent the goalkeeper's fault. For the fourth goal I wish to blame the goalkeeper thirty per cent. But the second goal was absolutely absurd.

People use the eyes and legs together. Do not think first. Use your eyes and then kick. Both have to be together. You have seen the person a few seconds earlier, then while you are kicking you never see the goal. (?) runs very fast and plays well, but his timing was not (?).

For each one I can say something, but if you listen to me I will advise you more. I will watch you a few times more if you listen to me. In the spiritual life you do not listen, but if you do not listen to me now, I will not watch you. If you listen to me, you will not lose. You have to develop all your capacities. There are many things you do not do.

When I started to play, I was hopeless. The coach came from Germany to teach us. Once he gave me a photograph and wrote: "To Chinmoy, who gave me much trouble and much love." I could not change my style.

Right now you have taken up football seriously. There quite a few things you must learn. If you do not have the willingness, you can play the same way for many, many years. But if you have the willingness you can go very, very fast.

Others may not be as clean. Their way of talking may be foul. Their consciousness may not be good. While playing, their consciousness is not good. You have to be tactful and clever. Use your mental mathematics!

If someone is making fouls and he has to leave, first let him feel remorse and then, after two or three minutes, his anger will go away. But if you send him out of the game right away, frustration comes in and then, after frustration, anger-bullet-power. Then he curses the person and waits for the opportunity (to ... him). First he curses the person who asks him to leave, and then he will curse his replacement. He will not have a sympathetic heart. This is the human tendency. Frustration has tremendous power. That bullet will enter, and he will try to find fault with others.

All of you try to play without talking. Good players do not talk.

Now, do you have any questions to ask? Otherwise, do what I am saying.

Y: Are there any more players you want us to invite to join us?

Sri Chinmoy: I am so glad you asked me. You can take K and H. If you feel they are not good players and there are some who are better, I am not comparing; I am saying they are not bad. When you are playing with people outside our Centre, then get good players. But only for playing here, anyone can join. You are lucky you were not born in my time and in my country and in my (?). We are poor people, but we worked very hard. We practised five days a week—me, sometimes twice a day or more. If you do not practise, you get rusty. If you do not play regularly, you are doing an injustice to those who play regularly. Please practise five days a week. The first 15 or 20 minutes only pay attention to difficulties you have. That way you can learn. Whenever possible, try to keep a good team, even if the opponents are weak. In that way you will be practising the combinations and the spirit. Make one team very strong.

S: I would like to take the best players from every Centre, the best 11 from every Centre. What can I tell the rest?

Sri Chinmoy: Now the thing is that everyone wants to play. If they wish to play, people who are really bad should play only people who are really bad—third class with third class. One bad player can ruin the whole team. There should be first, second and third teams, and a fourth if necessary. I used to be captain of the first team. The third and the fourth teams should play together and the first and the second teams should play together. Sometimes, occasionally, out of compassion, the first team will play the third team. That way the good players will go up, up, up and the bad players will also go up. From the second group if someone makes tremendous progress, he can go to the first group. If there are many members, have four groups.

Each group should have 15, so that there will be substitutes—specially the first group. There should be two goalies in the first group. Rupantar is a very good player.

Kicking is necessary. Never show the goal. Find somebody on the side. It is your duty—you have to think of the goalkeeper. Somebody is guarding. You have to think of each other, and how you can make it easy for each other. The person who is kicking should get the utmost support. The person who is going to receive is more responsible.

Practise, practise, practise! Your opponent is all the time thinking of you. Then only in the morning I will go there, S will go there, C will go there. Sanatan is also very good. Sanatan can also practise with the first group. But please select players from each Centre.

I am so glad you all shook hands with them!

S: Afterwards I was talking to the Russians and they were very friendly. They were giving us some pointers.

Sri Chinmoy: They are more mature, more controlled.

Fast, quick for the follow-up players. It is a waste of time, but each should learn to use the eyes with the legs. Most of you can use both legs. If you cannot, you have to practise. When you go to the left goal, you think of the right leg.

Some people are useless! Practise—otherwise football is not meant for you. Every Sunday and Saturday practise, twice and sometimes three times. Use mental mathematics; use your vision and speed. Think of the goal ahead, not sideways. Just because someone is obstructing him, a player is trying to go with the ball, but he is one-pointed; his eyes are focused here.

Please do not take this as criticism; only if you want to make progress, listen.