

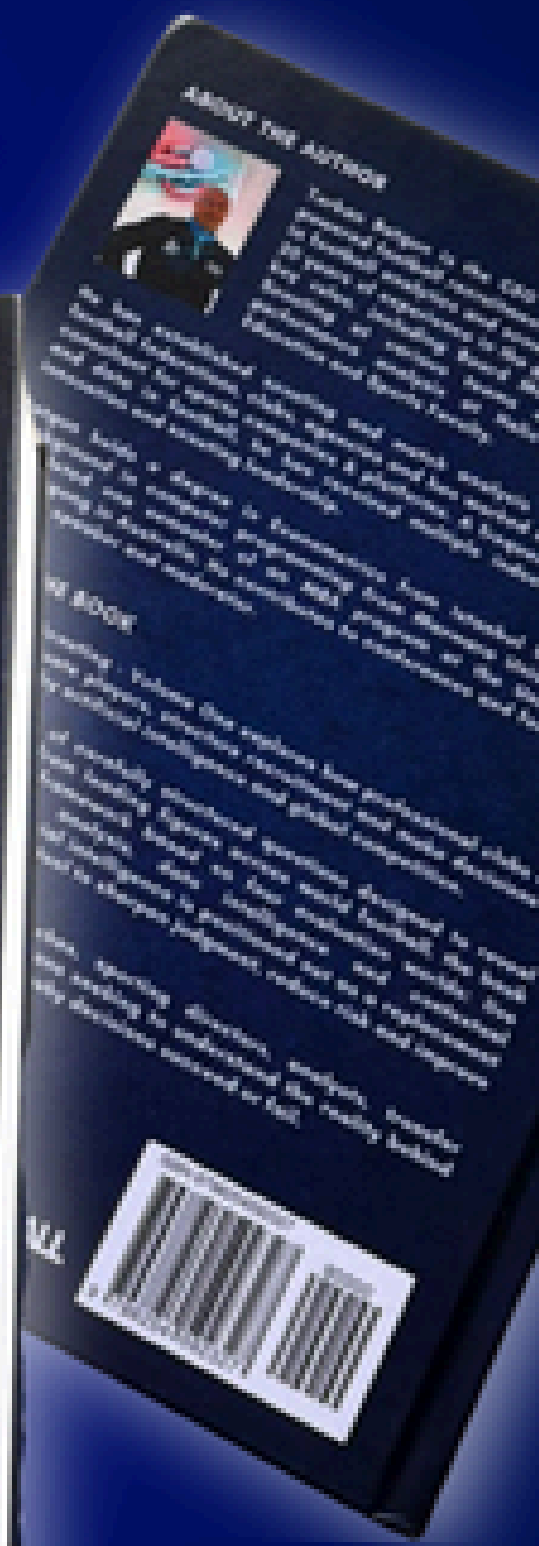
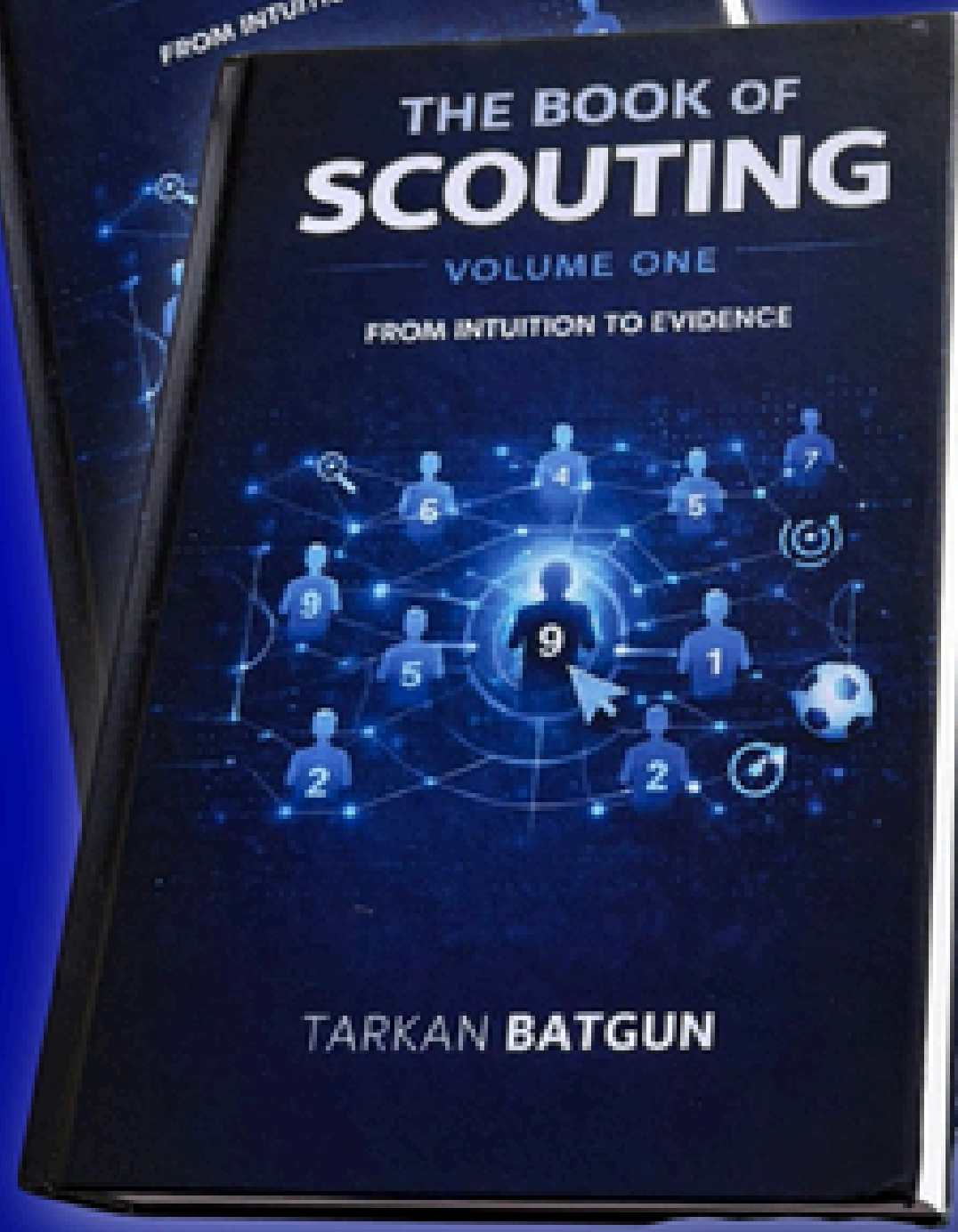
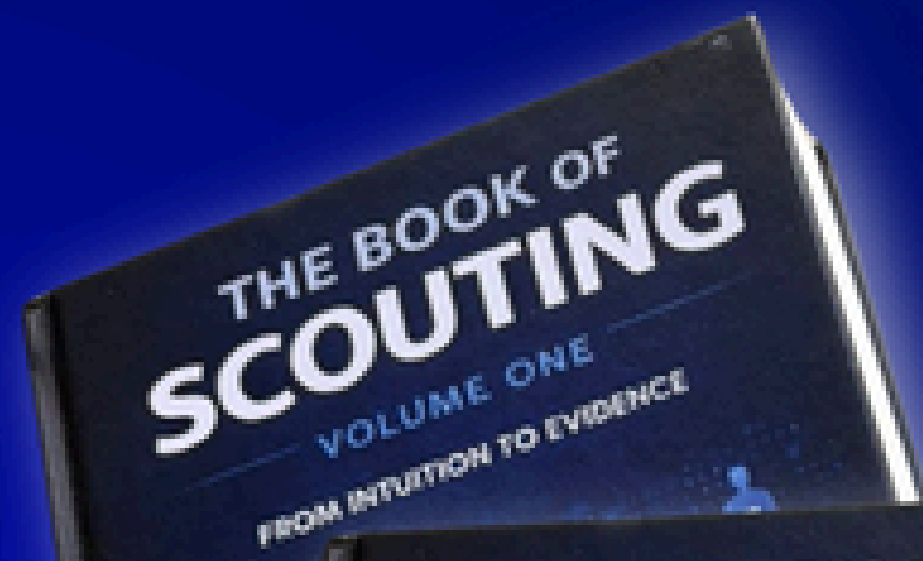
THE BOOK OF SCOUTING

