

In the relentless churn of modern football management, there's a curious phrase that has gained traction among pundits and fans alike: when a manager "doesn't try to win every press conference." At first glance, it might sound like code for stepping back, losing edge, or even giving up on the war of words that surrounds top-level football. Yet, beneath the surface, this approach is more nuanced — a subtle form of **media management** and **calm messaging** designed to avoid hype and maintain focus amid the chaos of *emotional volatility* and *media pressure cycles*.

The Post-2013 Identity Crisis in Football Management

Since around 2013, football clubs — especially those traditional powerhouses — have wrestled with something not related to tactics or transfers, but identity itself. Managers have come and gone with increasing frequency, each with [football betting odds guide](#) different styles, philosophies, and expectations. This **managerial churn** has created an environment where neither the club's culture nor the squad's composition has been stable enough to support sustained success.

It's in this context that the pressure on managers to "win" every interaction, including press conferences, has soared. But the truth is, not every press conference is a battlefield where the manager needs to outwit journalists or soundbites need to be "won." Sometimes, less is more.

What Changed After 2013?

- **Increased Media Scrutiny:** Social media exploded. Journalists and fans dissected every word in real time.
- **Faster Manager Turnover:** Clubs have less patience, leading to shorter managerial spells, encouraging quick fixes.
- **Player Power & Squad Mismatches:** Squads often assembled from disparate signings, not yet equipped to fit a clear system.
- **Rise of the PR Machine:** Clubs and agents craft narratives aggressively, leading to hyperbolic hype cycles.

With these factors in alignment, many managers found themselves caught in an exhausting dance — trying to be clever, aggressive, and transparent all at once on the media front. A few now intentionally dial back from "winning" each press conference to manage expectations and maintain equilibrium.



Why Managers Choose Not to "Win" the Press Conference

Winning a press conference might mean different things to different people. Some interpret it as outsmarting the media, spinning a positive narrative despite bad results, or deflecting blame artfully. But under the hood, these tactics can backfire — they invite deeper scrutiny, fuel transfer speculation, or add emotional volatility (think of the “airport runway” effect in midfield mistakes repeating in matches). Here’s why some managers deliberately avoid trying to win every interaction:



1. **Calm Messaging to Stabilise the Dressing Room:** Instead of stirring emotions or making big promises, measured answers help steady players and staff.
2. **Avoiding False Hype:** Overhyping a young squad or promising a “revolution” sets unrealistic expectations that can quickly unravel.
3. **Reducing Media Cycles:** Keeping statements neutral means less fodder for sensational headlines, lowering pressure on the squad.

4. **Long-Term Identity Building:** Emphasising process over instant results supports a sustainable club identity that's less volatile.

This strategy isn't about fear or lack of confidence—it's about understanding the *media management* game as a marathon, not a sprint.

Case Study: Michael Carrick's Coaching Impact Vs PR Hype

Michael Carrick's transition from player to coach at a top English club embodies this principle perfectly. Carrick's influence on the training ground and tactical setup is widely acknowledged by insiders, part of a steady hand helping to rebuild a squad mismatched by previous transfers and managerial changes.

Yet, outside the club bubble, media coverage has often swung between inflated hype and dismissive skepticism. Carrick's own media handling is notably understated — he rarely tries to dominate press conferences or feed the hype machine. This calm, measured public presence offers a masterclass in avoiding emotional volatility and controlling media pressure cycles:

- **Focus on Facts, Not Flair:** Carrick sticks to what the team is working on rather than creating sensational narratives.
- **Avoids "Project" Jargon:** You won't catch him trotting out clichés about "building for the future" just to placate fans or journalists.
- **Steady Messaging:** His statements are designed to keep expectations grounded and emphasise incremental progress.

In contrast, many clubs fall into the trap of forced "revolution" narratives — one of my personal pet peeves — which only adds to a fanbase's impatience and undermines long-term planning.

Emotional Volatility and Media Pressure Cycles

We've all seen it: one heavy defeat leads to panic headlines and urgent calls for change, only for the manager to claim "we'll bounce back." This cycle feeds off itself, increasing emotional volatility among players, staff, and supporters alike. Pundits attribute every mistake to "culture"—which I find lazy—and fail to acknowledge the underlying media pressure that distorts decision-making.

When managers learn they don't have to "win" every press conference, they reclaim some control over this exhausting process.

Breaking the Cycle

- **Accepting Short-Term Setbacks:** Calm messaging prepares fans for ups and downs, avoiding knee-jerk hysteria.
- **Building Trust Through Honesty:** Dropping the bravado increases transparency and reduces speculation.
- **Slowing the Firehose of News:** Less sensational quotes mean less clickbait, allowing rational discussion.

Most importantly, this approach recognises that football isn't decided in press rooms but on the pitch — and the manager's role involves crafting not just tactics but a climate conducive to growth and resilience.

Conclusion: The Wisdom in Not Trying to Win Every Press Conference

The modern football manager juggles a dizzying array of responsibilities, under intense public scrutiny. Choosing not to “win” every press conference is a deliberate strategy to preserve **calm messaging** and avoid the swirl of **media hype**. Especially in clubs grappling with post-2013 identity crises, **managerial churn**, and **mismatched squads**, the ability to manage media cycles calmly — as Michael Carrick exemplifies — provides stability amid chaos.

Far from a sign of weakness, this approach is a recognition that controlling the narrative is about pacing and restraint, not domination. It’s about building a solid foundation where the club’s true identity can grow without being whipped around by every headline or hyperactive fan reaction. In a sport obsessed with quick fixes and flashy statements, this calm, measured style is an underestimated art.