

Rams hit bull's eye

Woodlands introduce archery session to help players focus

By Tan Kim Han

WHAT do you do when you want your team to focus on their target?

Easy. Teach them archery.

S-League football club Woodlands Wellington have used the session with bow and arrows to help the players focus both mentally and psychologically.

Written on the target boards about 10m away are names or pictures of their rivals with the messages: "Player X, RIP", or "Player Y, go to hell".

Woodlands, who have slipped from the top to fourth place, claim that the archery exercise helped them beat Singapore Armed Forces FC 1-0 last week.

It was their first victory after eight league and cup outings.

Before that, Woodlands had lost to Tampines Rovers (1-4), Young Lions (1-2), Home United (0-2), Albirex Niigata (0-2) and Geylang United (2-3, 1-2), and drew 1-1 against Tanjong Pagar in the S-League and Singapore Cup.

Player-coach Simon Clark believes that the archery sessions conducted by Focus Adventure, an outdoor activities facilitator, can benefit his team.

He said: "Football is as much mental as it is tactical and physical. Some players do well for one game but maybe not as well when it comes to the next three games.

"Maybe because many of them are chasing the title for the first time."

Early this year, the team spent three days in Bintan without a ball as the objectives were vision-setting and team-building.

Bonding activities such as paintball and rafting expeditions took place.

The camaraderie forged contributed to the Rams' blistering start to the season where they led the table for the first half of the season before their recent slump.

Said Focus consultant Andrew Chua: "We also employed neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). Basically, it means the words you use will become your thoughts which will later become your action."

NLP, termed by some as "brainwashing", is a mind-training technique that aims to help personal development.

Added Chua: "This is where we get them to say phrases like "We can do it" and "champions" as part of their vocabulary.

"Now we are using archery because they have specific targets to achieve in their remaining nine games."

As such, nine target boards are used where players pen their objectives or write about their opponents.

For defender Azmi Mahamud, who scored the winner against Singapore Armed Forces FC last week, the archery session got his adrenaline flowing.

He said: "After going through the programme, it makes you want to win."

Added Clark: "This is a big thing now in England and I think it will be here, too."

So the next time you visit the Woodlands Stadium, don't be surprised to see the Rams plucking arrows instead of kicking footballs.

● In the S-League, struggling Geylang United drew 1-1 against Albirex Niigata at the Jurong East Stadium last night.

The Eagles conceded an equaliser from Albirex defender Eiichiro Ozaki's 83rd-minute free kick.

Geylang took the lead in the 44th minute through 18-year-old midfielder Fazrul Nawaz.

Albirex and Geylang remain sixth and seventh respectively after the draw.

