

SCIENTIFIC APPROACH OF TACTICAL TRAINING IN FOOTBALL GAME WITH CHILDREN AND JUNIOR PLAYERS

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Abstract: The football game constantly undergoes important changes in, whenever field practitioners consider it necessary, depending on the own players, the opponent, the need to change the game plan in order to hide the tactical intentions of approaching a certain official game.

The game conception, the system, the tactical plan, methods and means used are tools with which a team coach can juggle to achieve his goal in one match or more, but the strategy of teaching into a children's and juniors' center for a long time, must be adapted to the characteristics of age, specific to the junior footballer and to the way of effective understanding of the theoretical information he will put into practice on the playing field.

The purpose of the research is to make an exposure regarding the differential treatment of tactical training in stages, from the moment the child comes to football until he takes the step to senior teams. All stages of training will be approached scientifically according to the player's level of development and training and to the logical understanding of the information transmitted to the player, in particular. Also, creating an approach with age-specific means can be a priority, which will influence a science-based and modern training.

Research hypothesis - If we follow a methodical training course based on theoretical and practical information tailored to each age group, the percentage of integration into the high performance of junior football players will certainly be higher.

In conclusion, tactics will be the basic component, the central element of building the game model for each age. Such a methodical route, scientifically directed in an obviously modernized and constantly updated version is the key to success in gaining football performances.

Keywords: *football, training, tactics, children and juniors*

Introduction

The football game constantly undergoes important changes in, whenever field practitioners consider it necessary, depending on the own players, the opponent, the need to change the game plan in order to hide the tactical intentions of approaching a certain official game.

The game conception, the system, the tactical plan, methods and means used are tools with which a team coach can juggle to achieve his goal in one match or more, but the strategy of teaching into a children's and juniors' center for a long time, must be adapted to the characteristics of age, specific to the junior footballer and to the way of effective understanding of the theoretical information he will put into practice on the playing field.

What is the tactic? Who is it addressed to? When should it start being taught? How will it be taught? How long? What does it contain? These are just a few questions we will try to get an answer to. One thing is clear: practice is based on the theoretical information of the sport field, in general, and of soccer, in particular. Some infusion and an invasion of foreign literature into Romanian literature has been noticed lately, which cannot be neglected. It is based on the work of great specialists, which has been checked in the

world's biggest competitions such as the World and European Football Championship, the Champions League or the European League, etc. taken over by the Romanian Football Federation and by our coaches and put into practice in the Romanian football teams. We are dealing with a new way of approaching terminology, administrative organization and special training. The tactical periodization has replaced the instruction focused on physical training, obviously a much easier model accepted by the players and mental involvement reached levels that often decide the course of a game.

Material and method

The purpose of the research is to make an exposure regarding the differential treatment of tactical training in stages, from the moment the child comes to football until he takes the step to senior teams. All stages of training will be approached scientifically according to the player's level of development and training and to the logical understanding of the information transmitted to the player, in particular. Also, creating an approach with age-specific means can be a priority, which will influence a science-based modern training.

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Scientific approach to tactics in children and juniors

Tactics brings together a system of principles, ideas and rules for approaching the competitions by the athlete, through which he exploits all his technical, physical, and psychic abilities in order to solve the problematic situations (in contests) created by opponents, teammates and ambience, in order to achieve success [1].

The period in which a child enters, develops, then integrates into the great performance (1st league, strong teams from abroad, junior, youth or senior national teams) lasts approximately from 10-15 years to 30 years on the football field. Thus, the athlete undergoes several stages, all extremely important. Each stage of development will have clearly defined game-oriented goals.

Considering them as a starting point, each coach will elaborate another goal according to his own team's knowledge and skills as well as to the pedagogical and performance objective. Taking into account the fact that the training model on the basis of tactical periodization was global, we considered that such tactical approach would be really necessary from the youngest ages.

Tactical periodization is considered a new paradigm of understanding football. It is not only a training methodology, but also a way of understanding football. But people could ask: Is tactical periodization the best football training methodology? First of all, we need to understand that we must always adjust and adapt training methodology to the reality of our level, and then rely on this context. We try to develop our training with the issues we consider to be the most appropriate to get the maximum performance in our players, in our team [2].

