

It took just 20 minutes for the great Wiel Coerver to recognise the potential of what he saw in front of him. The famed Dutch coach, who had guided Feyenoord to victory over Tottenham in the 1974 UEFA Cup final, was sat in his office at the Qatar FA studying a video sent to him in the post from Holland. It outlined a new programme using Coerver's own methods of how to coach footballers and the sender was a 29-year-old part-time player and aspiring coach from Beugen by the name of Rene Meulenstein.



Highly-rated coach: But how will Rene Meulenstein fare as a manager during his time at Craven Cottage?

Perhaps appreciating his audacity, as well as confidence and an eye for detail, Coerver offered Meulenstein a job.

There in Qatar Meulenstein honed his skills, applying the Coerver Method with the ideal that 'skill could not only be inherent but could be passed on in a comprehensive, academic way'.

Upon that mantra he forged a reputation for developing players' techniques that led him to Brondby, Manchester United, Al-Gharafa, Al-Sadd and all too briefly Anzhi Makhachkala.

Twenty years on, Meulenstein has been given the platform he craved, coaching a Premier League side of his own. Yet there is no doubt Fulham could be a skills test too far — even for the man hailed by Sir Alex Ferguson as 'a magnificent coach'.



Difficult circumstances: Martin Jol (left) has been sacked, leaving Meulenstein fighting for survival

'It's a massive challenge,' said Meulenstein. 'But when you're faced with a challenge like this it comes down to making sure you get the basic things right.

'You need to stay mentally strong and make sure the fans are getting behind the team.

'I am confident because of the sort of experiences I've had for so many years at Manchester United. I know what is required at the top end of the Premier League.

'This is a different challenge with different pressure. This is making sure you realise the need to keep three teams below you.'



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Respected: Rene Meulenstein (second left) was an important coach under Sir Alex Ferguson at Old Trafford

On the evidence of Saturday's meek surrender to West Ham, that will be no mean feat.

Ultimately, Meulenstein left United as David Moyes wanted to be more hands on in training. But he has inspired many.

Although he has a penchant for PowerPoint presentations decorated with arrows, he transformed United's academy where his youngest son, Melle, still plays.

His coaching vision helped create the world-renowned Aspire Academy in Qatar and United's Carrington training ground complex.

His one-to-one sessions helped improve the techniques of Cristiano Ronaldo, Ruud van Nistelrooy, Danny Welbeck and Robin van Persie. He was seen as a 'go to' character for many players at United, more than Ferguson's assistant Mike Phelan.



Experienced: Robin van Persie (left) and Cristiano Ronaldo both thrived with Rene Meulenstein's coaching



Celebrated: Ruud van Nistelrooy, formerly of Manchester United, was another to develop under the coach



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Influential: Rene Meulensteen was inspired by the philosophy of celebrated coach Wiel Coerver

His sense of humour made it easy; assured belief in his own coaching prompted confident advice. Yet the man-management of under-performers was more Ferguson's domain.

Per Nielsen, a former Brøndby player, criticised Meulensteen's management techniques at the Danish club claiming he painted the club hallway green instead of yellow to promote calmness and jumped in front of them shouting 'Boo!' while they juggled a ball to prepare them for crowd abuse.

He also described a team talk where Meulensteen asked them to imagine what type of animals they were before taking the field.

He likes a beer and can take a joke; indeed on United's tour of the USA in 2011, staff at Seattle Sounders struggled to master the spelling of his name until he realised they had been advised daily by the mischievous Ferguson and Phelan culminating in their favourite moniker 'RONNY MELENSTEIN' being plastered above his locker.



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Hard at work: Rene Meulensteen watched Fulham's Under-21 against Everton's on Monday night



Untested: It remains unclear how good a manager Fulham's Rene Meulensteen actually is

Meulensteen, who on Monday appointed former Manchester United academy coach Jonathan Hill to work with him, advocates fun is part of the game.

But his confidence will be sorely tested over the next few months.

'In combat situations, 75 per cent of it is mental,' he once said.

'It's a way of developing your mindset and I'm a firm believer that you don't just train your physical attributes, you're training the mental attributes too.'

The question is whether Meulensteen can now apply his own mind to overcome the matter of relegation as a manager.

WHAT WILL THE NEW MAN BRING?

Meulensteen is rooted in Dutch football traditions and was the technical coach at Manchester United. He said: 'I was appointed by Alex Ferguson because I was a Coerver coach. He and I feel the Coerver Method is the top way of teaching technical skills.'

WHAT'S THE COERVER METHOD?

A system devised by Dutchman Wiel Coerver, who led Feyenoord to UEFA Cup glory over Tottenham in 1974. He believed players did not have to be born with talent and could have skills coached into them.

DOES IT WORK?

It is most effective coaching young players but has been used with good results at Real Madrid, Bayern Munich and Arsenal.

WILL FULHAM CHANGE STYLE?

Not necessarily. Coerver's method is less about tactics and more about improving technical play.

BUT WILL IT IMPROVE RESULTS?

Things should get better but the Coerver curriculum 'values winning, but not more than character and performance'. Not quite what you want to hear in a relegation scrap.

To read the full article visit <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/football/article-2517081/Fulhams-new-manager-Rene-Meulensteen-used-shout-boo-players.html#ixzz2mPnxUXg4>