VOLUME ONE

FROM INTUITION TO EVIDENCE

TARKAN BATGUN

Available in Amazon



THE BOOK OF SCOUTING

SCOPE AND CONTENT

Part I – The Foundations of Scouting

1. What Scouting Really Is
2. The Four Worlds of Football Evaluation 1
3. Context: The Invisible Engine Behind Performance 2
4. The Human Side of Talent
5. The Myth of Objectivity

PART II – Seeing the Game Differently

6. Behaviours Over Actions
7. Tempo, Space, Fitness and Decision Windows
8. Role-Based Scouting
9. Pattern Recognition and Tactical Intelligence

Part III – The Structure Around Scouting

10. The Scouting, Data and AI Alliance
11. Youth Development and the Coming Revolution
12. Building Pathways
13. The Scout's Mindset
14. The Scout's Environment
15. Scouting in Player Agencies
16. Decision-Making: The Final 10% That Controls 90% of Outcomes

Part IV – The Future of Scouting

18. The Loan Department: Football's Most Ignored Revenue Engine
19. Scouting Under Constraints
20. Succession Planning
21. Leadership in Modern Scouting

Part V – Worldwide Contributors

22. Owners and Executive Leaders
23. Sporting and Football Directors
24. Chief Scouts
25. Coaches
26. Player Agents
27. International Media

Appendix

- Appendix I** – Structure of a Modern Scouting Department and Decision Frameworks
- Appendix II** – Advanced Models: AI, Pattern Intelligence and Future Systems
- Appendix III** – Practical Checklists and Evaluation Templates
- Appendix IV** – Player Pathway and Loan Toolkit
- Appendix V** – Scouting Report Templates
- Appendix VI** – Modern Role Profiles in Professional Scouting
- Appendix VII** – Decision Architecture, Integrity and Department Performance

Why This Book Exists

I never planned to write a book. People often assume this was about documenting a personal journey or leaving a legacy.

The truth is simpler. Football is losing clarity. Clubs are drowning in noise. Agents increasingly dominate conversations and technology is advancing faster than understanding.

Scouting, the craft meant to protect a club's future, is too often left to emotion, politics, or what I call "Destinism".

Destinism is accidental decision-making disguised as intuition. It is the belief that feeling replaces structure and that confidence replaces truth.

Across my years in football, from building video workflows in Australia to directing recruitment under pressure, developing departments, managing data projects and refining methodology, one principle has never changed. Football rewards structure and football punishes chaos.

I have seen modest clubs succeed through discipline and wealthy clubs fail through emotion. I have seen unknown youngsters become elite players because someone understood behaviour and expensive signings collapse because nobody understood context.

This book was born from those realities. It is not theory. It is not opinion. It is not motivation. It is structure, the element most often missing in modern scouting.

Inside these pages are methods refined through experience, frameworks built through necessity, mistakes that cost time, money and emotional energy, lessons learned under pressure and truths the industry often avoids.

You will not find gossip or exaggeration here. You will find clarity.

Because scouting is not simply watching players. Scouting is understanding human behaviour inside a football context. The future belongs to those who see clearly.

I wrote this book for the scout who wants discipline, the coach who wants alignment, the sporting director who wants structure, the board member who wants sustainability, the analyst who wants meaning, the student who dreams of entering football and the clubs that want to move from survival to strategy.

If one scout becomes more disciplined, if one club avoids a Destinism transfer, if one young player is evaluated fairly, or if one reader begins to see football with deeper clarity, then this book has done its job.

Welcome to The Book of Scouting - Volume One.

Not a manual. Not a textbook. A way of seeing.

