

SPORTS COMPETITIONS ON REDUCED PITCH AREAS - A MEANS OF TRAINING AND EVALUATION IN THE FOOTBALL GAME

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Abstract: The present research represents a scientific investigation carried out for a period of 1 year, on the importance and influence of the game of football on reduced pitch areas, regarding the development of the motor qualities, as well as the learning of the basic technical elements and procedures, in children aged 6-7 years. The research was carried out on a number of 36 children, aged 6-7 years, from the "Gica Popescu Football Academy", respectively the Sport School, divided into two groups: experiment and witness, numerically equal.

The purpose of the research is to highlight for this age, the importance of playing football on a reduced pitch area, as well as the need to systematize the methods and means of developing the motor qualities, and to learn the basic technical elements and procedures, specific to the game.

The methods used in this research were the observation method, the experiment method and the statistical-mathematical method.

Results. Following the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained after the two tests, the indices of the motor parameters tested in the experimental group are superior to the control one, in all the tests.

Conclusions. Competition and training on a small field represent a significant means of increasing the motor qualities indices and the proper acquisition of the technical elements and procedures, specific to the football game. Learning the technical-tactical actions, in adverse conditions, proves its usefulness in playing the football game on the reduced pitch area, for this age segment, all of these findings resulting from the test values.

Keywords: football, reduced pitch area, training, performance.

Introduction

Generally, competition and, especially, modern sports competition encompasses a number of problems, including conceptions and speculations, on which pedagogues, psychologists, physiologists, sociologists and coaches must reflect deeply. At the level of inter-school competition or that of clubs and sports associations, the characteristics of the competition bear those traits of the specialized federation systems competitions, the qualifications in the higher stages being relevant.

Why do we start children's football training on reduced pitch areas?

The first wish of the beginner children is to establish as close a connection as possible with the ball - the object of the game. This pleasure will have to be satisfied, as it creates the motivations for the game and secondly, it improves the technique of the game, aiming at 4 general objectives:

- placing the child in multiple and varied situations of ball control, through the passes, the shooting at the goal, the ball driving, dribbling etc;
- allowing the child to manifest, through games on reduced pitch areas;
- children are more motivated by the frequency of meeting and controlling the ball, as well as by the greater number of goals scored, by each team;

- multiple relationships with the game partners and opponents:

- communication with the game partners materialized by passing the ball;
- awareness of adversity in the 1: 1 situation, then the collective elaboration of the attack in response to a concrete situation from the field, elaborated by the opposing team, represents the framework of some decisive behaviors for the game on the small field.

"At the same time, children need to be aware of the manifestations of celebrity, not consistent with their technical possibilities, from selfish beginnings or to the delight of the stands, can harm the outcome of the competition, as well as the work of the whole team and the coach." [1] As training is characterized by a progressive systematic specialization, competitions must undergo an analogous process of progressive specialization. The children and the young juniors competitions fulfill the function of intermediate stations, they must be considered as building competitions, stages on the way to the great results in the methodological-organizational plan and organically linked to the function designated for training.

Why reduced pitch areas games?

Methodologically, the practice of playing football starts on reduced pitch areas, the children not having the physical, technical and tactical possibilities to comply with the requirements and

forms of playing 11 to 11 players, "smaller surfaces representing small scale reproductions of the playing field areas and colors, reproducing, according to the dimensions used, those representative technical-tactical actions, for certain surfaces of the pitch, for certain moments of pitch, or for certain situations in the pitch." [2]

At the young age (from 6-7 years old) you can start the race on pitches with dimensions of 40 x 20 m., delimited even by milestones, and the teams will consist of 4 field players and a goalkeeper. The reason for this organization is the lack of spatial orientation, the field of vision still reduced, the attention focused mainly on the ball. During competitions and training, "the concentration of the players must be directed towards each action at maximum speed, an aspect that helps the athletes to reach a higher speed and neuromuscular coordination." [3]

