

Robert Moreno • The story

From a home video camera to the South Korea bench

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At fourteen, Robert Moreno was already coaching. And at the same age he did the sum that almost every boy playing football in Barcelona does, and got the wrong answer: he did not have the talent to play.

The example was at home — his father had been a coach, and held the badge. So Moreno combined the two things that interested him most:

“I’m a bit obsessed with technology and with football. So I picked up a camera, picked up a computer, and started filming matches.”

The reason was specific and characteristic of him: he had worked out that watching from the touchline, you can only follow where the ball is, not what the players away from it are doing.

What came next separates a hobby from a vocation. He rigged cameras to the top of floodlight pylons, with his then girlfriend — now his wife — filming while people laughed and asked what on earth it was for. Analysing a single youth match took him **eight hours**, because the process was painfully slow. He spent his first salary, earned working at a branch of the bank La Caixa, on a projector, so he could take the video to grounds and show it to the players. And he read more than 150 books about football.

“I wanted to understand what was happening on a pitch. I wanted to know how I could help the players, and that’s what I did.”

None of it was a career plan. In 2010 there was no profession called “video analyst” to aspire to in Spanish football.

The call, and then the real one

Half an hour before the 2010 World Cup final, Robert Moreno was at home with his family waiting for Spain–Netherlands, like half the country. The phone rang. It was his friend Joan Barbará, who had spent years working across different departments at FC Barcelona. They needed a video analyst, he said, and Luis Enrique would be calling that week.

Spain won the final. It was a day he remembers for two reasons.

The call that mattered came on the Monday. Moreno was at work in the bank. An unknown number came up, he answered it, ran to a storeroom so he could talk, and spent half an hour on the phone. By the time he hung up he knew that someone from the club would call the next day to sign him.

He was 32, with no playing career behind him. He came in through a door he had spent eighteen years building himself.

Five countries

What followed reads quickly and happened slowly.

AS Roma, 2011. First job outside Spain, first taste of Serie A, first new language. Assistant coach.

RC Celta, 2013. Back to Spain.

FC Barcelona, 2014–2017. Three seasons on the first-team staff. The club won nine trophies in that time: the 2014-15 Champions League, two league titles, three Copas del Rey, the 2015 UEFA Super Cup and Club World Cup, and the 2016 Spanish Super Cup. The first of those seasons ended with the treble.

This is worth stating precisely, because it is where other people's accounts tend to inflate: he was an assistant, not the head coach. He was part of the staff that won those nine trophies. It is an achievement that does not need embellishing.

Spain, 2018. Joins the national team staff as assistant.

Spain, March 2019. Appointed head coach. Nine matches: seven wins, two draws, no defeats. Spain qualify for Euro 2020 without losing a game.

It ended in November of that year. His position on what happened has never shifted: what goes on inside stays inside.

The hard years, which are the ones that teach you

AS Monaco, December 2019 – July 2020. First head coach job at a club abroad. A young squad with a very high market value. And a season cut in half by a pandemic. Seven months.

Granada CF, July 2021 – March 2022. LaLiga, a difficult institutional context, and results against sides of European standard. Nine months.

PFC Sochi, January 2024 – September 2025. A year and eight months, and the hardest of the three to fit into a headline.

He took over a team in crisis. They were relegated. He stayed. And he took them back into the Russian Premier League in 2025.

He went alone. His family stayed in Spain, and he spent a year and eight months there. He learned to run a dressing room in a language he did not speak, and found out something about himself he had not expected: that enduring that distance cost him far more than he thought it would.

Three short spells. He does not argue with that. What he has pointed to, and what can be checked, is what remains of each: at Monaco, the development of Aurélien Tchouaméni and Youssouf Fofana; with Spain, first call-ups for players who are now regulars; at Sochi, a promotion.

What he learned on the way

One line of his sums up what the job has become for him better than any other:

“I used to spend a hundred per cent of my time on tactics, methodology, preparing matches, analysing opponents. Now I realise that was twenty per cent of what being a head coach is. The other eighty is essentially dealing with people.”

It is a striking thing to hear from someone who reached professional football precisely through the other twenty per cent. And it explains why his way into a new country does not start with the squad:

“When I go to a country, what interests me most is understanding its culture and how people communicate. Talking to a Russian is not the same as talking to someone French, or from the Arab world, or American. That part is invisible to the public and it matters enormously to a coach.”

Korea

On 1 September 2026 the Korea Football Association announced his appointment as head coach of the national team.

The detail worth noticing is how he got there. It was not a phone call, as in 2010. It was an **open public recruitment process with published criteria** — the first of its kind in the federation's history. He applied with a closed six-person coaching staff and a written project, and came through it.

He is the first Spanish coach to lead South Korea. His mandate runs to six matches, through to 27 November.

Korea is the fifth country he has worked in, after Spain, Italy, France and Russia. It is also the second national team he has managed — sixteen years after climbing a floodlight pylon to see the pitch from above.

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