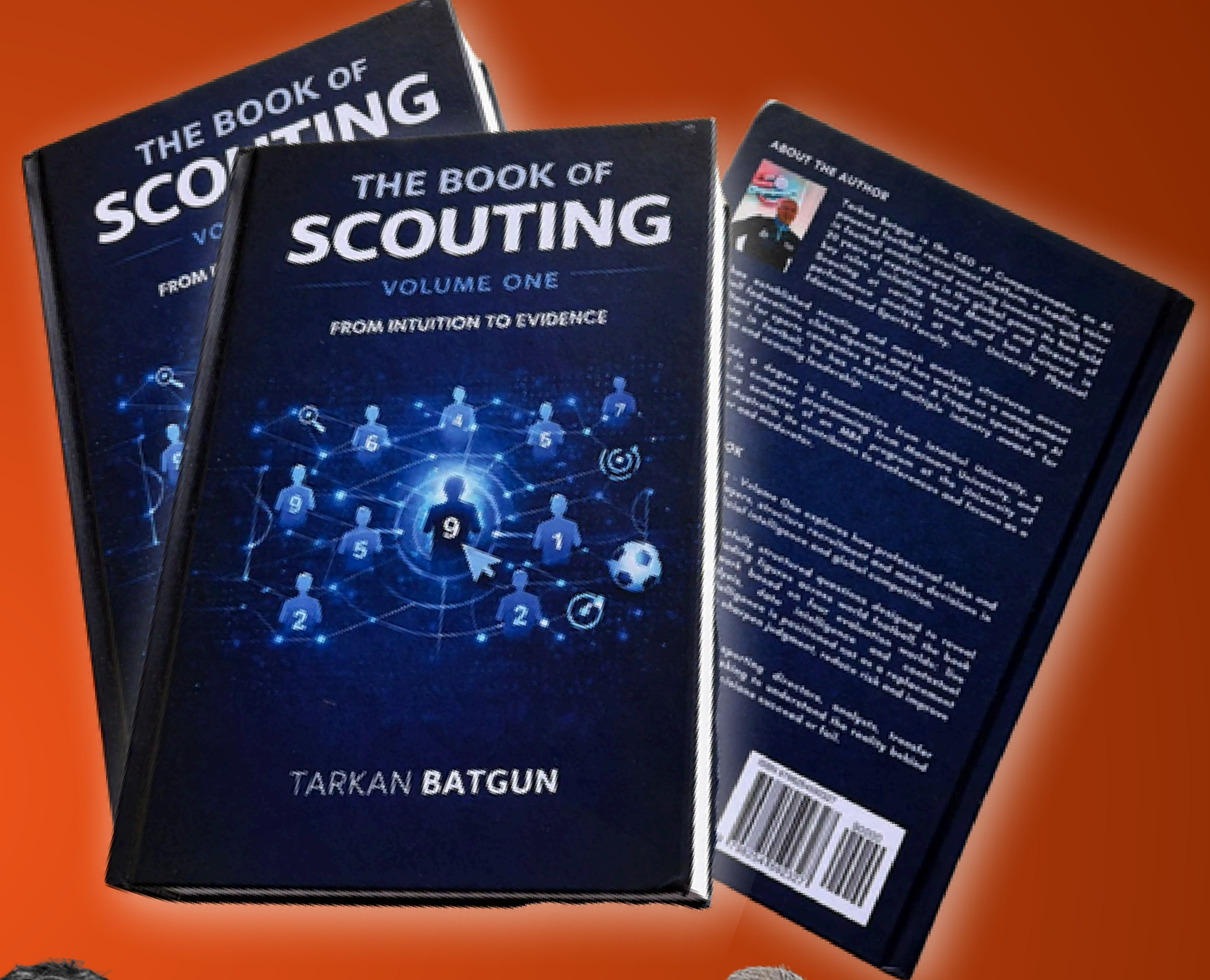
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Key Insights from Book Contributors
"Owners & Executive Leaders"



Isitan Gun
Former Chairman
Fortuna Sittard
(The Netherlands)

"Data and contextual scouting play a critical role in transfers"



Matteo Campodonico
Former Co-Founder & CEO
Wyscout
(Italy)

"Having a good eye no longer enough in scouting"



Philip Jackson
Former Managing Director
Sportstec
(Australia)

"The critical skill in analysis is the ability to identify what actually matters"



Andrea Radrizzani
Former Chairman
Leeds United
(United Kingdom)

"Long-term success starts at home"

Part I – The Foundations of Scouting

“Calm decisions are built before pressure arrives.”

Tarkan Batgun

Football scouting is often misunderstood because people begin at the wrong place: actions, highlights and outcomes. This part resets the conversation. It defines what scouting truly is, what it is not and why context, behaviour, bias and human reality sit at the centre of every correct evaluation. Before we can talk about tools, technology, or systems, we must first understand thinking, perception and truth.

1. What Scouting Really Is

A clear definition of scouting beyond myths, buzzwords and outdated assumptions

Scouting is widely misunderstood because it is often reduced to surface-level acts. It is not simply watching football, not judging talent in isolation and certainly not falling in love with moments.

At its core, scouting is the disciplined act of understanding human behaviour within football context and translating that understanding into accurate, defensible decisions.

This chapter traces how scouting evolved from instinct-driven judgment toward disciplined, structured decision-making

1.1 From Storytelling to Structure

When I first entered football, scouting resembled storytelling more than professional analysis.

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, video access was limited, data barely existed and reports were driven by emotion rather than evidence. Decisions were instinct-led, a single scout often covered entire regions, context was largely ignored and one good match could reshape an entire transfer plan. Some scouts became “legends” not because they were exceptional, but because they operated in a world without information. Scarcity created false heroes.

Clubs treated VHS tapes like sacred evidence. If a player looked quick, they were declared fast, even when slow frame rates distorted reality. If a player scored one spectacular goal, they were instantly labelled a natural finisher. If commentators sounded excited, presidents became excited. Perception became reality.

Today, the game exists in layers. Performance is no longer interpreted through a single lens, but through tracking and physical metrics, movement and behavioural signals, role clarity and tactical fit, league translation intelligence, psychological indicators and AI-driven pattern clustering. A modern scout must read these layers simultaneously and yet even with all this sophistication, clubs continue to repeat old mistakes. Tools do not create intelligence. Context, discipline and structure do.