With learning the placement of children on the field and simple technical-tactical actions, you can switch to teams of 6 field players and 1 goalkeeper, as children are older (9-10 years). The specialists in the theory and practice of football play recommend playing on small pitches as a form and means of adequate training for learning and consolidating football, for the following reasons:

- the number of contacts with the ball is higher, producing a very dense repetition of the technical-tactical skills, an aspect that leads to their consolidation;
- permanent runs from one goal to another contribute to the development of speed and endurance
- jumps, turns, stops, sprints prepare the strength of the legs
- very frequent shooting at the goal increases the more active participation.

Coaches from these age categories should take into account that the basic methodological process is the demonstration, accompanied of course by explanation.

After the initiation period follows the training period, of guided training that goes parallel with the development of the basic and combined motor qualities. Around the age of 11-12 years the size of the pitch is increased. It is played on the widths of the normal football pitch, the dimensions reaching 70/50 m. and the teams are made up of 8 field players and a goalkeeper. The goals have the dimensions of 5 x 2 m. and the system of placement on the ground may be different. An important aspect to remember is that "the effect of training on all physical and mental capacities is maximum

during times of crisis that is during competitions" [4].

The requirements that the competition addresses to the organizers must be developed in such a way as to promote action programs adapted to the objectives of the future activities, the main one being to develop the individual game capacity, and to widen the range of technical-tactical actions.

Competitions on small pitches are important because "their realization requires intense physical effort (aerobic - anaerobic), attention, concentration, will, capacity for anticipation, imagination and dedication" [5], as well as:

- the increased frequency of actions to be performed in a small space;
- increased speed of carrying out tactical actions in a small space;
- the technical precision in the transmission of the ball is trained;
- it increases the capacity to recognize the concrete situations in the game and to find suitable solutions;
- the reduction of the number of players favors a multilateral training through the rapid passage from the defensive actions to those of the attack and vice versa;
- „favors the development of the higher parameters of the specific motility (varied runs, stops and starts, bypasses, returns, falls, rolls, changes of direction, coordination in jumps, comeback and balancing with implications on the continuity of the game actions.”[6]

The frequency, stability and preparation of competitions must adapt to the training objectives specific to the age categories. Normally, in the composition of the long-term performance forecast, the increase of the competing demands is associated with the advantages implied by the numerical increase of the competitions. "The child must also be exposed to a systematic and progressive increase of the training stimuli, designed to constantly improve his physiological and execution capacities, that is, to exceed the threshold of adaptation" [7].

The emotional value and the action of the competitions on the development of motivation at this level, especially for the players in the sector of children and young juniors, is indisputable. Consequently, these competitive modalities should be planned throughout the year, but nonetheless, the competitions are high psycho-physical burdens, as such, in the category of children and young juniors, a frequency of such modalities can lead to the appearance of "psychic saturation phenomena,

determined by the characteristics of the game and caused by the contest states, these having resonance on the psycho-behavioral manifestations (emotional, affective, moral-volitional, intellectual, etc.) of the athletes." [8] Therefore, with regard to training in these age categories, the question remains whether the competition effort should be made mainly through the development of competition content, in accordance with the long-term training plan, or if a numerical increase in competitions can be waived or not. "The assurance of an efficient adaptation is given by the concordance between the exercises used and the requirements of the competitive activity on a small pitch, the greatest influence on the body being showed by the exercises of global character that engage over 60-70% of the muscles " [9].

Material and method.

The research was carried out during the 2018-2019 school year, starting in September, when the first player testing took place (initial testing) and ended in May with the final testing. The research was carried out on a number of 36 children, aged 6-7 years, divided into two groups -experiment and witness, numerically equal, from the "Gica Popescu Football Academy", respectively the Sport School.

