

INNER STRENGTH: ROMELU LUKAKU

Off Pitch Training Determines On Pitch Success

Early career disappointments, watching his team, benched on the sidelines as an 18 year old, instigated Romelu Lukaku's addiction to improvement through training. Come June, this ultra-competitive character will put his mantra of, "*You train how you play*" to the test, looking for the chance to prove himself again to all of Europe on the international stage.

It's tough to fathom that Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku is just 23 years old. Having played at the top level professionally already for six years. He has a curious mix of a youth and veteran mindset behind his game that makes him both a leading scorer and a fan favorite. It's even tougher to comprehend how hard he pushes himself in order to prove to both himself and an entire nation that he is good enough to be part of the country's growing reputation for brilliant football. He is fully aware of the remarkable talent that surrounds him, "*You've got three players playing for your place man, so you better be that dude. You better be the dude that scores the goals.*"

Lukaku's relentless training regime mirrors his focus and passion he's looking to unlock on the pitch this summer. Lukaku's extra hours spent running between the cones hone his reaction and speed based on a determination to bring split-second moves to his already enviable scoring ability, "*I'm really fast but I need to be more agile, to change directions quicker and improve my balance especially when I shoot.*"

His extra hours of training day in and day out are based on a determination to bring some split-second moves to his already enviable scoring ability and prove himself at the tournament this summer. That ambition means training on top of training, "*Sometimes when my team goes inside, I go outside to train on the field on my own for about 45 minutes and then I go into the gym for 45 minutes.*"

The gym is a process of maintenance for Lukaku and sometimes it's a place to rebuild. Exercising there is an occupation in itself, "*I'm here to work. I'm not here to make friends. I'm here to do business,*" he says, "*Every job that I do has a specific reason — to give me five-percent more.*"