1.2 The False War: “Eye Test vs Data”

Football created a debate that does not actually exist. Some claim that data is killing scouting, while others argue that scouts do not understand numbers. Both of these positions are wrong. There is no war between the eye and data.

1.2.1 What the Eye Sees

The eye test reveals intention. It captures how a player scans the game, positions their body, reacts emotionally, balances courage with fear, communicates with teammates, obeys tactical instruction and maintains mentality discipline.

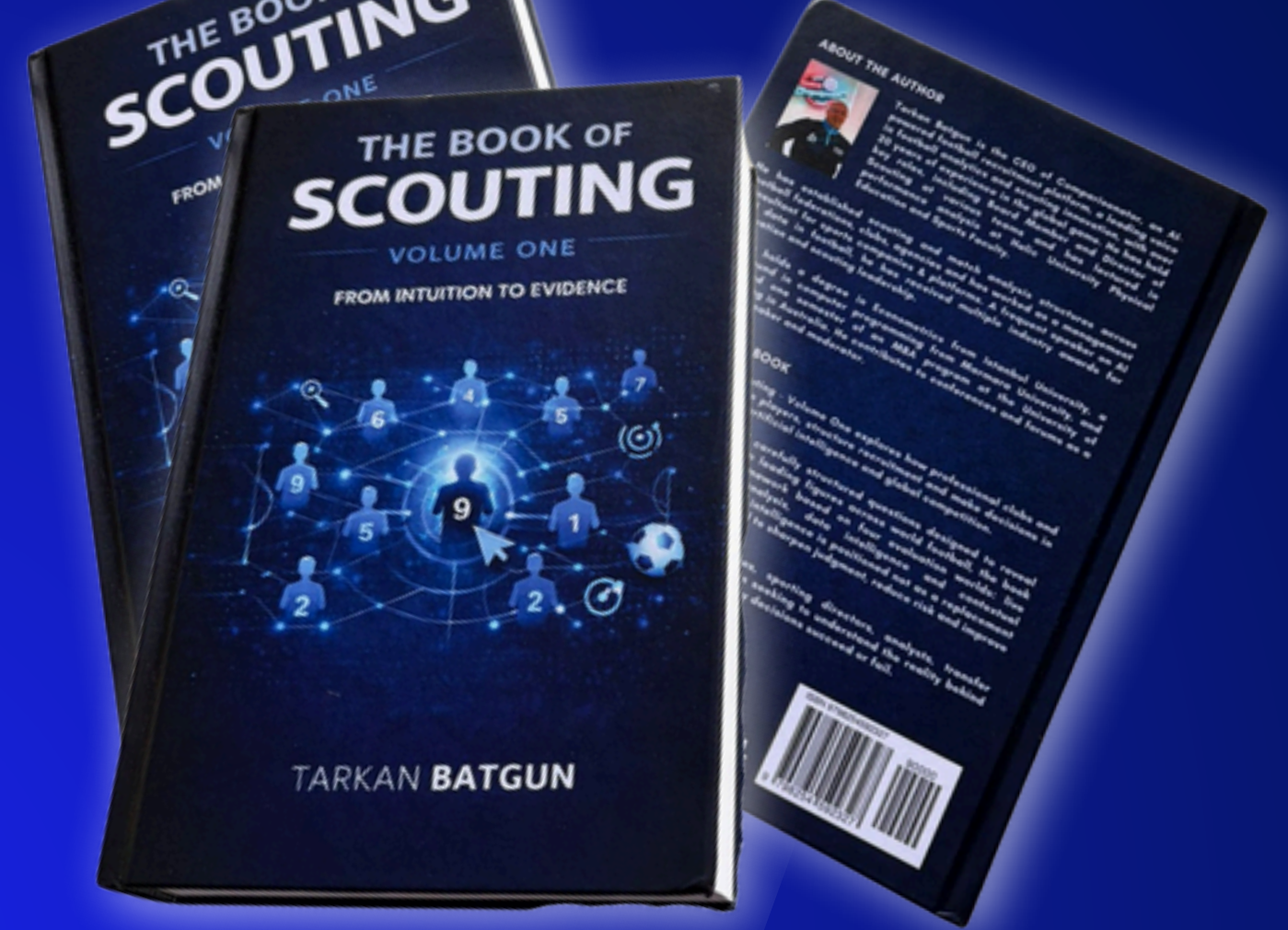
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Key Insights from Book Contributors
"Sporting and Football Directors"



Andre Zanotta
Sporting Director
FC Dallas
(USA)

"Sustainable player development does not happen by accident"



Barry Simmonds
Former Sporting Director
(United Kingdom)

"Strong data supports a positive human judgement"



Dr. Erkut Sogut
Managing Director
DC United
(USA)

"The future belongs to professionals who can operate across disciplines"



Zac Anderson
Chief Operations Officer
Brisbane Roar FC
(Australia)

"A player is not simply "good" or "not good" until you understand the environment"



Ceyhun Kazancı
CEO
Kasımpasa
(Türkiye)

"AI have assumed a central role across all dimensions of football"



Nicola Innocenti
Sporting Director
(Italy)

"Transfer decision-makers need a mindset of continuous learning and humility"



Bruno Costa
Director of International Offices & Relations
CBF
(Brazil)

"In a modern club, recruitment must be integrated with Performance and Player Care"



Dr. Mustafa Eroğut
Sporting Director
(Türkiye)

"If a country wants a football identity, it must invest collectively in the pathway"



Fuat Çapa
Football Director
Yılport Samsunspor
(Türkiye)

"Rationality remains essential but without contextual awareness, it becomes incomplete"



Les Reed
Sporting Director
(United Kingdom)

"Structure and accountability matter but recruitment success is built on teamwork"



Steven Vanharen
Sporting Director
ETO Győr
(Hungary)

"Multi-club collaboration accelerates improvement without forcing uniformity"

1.2.2 What Data Shows

Data reveals pattern. It measures volume, repeatability, efficiency, durability, consistency and how performance holds across different match states.

