

Robin van Persie confident Manchester United will frighten teams again

- Striker believes Louis van Gaal is taking team in right direction
- The club will be a force again once the injury crisis is over

United's David de Gea and Robin van Persie. Photograph: Matthew Peters/Man Utd via Getty Images

Robin van Persie believes Manchester United will soon frighten teams again when Louis van Gaal's methods fully click and the injury crisis is eased.

The striker is confident United are heading in the right direction, with Van Persie pointing to Saturday's 2-1 win over West Ham United with 10 men and the 4-0 victory over Queens Park Rangers two weeks before.

Van Gaal has nine players injured and is waiting on the fitness of Ander Herrera, who was taken off with a suspected back problem during the West Ham match.

Asked if once the injuries abate and Van Gaal's approach is put fully into practice United will again frighten sides, Van Persie said: "I think we can be able to do that. If you look at these players, they are great players in their individual way. But now we are working together on this project and games like winning 4-0 against QPR help. We had a setback against Leicester [losing 5-3] but to win in these circumstances like the weekend sends a message and shows that even in these difficult games we can win. Now we have to extend that."

Van Persie, who was speaking at the launch of Abengoa as Manchester United's first global sustainable technology partner, admitted that in a Champions League week as now, United being out of the competition makes players more determined to qualify again. "That's our aim this year to be sure," he said. "To be in the top four. If you look at our players, fans, squad, stadium, it's normal to be in the top four. This year we have a great manager, great staff, great fans so, when you look at everything together, it makes it hard [not to be in the Champions League]. Everything is in place to be up there competing with the very best teams. I think we can do it and we will."

Of Van Gaal's footballing ethos Van Persie, who worked under him with Holland, said: "I had two years with the national coach but that's a different situation from working with him on a daily basis. But I had a bit of insight into how he works. Over the last two years I was with him for three days or nine days but it gave me a head start.

"His way of working is very good, very direct, very clear for everyone. There is a lot of communication and he's doing great. He's trying to get his philosophy into a lot of new players. Only me and Daley Blind knew how he works before, so

that takes some time but I'm convinced that we will do what he wants us to do and go where he wants us to go.

"It's very demanding in a good way as you have to be focused every single day of the sessions or the meeting. He wants players to get involved in the meeting too. You have to give your own input, which is what the staff likes. That's a bit of the Dutch thing. Everybody gets involved in the project. We are all working on it.

"Everyone has their own say, which is maybe new for some players but not for me as I know how he works. I think it's very interesting and very good because we are all pulling on the same rope – as the Dutch say. We all have one target, which is to win and win as much as we can. If I look at what I have seen in training and on the pitch in games I can see that it is getting much better. We are improving every day and getting better.

"Some training sessions are incredible and we are showing that in games as well. Now we have to extend that and make at least the top four. That's a realistic target but it's still early in the season. We are here, everybody wants to win every game, every training session and even if we are playing a different kind of game like table tennis. We are winners. We are not here just to set low standards. We want them to be as high as possible, winning games and winning trophies."