Therefore, the stages of football training for children and juniors can be as it follows:

1. The first stage - the attraction and screening is important in the regard that we will have to find and bring children that have good motricity, which from the genetic point of view corresponds to the requirements of high performance sport. It is vital to have great basis of selection, many groups of 5-6- year-olds, the main objective being to develop and cultivate the pleasure of practising football.

There is NO tactical approach to training.

Ex. 1: driving the ball into a limited space (20 / 20m), 8 children have a ball and 2 do not. The 2 players will try to take the ball from any of those who have the ball and lead the ball. Those who will be deposed of the ball will also try to get a ball.



2. The second stage, the construction - development period is a period of approximately 4 years, corresponding of the 4 years of the primary school cycle (1st - 4th grades), where the focus is on the acquisition of the technical elements specific to the football game, the ability to practise football with fewer players on small ground - 4vs4 + goalkeeper and then 6vs6 + goalkeeper.

The player will have to work very analytically at this age; at the end of the period he will be able to put into practice correctly all the elements of transmitting the ball, of entering and keeping the ball, so that in the 1vs1 relationship he can easily

find solutions to overcome the opponent directly and score goals.

A. Age group: 7-8 years old

It will begin analytical teaching of tactics and learning-strengthening exercises of passes in two or three players will be designed, acting within gaming systems, aiming for players to have:

- **Game skills:** Tactical sense in possession of ball and without; integration into the collective; creativity; technical performance; overall performance during the match; the ability to play in multiple positions; advanced psychological features.

- **Speed and efficiency:** anticipation; perception; processing the information; decision-making;

movement and action; technical and tactical skills displayed in simple and complex contexts; adaptation to unexpected situations.

- Objectives:

- Game system: 1-1-2-1, player's position is not important, it can be changed to observe the player's ability to act and his orientation in the playing area;
- Developing motor skills by playing with the ball,
- Developing pleasure to relate to children of the same age,
- Learning and consolidating technical procedures: striking and taking over the ball, improving the control of the ball with both feet; learning simple flips done through driving the ball.

Dynamic games play an important role in the development of motricity, but also in the combined motor skills with the emphasis on:

- Speed and skill games, games on small field from 1vs1 to 4vs4 - 5vs5 maximum; working space adapted to age and level of accumulations, with goals of 1/1m, 2/2 m, 2/1m, 3/2 m; all games with theme;
- Educating group interest (attitude, integration).
- Do not work from static positions.
- Clear explanations, followed by demonstration.

Taking into account that speed and skill are hereditarily stable qualities, genetically determined and possible to be developed at this age, tactical priority is given to the following individual and collective actions:

- *Individual*: 1x1 relationship (individual overtaking); demarcation, free kick and various elementary tasks in positions.
- *Collective*: pass, the basic element in the construction of the game; compartment, functional unit of the team:
 - Passes in twos (with and without pick-up), with position exchange, with one active defender, finalisation;
 - Attack structures with finalization through centering in front of the gate;
 - Passes in threes with and without pick-up, in 15x15 m. squares, without and with defender;
 - Passes in threes with position change, with finalization;
 - One-two, support, ball and ballless circulation;
 - Possession game, 2 vs. 1, 3 vs. 1 and 4 vs 1 in squares or circles of 25-50 m²;

Ex. 2: 3vs1 positioning game (2vs1 / 4vs1) - 3 (4.5.6) consecutive passes, followed by shooting at the goal, 5 minutes. After every action the defender is changed.



B. Age group: 9-10 years old

Tactical training is done in isolated game conditions or active game, by possession and positioning from 1vs1 to 8vs8 with a passive, semi-active or active opponent. Depending on the goal of the training, the workspace will be adapted to the technical and tactical training requirements that will take into account the peculiarities of the team, with focus on improving individual overtaking, ball transmission, finalization from elaborate tactical combinations, marking, pressure and pressing.