The eye shows how a player behaves. Data shows how often it matters.

1.2.3 Where Both Fail

When the eye operates without data, evaluation collapses into emotion. When data is used without the eye, interpretation loses meaning and context. True intelligence in scouting emerges only when observation and evidence work together. The future belongs to those capable of integrating observation and evidence into a single, disciplined way of thinking.

1.3 Context: The Oxygen of Scouting

Everything I know about scouting can be reduced to a single principle: a player is a product of their environment. When the environment changes, the player changes with it. Talent does not simply travel unchanged from one context to another. It translates, adapts, survives, or collapses depending on the conditions surrounding it.

Across my career, I have seen dominant attackers disappear as tempo increased, average midfielders become elite inside structured systems, powerful defenders fail in technical leagues and elegant playmakers collapse when placed in chaotic environments. These outcomes were not mysteries of talent, but consequences of context.

Context governs league tempo, spacing, pressing density, physical expectations and tactical responsibility. Without understanding it, evaluation becomes incomplete. The deeper mechanics of context and why it decides success or failure, are explored later in this book.

1.4 Destinism: Football's Most Expensive Disease

"Destinism: accidental decision-making disguised as intuition."

Football operates in an emotional environment. Scouting cannot afford to. Destinism appears when clubs fall in love with players they were never intentionally scouting, react to a single match, chase charisma, allow agents to dictate belief, sign players from highlight packages rather than human observation, follow impulsive decisions driven by senior executives and confuse aesthetics with function.

1.4.1 Example: The Full-Back Who Fooled a Club

We travelled to evaluate a midfielder. Instead, the full-back delivered the performance of their life.

When the scout returned, the conclusion was immediate and emotional. The recommendation shifted away from the original target, with a single sentence driving the decision: forget the midfielder, sign the full-back. What we ultimately signed was not the player, but the episode.

Months later, reality emerged. The full-back struggled in transitions, lacked defensive structure, panicked under pressure and showed poor tactical discipline. Emotional instability appeared quickly once the environment demanded consistency rather than spectacle.

We did not sign quality. We signed a moment. This is Destinism in practice.

1.5 The Winger Everyone Loved (For All the Wrong Reasons)

The player appeared to have everything modern football celebrates: explosive highlights, charisma, physical dominance, technical ability, goals and a strong social presence.

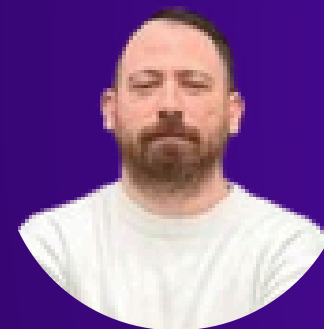
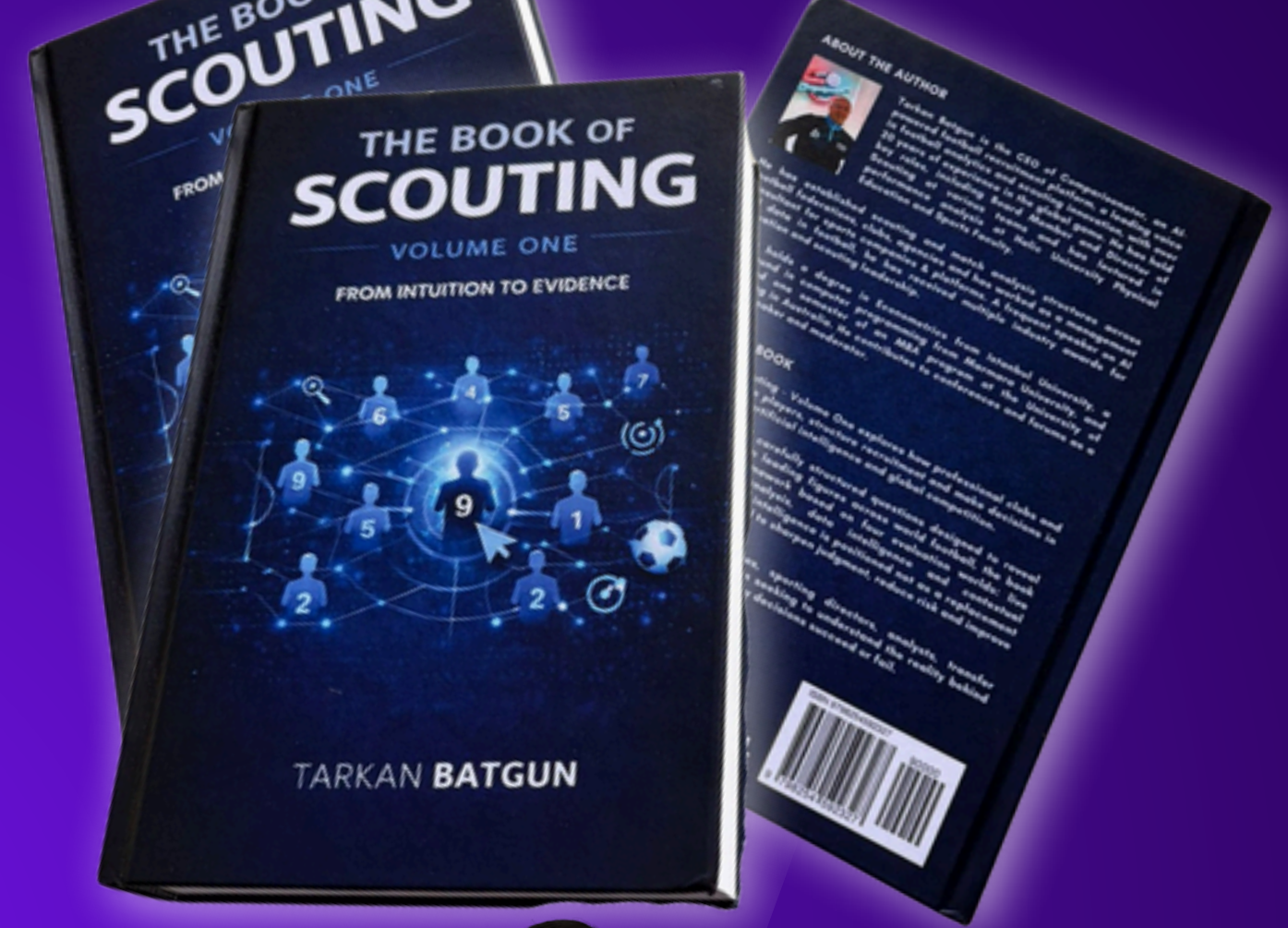
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Key Insights from Book Contributors
"Chief Scouts"