During the research period, the control group of the Sports School carried out a number of 3 training sessions per week, and the experimental group of the "Gica Popescu Football Academy", 2 training sessions and 2 friendly or official matches. The official or friendly games, the competition itself held weekly by the experimental group, actually suggested to us the problem of the present work, in the sense that, it started from the idea that the game itself contributes significantly to the development of the psycho-motor qualities and to the acquisition of technical elements and procedures of the football game.

Research hypotheses:

1. The low-level sports competition, due to the increased frequency of game actions and their

speed, the high number of ball touches and the frequent shootings to the goal, contributes to the development of the motor qualities and to the learning of the basic technical elements and procedures.

2. The efficiency of the sports training lesson on the reduced pitch on the motor qualities, as well as on the basic technical elements and procedures, can be increased by elaborating structures of operational exercises, accompanied by specifying the elements aimed at the dosage of the effort, the number of repetitions, as well as the concrete exercising modalities, all practiced against the background of the functional reserves existing at this age level.

The purpose of the research is to highlight for this age, the importance of playing football on a small pitch, as well as the need to systematize the methods and means of developing the motor qualities, and to learn the basic technical elements and procedures specific to the game.

The methods used in the research were the observation method, the experiment method and the statistical-mathematical method.

The technical tests were:

1. Keeping the ball in the air through repeated kicks and head hits. Two attempts were made, with the best performance being recorded.

2. Technical-tactical exercises set. Standing, starting in running over 5 fences located at a distance of 70 cm between them and with a height of 20 cm. Taking the ball at 1,5 m from the last fence and driving it among 4 milestones arranged from 2 to 2 m, followed to the goal from the distance between 9 and 11m. The ball must enter the goal through the air. The stopwatch was started at the time of running over the fences and was stopped when the ball hit the goal. Note: If the ball did not enter the goal through the air, the player was penalized 1 sec. There were two executions, recording the best performance.

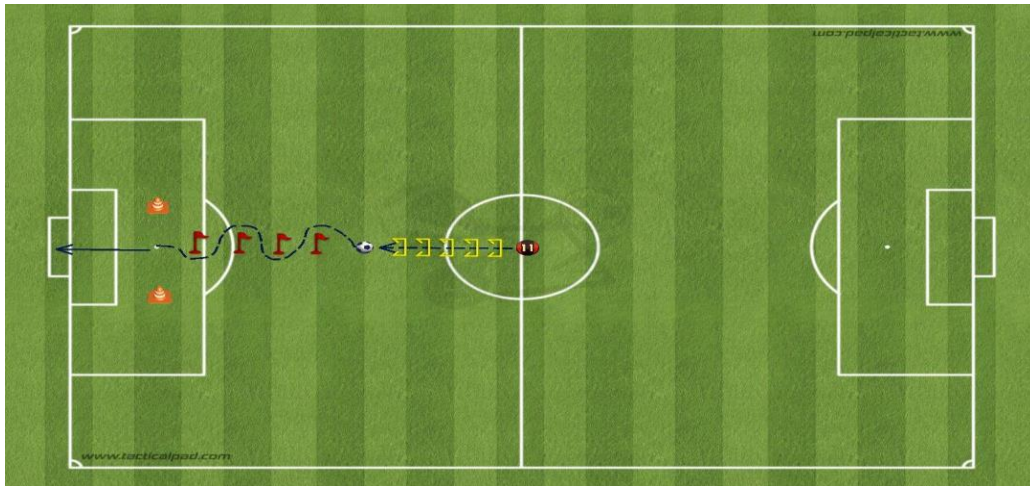


Fig. 1. Figure 1. Technical and tactical complex

3. The test for the appreciation of the operative memory with the help of the technical-tactical exercises of the football game that consisted of:

- taking the ball thrown from the edge of the center line of the field;
- driving the ball diagonally towards the edge line;
- driving the ball between 3 milestones, placed from 2 to 2 m;
- pass to a partner, placed inland, at a distance of 10-12 m;
- taking back the ball through one-two and driving it near the touch line of the field;
- dribbling an opponent towards inside (passive);
- auto passing and shoot to the goal from a distance of 11 m.

