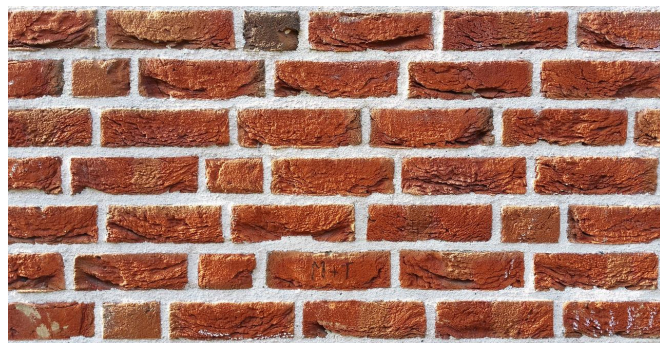


Unbeatable Defences



1) Discussion

- a) Who are some of your favourite defenders?
 - b) Can you think of any teams that have a very good defence, either now or in football history?
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2) Vocabulary

a) Match the vocabulary to the definition.

1) Stewardship (noun)

2) Miserly (adjective)

3) Pragmatism (noun)

4) Indomitable (adjective)

5) Nous (noun)

6) Unwavering (adjective)

7) To Marshall (verb)

a) Unable to be defeated; unconquerable.

b) Taking care of something, like the environment or resources, responsibly.

c) Dealing with things practically and realistically, rather than based on theories or ideals.

d) To organize or arrange things in a systematic or orderly way.

e) Being very reluctant to give something away; very stingy or frugal.

f) Good sense or practical intelligence, often used to describe someone's understanding or wisdom.

g) Firm and steady, not changing or faltering in belief or determination.



b) Complete the sentences with the vocabulary from exercise 2a.

Stewardship

Miserly

Pragmatism

Indomitable

Nous

Unwavering

To Marshall

- 1) Antonio Conte's _____ has won him many trophies over the years.
- 2) Xavi's onfield tactical _____ was crucial for the team.
- 3) Sir Alex Ferguson's _____ of Manchester United made them one of the biggest clubs in the world.
- 4) Cristiano Ronaldo's _____ commitment to training and performance has made him one of the greatest footballers of all time.
- 5) Virgil van Djik has _____ Liverpool's defence since he signed in 2018.
- 6) During the 2003-2004 season, Arsenal seemed _____, going the entire league season without losing a game.
- 7) The key to winning the title was their _____ defence, with the team only conceding 18 goals in the whole season.



3) Quick Read - Read the article quickly and answer the question.

a) Which teams are mentioned in the article?

Brick Walls

In the realm of football, where attack often steals the limelight, a formidable defence can be the cornerstone of success. Throughout history, several teams have showcased defensive mastery, earning them accolades, trophies, and a place in football folklore.

The early 1990s saw AC Milan under the stewardship of Arrigo Sacchi, boasting a defence famously dubbed the "Immortals." Led by the imperious Franco Baresi and Paolo Maldini, this unit conceded a miserly 15 goals in the 1991-92 Serie A season, a league record. Their solidity propelled Milan to consecutive European Cup triumphs in 1989 and 1990.

Fast forward to Chelsea's 2004-2005 season under José Mourinho, where they conceded a mere 15 goals in the Premier League. Anchored by the imposing presence of Petr Cech in goal, John Terry and Ricardo Carvalho at centre-back, and Claude Makélélé sitting in front of the back 4, the Blues clinched the league title, epitomising Mourinho's defensive pragmatism.

Greece's unlikely triumph at Euro 2004 showcased the power of resolute defending. Led by coach Otto Rehhagel, Greece conceded just four goals en route to lifting the trophy. Players like Traianos Dellas and Antonios Nikopolidis formed an indomitable defensive wall, stifling opponents with disciplined organisation and unwavering commitment.

AC Milan's renaissance under Carlo Ancelotti in the early 2000s saw them conquer Europe once again. With Alessandro Nesta and Jaap Stam marshalling the defence alongside Maldini and Cafu as full-backs, Milan conceded only 20 goals in the 2003-2004 Serie A season, securing the Scudetto and Champions League glory in 2003.



Italy's triumph at the 2006 FIFA World Cup was built on a foundation of defensive resilience. Led by Fabio Cannavaro alongside Marco Materazzi with Gianluigi Buffon in goal, the Azzurri conceded just two goals in seven games. Their tactical discipline and unwavering defensive solidity paved the way for Italy's fourth World Cup triumph.

What set these defences apart was not just individual talent but a collective understanding, discipline, and tactical nous. From Serie A to international tournaments, these teams showcased the art of defending at its finest, etching their names into footballing history as bastions of defensive excellence.

4) Discussion

- a) What are your thoughts on the article? Which defence do you think was the best?
- b) Which do you think is more important, a good defence or a good attack?
- c) Do you think that defending has gotten worse in recent years?
- d) If you could sign one defender in the world for your favourite team, who would you sign?