Dehan Ogetbil
Chief Scout
Beerschot
(Belgium)

"Scouting is not only identifying talent. It is predicting where that talent will live best"



Fernando Matos
Chief Scout
FC Famalicao
(Portugal)

"Good professionals know how to wait, revisit and doubt initial conclusions"



Jiro Kitahara
Head of Scouting
& Method Director
FC Tokyo
(Japan)

"Developing players as individuals requires strong communication and dialogue skills"



Eduardo Henrique Chavare
Head Scout
Juventude
(Brazil)

"When scouting is aligned with game model and staff methodology, continuity is created"



Jahid Asgarov
Chief Scout
Neftchi Baku
(Azerbaijan)

"A good scout should always be ready to support his "eye" with relevant analytics"



Riccardo Polacco
Chief Scout
Olympique Marseille
(France)

"A solid data background helps to properly interpret what the numbers are really saying"

Support quickly formed across the club, though for different reasons. The coach focused on the goals. The sporting director was drawn to the player's star-like profile. The president felt the pull of supporter enthusiasm. Each perspective reinforced the same conclusion, even though none addressed how the player actually functioned within a collective structure.

Reality surfaced early. The player showed little understanding of pressing responsibilities, behaved irresponsibly in transitions, disrupted the team's tactical structure, monopolised possession and displayed emotional volatility alongside unreliable discipline.

The sequence that followed was predictable. The player was signed, dropped, loaned and eventually gone. Admiration had replaced analysis and the decision collapsed under its own lack of structure.

1.6 The Centre-Back Who Taught Me Humility

On video, the player appeared perfect. In data, the profile was outstanding. On paper, everything suggested an ideal fit. Yet live observation quickly dismantled that illusion.

The issue was not technical ability or physical capacity, but behaviour under pressure. The player was emotionally reactive, frequently broke the defensive line without necessity, panicked when pressed and struggled to manage space responsibly. Rather than acting with intention, the player's decision-making became chaotic in moments that demanded control, composure and positional discipline.

Video footage concealed these weaknesses and data alone could not fully explain them. Only context exposed the reality of the player's performance and limitations.

Scouting is not about believing what you want to see. It is about accepting what is real, even when that reality contradicts expectation.

1.7 What Scouting Really Is

Scouting is the disciplined recognition of behaviour, the interpretation of context and the application of structured thinking under emotional control. It requires humility, intellectual honesty and an uncompromising commitment to truth rather than comfort or consensus.

Scouting does not rely on instinct alone and it does not exist to validate opinions or confirm desire.

At its core, scouting is disciplined intelligence applied to decision-making. The scout's responsibility is not to be right in isolation, but to protect the club from being wrong through clarity, discipline and accuracy.

1.8 Case Study: The First Lesson. What Christoph Daum Taught Me

If I trace the origin of my professional discipline, defined by precision, clarity and an intolerance for vagueness, it begins with Christoph Daum. While working with him as Director of Scouting and Recruitment, my understanding of responsibility, accuracy and the true purpose of scouting was fundamentally reshaped.

He taught me something early on that has never left me: details are not small. Details are the job. His standards were uncompromising. There were no vague sentences, no mislabelled clips, no misunderstood metrics, no incomplete observations and no half-finished tactical notes. Every report was expected to reflect reality exactly as it was, not as someone wished it to be.

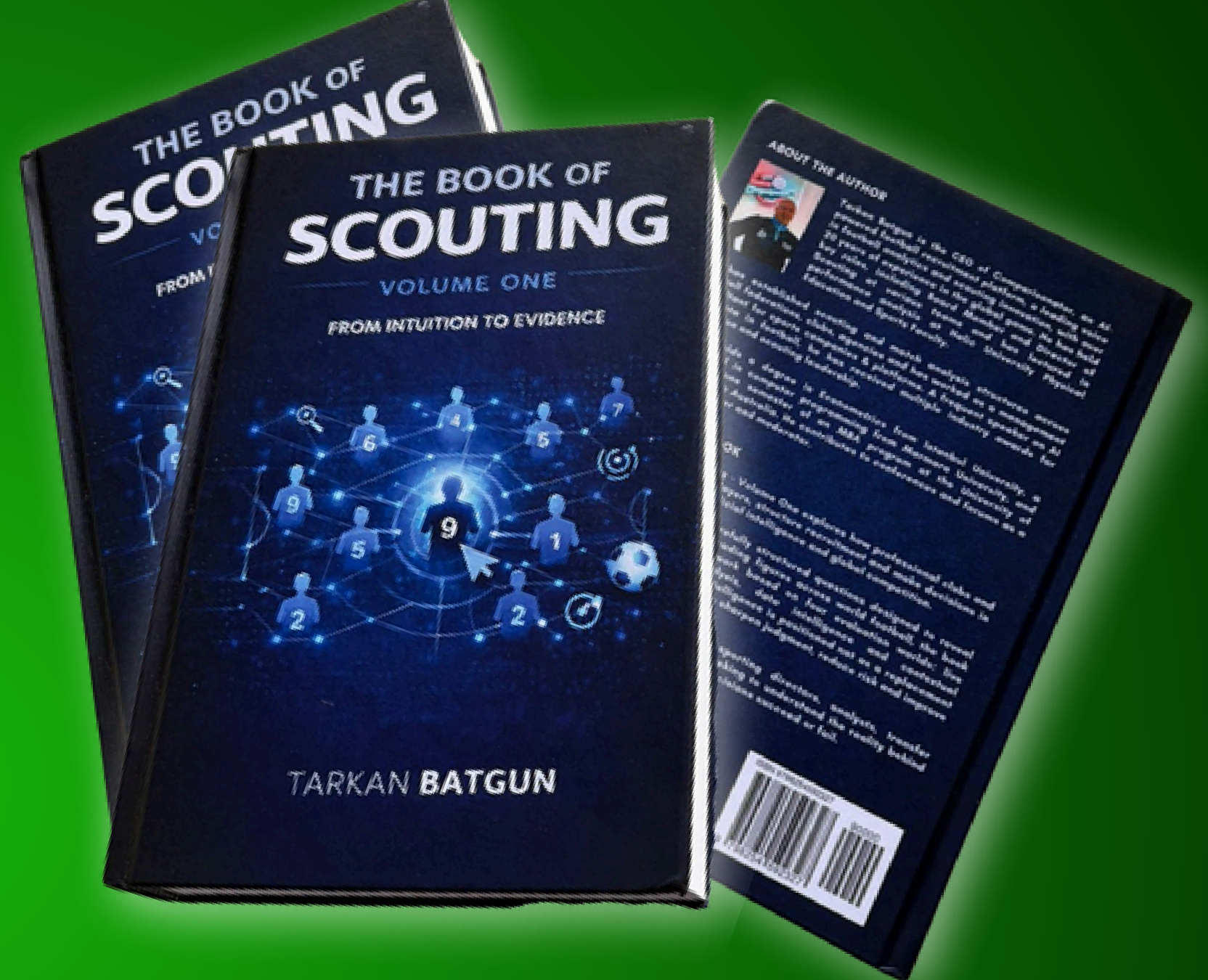
Daum once told me, "I do not need scouts. I need people who help me understand the reality." In his environment, vague language had no place. No one could say "the player is good," "the player has potential," or "I think this player fits" without being challenged. Every statement required evidence.