- Objectives:

- Game system: 1-3-2-1;

- Special emphasis on the systematic development of basic motor skills;
- The formation of the basic technique becomes the most important, also taking into account the increased concentration capacity;
- Correcting the mistakes is another concern of teacher-coaches in order to avoid making mistakes;
- The possession of the ball in all positions - static, then dynamic, without and with feint;
- Driving the ball rapidly with change of direction;

- Combining the technical procedures for transmission, taking into possession and keeping possession, on the ground and above.
- Training the player to engage in both attack and defense.
- All information transmitted progressively will aim to develop tactical thinking;
- Forming correct orientation in space, anticipating the movements of his opponents and teammates;
- Encouraging imagination and creativity, trust in his own power and in team force, creating team spirit and the willing to engage in combat;
- The main goal of the game will be to practise offensive football;
- Filming and viewing your own training or other exercises and games from other clubs to make comparisons.



3. The third stage - the specialization, begins at the age of 11 and lasts up to 15, the stage in which the logical thinking appears in the children, so we can gradually introduce the child into individual and collective tactics, we will be able to teach him the phases and forms of attack and defense. On the basis of individual and group creativity, we will try to familiarize him with finding the best solutions to reach the opponents' goal, based on group communication, depending on the position and the way the opponent reacts. Basically the athlete is able to think logically about why he is acting in a certain way on the ground.

C. Age group: 11-12 years old

Tactical preparation involves actions based on a constructive-collective game, balanced on both phases - defense and attack, in the context of elaborate and thoughtful game:

- Objectives:

- Game system: 1-3-2-3;
- The systematic development of basic motor skills;
- Consolidation and improvement of the basic technique in the context of collective game;
- Attack actions will be run smoothly, simply across the entire surface of the field as variously

U10 Player Profile [3]:

- Dribbling moves under pressure;
- Role of first and second defenders;
- Use of both feet consistently;
- Delivering longer balls;
- Learning to serve and properly receive flighted balls consistently;
- Supporting runs off the ball and more sophisticated combination play;
- Recognize roles and responsibilities by position;
- Awareness of the numerical positioning system employed;
- Introduction of catching the ball and angle play with the keeper.

Ex. 3: 4vs4 + 2 jolly (amplitude edges and depth gauges, inside for construction).

as possible, with maximum and effective acceleration to score goals;

- Ballless play is continuous, with permanent startups and demarcations;
- Offensive actions will be oriented especially on the edges of the field, with the change of the direction of attack;
- Players with offensive tasks will be separated into free spaces, pass without take over, one-two learning, and demarcation after passing;
- Allow and encourage individual actions, dribbling, if possible;
- Defense actions begin immediately after losing the ball to stop the opponent's attack;
- Particular attention will be paid to fixed phases through a wide range of executions;
- Acquiring the courage and responsibility to shoot at the goal;
- Appropriate placement for free kicks, corner, out; getting the placement in the defense phase between opponents and the goal;
- The fight for defeating the ball and preventing the opponent from shooting at the goal.

Ex. 4: 3vs3 + 3 jolly with finalization. Search for solutions for construction and finalization, taking the ball, transition, progression.



D. Age group: 13-14 years old

From the motor point of view, the speed is very good, the coordination abilities are very well developed, mobility has the lowest levels, the body carries medium-term efforts. It is good to schedule training sessions for the development of muscles.

- Objectives:

- Playing on the normal field, specializing in positions (defenders, midfielders, attackers), improving tactical combinations and play relationships.
- The game system chosen within the club's own philosophy appears;
- Clear tasks specific to the players on the positions they play;
- Active work is done to develop strength and endurance according to the age of the athletes;
- Developing tactical thinking and skills specific to football;
- Development of general and specific motricity to be achieved through specific exercises of possession and positioning executed in isolated game conditions, but also real games, relay and ballless competitions;
- The technical objective further aims at strengthening and refining complex technical elements and procedures.