Testing methodology: Each player went twice through the route under the supervision of the

teachers, then they were sent to the locker room and brought in a row to execute the route. The scoring mode was the following: the students were awarded 8 points for no mistake; 6 points for a mistake; 5 points for two mistakes; 4 points for three mistakes. We mentioned that the errors were marked only with regard to the interpretation of the route and not related to the technical executions.

The physical tests were the following:

Physical training tests: speed running at distances of 10 and 30 m.p, long jump.

Data analysis and interpretation:

In the test of keeping the ball in the air by repeated hits, the experiment group records indices with values higher than the control one in both the initial (14.78% more) and the final (25.53% more) tests, the difference between the two tests being 10.75%, (see table 1).

Table 1

Recording date	Initial Test		Final Test
Results mean	M	3,72	4,77
	E	4,27	5,81
Percentage difference %	14,78%		25,53%
The difference between the two tests $T_F - T_i$			10,75%

Regarding the indices of the technical-tactical complex, the experiment group records values higher than the control one in both the initial (9.75% more) and the final tests, (22.22% more) the percentage difference between the two of them being 12,47% (see table 2).

Table 2

Recording date	Initial Test		Final Test
Results mean	M	9.4	8,1
	E	8,5	6,3
Percentage difference %	9,75%		22,22%
The difference between the two tests $T_F - T_i$			12,47%

Regarding the indices of the motor operative memory, manifested in the accomplishment of the technical-tactical exercises, the experiment group obtains a total score of 128 points, compared with the control group that obtains only 104 points, the difference in percentage between the two final and initial tests being 23, 07% (see table 3).

Table 3

	Errors				Total
	0	1	2	3	
Obtained score	8	6	5	4	
Witness group	4	5	6	3	104
Experiment group	11	5	2	0	128
Percentage difference %	4	5	2	8	23,07%

In all the physical tests, both at the initial and at the final test the experimental group obtains results superior to the control. Regarding the difference in percentages between the two tests (progress), initial and final, it is observed that in the speed tests, the experiment group obtains values superior to 12.6% and 10.87%, respectively. Regarding the standing long jump, the difference between the two tests is 6.61% (see table 4).

Table 4

Recording date		Initial Test	Dif în % T _i	Final Test	Dif în % T _f	T _F - T _i
Test						
Speed 10m p	M	2,7 sec	7,4%	2,5 sec	20%	12,6%
	E	2,5 sec		2,0 sec		
Speed 30m p	M	6,8 sec	8,82%	6,6 sec	19,69%	10,87%
	E	6,2 sec		5,3 sec		
Standing long jump	M	1,30 cm	6,15%	1,41 cm	12,76%	6,61%
	E	1,38 cm		1,59 cm		

Conclusions

1. Competition and training on a reduced football pitch, represents a significant means of increasing the indices of the motor qualities and the proper acquisition of the technical elements and procedures specific to the football game. Learning the technical-tactical actions, in adverse conditions, proves its usefulness in playing the football game on the field reduced to this age segment, all of which result from the test results.
2. The effort volume and intensity at this age level must be derived from the model of the competition effort for which the child is prepared, as well as from the particularities of each one, depending on the case.
3. Competitions on the reduced football pitch have a fundamental role in learning and consolidating the technical-tactical combinations, understood as game structures in continuous movement, in relation with the partners of the game, in the consolidation of player-teammate-opponent relations, as well as in the collective organization of the game in continuous movement, in order to reinforce the attack through the circulation of the ball and the players.

4. The progressive systemic training must correspond to an analogous competitive process, the playing surface and the number of players increasing with the children’s sports progression.
5. The numerical increase of the competitions leads to superior qualitative indices in tactical - technical -physical field.

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