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Key Insights from Book Contributors "Coaches"



Marco Pedroso
Assistant Manager
FC Famalicao
(Portugal)

"Successful squad building depends on all departments working in balance"



Jessica Silva
Head Coach
(Canada)

"Successful transfers require human fit to be as strong as tactical fit"



Peter Cklamovski
Head Coach
Malaysia National Team
(Malaysia)

"The best recruitment decisions come when data, observation and human insight align"



Rudi Verkempinck
Head Coach
(Belgium)

"Be ready, as AI will soon take over many tasks that recruitment analysts do today"

You had to explain where performance lived, why specific behaviours mattered, how execution was sustained over time, against which opponent profiles, under which coach, in which environment, with which teammates and during which phases of the game. Assumptions were not tolerated. Interpretation had to be earned.

1.8.1 The Birth of System Thinking

Before hiring me, Christoph Daum made one request. Whenever an agent sent a player name, he wanted a full report immediately. I agreed, without yet realising that this would soon mean receiving close to fifty player names per day.

By the third day, Daum said a sentence that changed my professional life. He told me to hire engineers and build a player analysis tool because we could not afford to waste time on noise. That instruction was not about technology for its own sake. It was about protecting decision-making from overload, bias and inefficiency.

At the same time, I was exposed to another critical dimension of elite recruitment through his assistant coach, Rudi Verkempinck. Rudi played a decisive role in shaping how I understood tactical requirements at position level. He explained, in detail, what each role truly demanded within Daum's game model, using concrete examples rather than abstract descriptions.

He would spend hours walking me through player footage, showing how small tactical behaviours determined suitability or incompatibility. Movement patterns, decision timing, spatial discipline and role execution were always analysed in direct relation to what the coach required on the pitch. This was not theory. It was applied football intelligence.

Once the tactical and behavioural requirements were clearly defined, we combined data analysis and video evaluation to identify suitable profiles. Fernandao, the centre forward we recruited from Brazil, was a clear example of

this process. He was identified not because of highlights or reputation, but because his behaviours aligned with the precise demands of Daum's attacking structure.

To validate the profile, we then assigned a specific scout to follow Fernandao live over a one-month period, covering five matches. Those observations were used to confirm what data and video had already suggested, with detailed eye reports focused on behaviour, consistency and execution under real match conditions. Only after aligning tactical logic, data signals, video analysis and live scouting reports did we move toward a final decision.

Fernandao went on to become the league's top scorer. The success was not accidental. It was the result of structure protecting judgment.

In parallel, we built a system capable of coding a single match efficiently, assigning structured performance values, eliminating weak profiles at an early stage and breaking agent-driven illusions before they reached decision-makers. That system became one of the early ancestors of what would later evolve into Comparisonator.

Until that point, football recruitment often followed a familiar and inefficient pattern. Clubs watched "best actions" videos, then, if intrigued, reviewed a full home match, followed by an away match and finally, in some cases, travelled to see the player live. This approach consumed hours, drained budgets and exhausted emotional energy long before clarity was reached.

Daum forced a fundamental shift in thinking, supported by a staff that demanded tactical precision and intellectual honesty. Structure had to come before excitement and truth had to come before admiration.

1.8.2 The Lesson That Never Left Me

There was a moment I will never forget. We had produced a detailed analytical report of around thirty pages. It was impressive, clean and confident. We believed we had done everything right.