Tactical training involves:

- Game system: 1-4-2-3-1;
- Training individual and collective tactical basic skills for attack and defense;
- Choosing the best passing solutions;
- Searching for and finding the most prolific finalization situations;
- Learning 2-3 situations of construction and development of the offensive game;
- Learning positioning and achieve a defensive balance within the new system on normal ground;
- Use of exercises performed in play conditions with rapid execution, semiactive or active opponents, numerical superiority and high speed.
- Psychological and mental improvement in specific situations of play;
- The great effort implies a wider development of motor skills and adaptation to any game situation - marking, doubling, pressing;
- Rapid execution of defensive and offensive transitions;
- Improving players' behaviour in fixed phases;
- Rapid adaptation to the solutions proposed by the system transformation, both defensive and offensive.

Ex. 5: build-up - construction from the goalkeeper - 4 + 2vs4 - solutions;



4. The fourth - performance stage lasts about 4 years, from 15 years old and until the junior becomes senior at the age of 19. It will target players with real qualities of integration into great performance, when they are selected to be part of the senior and national teams.

During this period, the fundamental roles of the four positions existent in a team (goalkeeper, defender, midfielder and striker) are extremely complex and differentiated. Running players on different areas of the field, either on the left or right side, in attack, in the middle or in defense, is absolutely necessary. Creating future automatisms

related to a particular post may lead to the junior's accomplishment of the role of the post only, which will make his adaptation to a team of seniors in the future harder.

It is the time when the diversification of the training has a decisive role. Exercises (games) of possession, positioning, finalization, etc. will be designed and applied to team players in order to develop their creativity and ability to understand and adapt to new problematic situations during the game.

Towards the end of the junior stage, the coach has to finalize the form of the athlete's evolution to a certain role he can best perform in the team.

E. Age group: 15-16 years old

The tactical training at this level aims at consolidating the individual and collective elementary tactical repertoire, by using in preparation a set of technical and tactical structures that contribute to the formation of basic skills (universalism) and the transition towards the actual specialization in positions.

It will seek to improve the elements of attack and defense:

- Game system: 1-4-2-3-1 and its variants in attack and defense;
- Creating an appropriate and coherent model of player participation in attack and defense, with clear tasks for each player;

- Strengthening and refining the skills and knowledge of individual and collective tactics for attack and defense;
- Developing the capabilities of players in possession of the ball to become game coordinators;
- Orientation towards a simple game with executions in the direction of attack - progression;
- Attack on the whole width of the field - amplitude;
- Positioning in the field without the ball;
- Developing the sense of anticipation (intuition);
- Practising pressing - pressing area;
- Easy and permanent participation in offensive and defensive transitions;
- Realizing a model with different ways of participating in the fixed own phases and the opponent's;
- Training and developing the ability to choose the most technical variants in relation to the game situations;
- Forming the model player for the team and club.

Ex. 6: 10vs6 development exercise with superiority in quadrants - search for offensive / taking the ball solutions, transition 3,4,5 passes;



F. Age group: 17-18 years old

Building the training model is complete. The set requirements will be known in detail by each player who at this age can be assimilated into performance teams. Basic and combined motor skills can be developed at the highest level in all their manifestations required primarily by modern football. Technical and tactical skills and knowledge - the technical processes and individual and collective tactical actions in attack and defense are at the highest level.

All the goals set for the previous training level remain valid.

- Objectives:

- Game system: 1-4-2-3-1;

When we prepare the offensive phase in this system, we will consider [4]:

- If the offensive action takes place after taking over the ball, the loss of the ball by the opposing team, the subsequent attack action, the type and duration will be made depending on how the opponent is positioned;
- If the offensive action is a counterattack, we will search precisely for the spaces generated behind the line of defense, with one aim: to surprise the opposing team;
- Improving the player's ability to react to the challenging situations of opponents and teammates;
- High ability to anticipate the opponent's reactions;

- Work to the virtuosity of many tactical situations in attack and defense, fixed moments of play (placement and technical execution).
- Clairvoyant observation of tactical situations in the manner of practising the total game;

- Formation and development of the mentality of a winner.

Ex. 7: complex positioning game 11vs11 - great principles;



Conclusions

Tactics will be the basic component, the central element of building the game model for each age. Such a methodical route, scientifically directed in an obviously modernized and constantly updated version, is the key to success in achieving football performance.

Without a coherent, scientific and broad selection we cannot reach high performance.

Without committed and educated coaches who have concrete knowledge there will not be maximum progress in training.

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