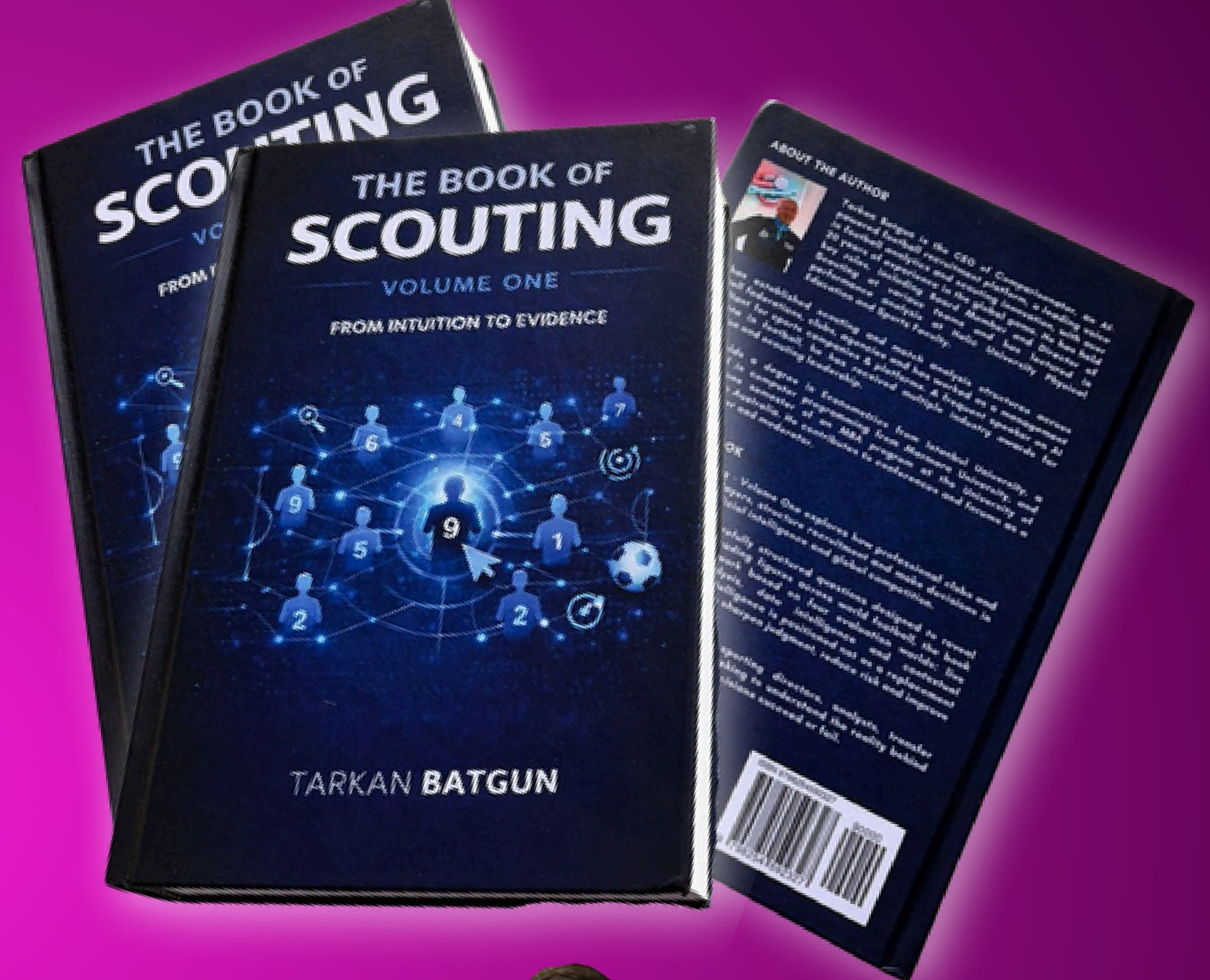
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Key Insights from Book Contributors
"Player Agencies"



Hunor Dudas

Player Agent
(Hungary)

"Scouting must function as an institution, not a personality-driven effort"



Mark Coonen

Player Agent
(The Netherlands)

"Players with high learning speed & adaptability pass through barriers where others stagnate"



Ömer Koray Uzun

Player Agent
(Türkiye)

"The agent, as an orchestra conductor, will always continue to play a central role in transfers"

Daum looked at the report and asked a simple question: “How much of this is correct, Tarkan, out of one hundred?” I answered confidently, “Ninety-five percent.” His response was immediate. “Bring me one hundred percent.”

My scouts and I returned to the room frustrated and surprised. As we reviewed the report again, we discovered more errors than we had expected. We corrected them all and returned. Daum asked the same question once more. This time I answered, “Ninety-eight to ninety-nine percent.” He shook his head and replied calmly, “I do not work with ninety-nine percent. Only with one hundred percent.”

The following day, we brought the report back again. When he asked the question for a third time, my answer was different. I said, “One hundred percent.” This time, he did something unexpected. He did not open the report. He simply said, “If you say it is one hundred percent, I trust you.”

From that day onward, he never checked another report. Responsibility had been transferred and with it, trust.

1.8.3 What This Taught Me About Scouting

That year permanently reshaped my professional DNA. It taught me that precision is protection, structure is discipline, clarity is respect and truth must always be defended. These principles stopped being ideals and became responsibilities.

It also cemented one of the core philosophies of this book: Scouting does not exist to admire players. Scouting exists to protect football from wrong decisions.

1.9 Key Takeaways

- ✓ Scouting = behaviour + context + disciplined interpretation
- ✓ The eye reveals intention; data reveals pattern
- ✓ Context defines truth
- ✓ Emotion destroys accuracy
- ✓ Destinism ruins recruitment
- ✓ Every player is environment-dependent
- ✓ Structure protects clubs from chaos
- ✓ Precision is not optional. It is responsibility

1.10 Reflection Questions

- Do you evaluate players without analysing their league ecosystem?
- Which emotional biases affect you most: reputation, highlights, charisma, recency?
- Do you analyse behaviour or only actions?
- How often has context changed your opinion of a player?
- Are you mistaking highlights for evidence?
- How do you separate admiration from analysis?
- Where does emotion still enter your decision-making?
- Do you operate at 95% confidence or do you demand 100% clarity?

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Key Insights from Book Contributors
"International Media"



Christopher Beesley
Liverpool Echo
(United Kingdom)

"When deployed intelligently, AI can help football recruitment become far more efficient"



David Novo
Record
(Portugal)

"Success depends on the ability to filter information and understand it rigorously"



Emanuel Rosu
Guardian
International Media
(Romania)

"Scouting is clarity, objective thinking, emotional control and constant observation"



Miguel Angel Garcia
Marca
(Spain)

"Without real football knowledge, data cannot be applied correctly to identify right needs"



Vasilis Sambrakos
Sport24
(Greece)

"AI shifts observation from instinct to evidence-based, objective decision-making"

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