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DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF FOOTBALL TECHNIQUE

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Abstract

This article examines the distinctive features of football technique and the methodological foundations for developing technical skills in young players. The study emphasizes that football technique differs from many other sports because most technical actions are performed with the feet, which creates specific difficulties during the initial stages of learning. Particular attention is given to the relationship between technical mastery and physical qualities such as strength, speed, endurance, agility, flexibility, and coordination. The article highlights that effective technical performance cannot be achieved without sufficient physical and psychological readiness. It also explains the importance of age-related development, noting that the conscious teaching of football technique is most appropriate for children aged 9–11, while younger children should primarily become familiar with the ball through games and playful activities. The article discusses methodological principles such as moving from simple to complex exercises, using both whole and part-by-part teaching methods, correcting technical errors in a timely manner, and applying subjective and objective assessment tools. Special attention is paid to the role of coaches in organizing systematic training, monitoring progress, and developing players' ability to perform technical actions under changing game conditions and opponent resistance. The article concludes that the successful formation of football technique depends on the integration of motor skill development, physical preparation, psychological maturity, methodological consistency, and continuous pedagogical control.

Keywords: Football technique, motor skills, development of a player's technique, physical abilities, from simple to complex, kicking.



Introduction

Without understanding the distinctive features of football technique and its differences from other sports, it is impossible to achieve success in this field. Every football player must master the methods of performing technical actions. The execution of technical methods and certain elements of ball possession, as well as their application during a game, can be characterized as follows:

Football motor skills are always based on certain qualities such as muscular strength, speed, and endurance.

A motor skill is an element that represents game technique and remains stable at a high level for a long time.

A characteristic feature of football technique is that the main technical actions are performed with the feet rather than the hands. This creates difficulties only during the initial stages of learning.

Since many football technique elements are unusual and unnatural for children, appropriate teaching methods must be used.

During a game, players apply technical skills in a unique environment. The rules allow physical contests, and opponents may interfere with the execution of technical actions. Therefore, while teaching and reinforcing technique, it is important to consider game-related struggles and the opponent's resistance.

In football, especially during matches, movements cannot be predicted in advance. They occur in specific times and spaces and cannot be completely planned. Their spatial, temporal, and dynamic characteristics differ significantly from those in many individual sports such as athletics, gymnastics, swimming, and cycling.

The nature of the game and the specific structure of movements determine not only the physical and psychological characteristics of players but also the methods of teaching and reinforcing technique. Movement training cannot be effectively conducted by separating actions into isolated components.

Future football players must become familiar with technical methods, learn them thoroughly, and apply them in game situations. To begin learning football technique, a person must reach a certain level of maturity. This means being physically and mentally prepared to acquire movement skills. Physical growth, proper functioning of the circulatory and respiratory systems, and the

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development of other organs indicate such maturity. Attention should be focused not only on height and weight but also on internal physiological development. There is a close relationship between maturation and learning movements. Certain skills, especially motor skills, can only be acquired at specific developmental stages. Otherwise, the structure of the movement and the body's functions may conflict, resulting in unsuccessful learning and potentially negative consequences in the future.

Thus, football techniques and movement skills can only be mastered when a player is physically and psychologically mature.

Methodologically, it is most appropriate to begin teaching football technique consciously at the age of 9–11 years. At this age, normally developing children possess the necessary abilities to learn football movements. Technical elements should not be forced upon younger children. Instead, they should become familiar with the properties of the ball through various games. As it is often said, at this age “the ball moves the child rather than the child moving the ball.” Through experience, children acquire basic skills in handling the ball.

Development of Physical Abilities and Technique

A football player can demonstrate effective performance only when technical skills are combined with optimal strength, speed, endurance, and other physical qualities.

Without sufficient strength and speed, technical actions cannot be performed effectively. Likewise, without endurance, technical skills lose much of their value.

Strength plays a crucial role in executing technical elements such as kicking with the foot and head, feints, and tackling. A football player can effectively use feints only if he is able to turn, stop, and change direction while moving the ball at high speed. Strength is also necessary for jumping and pushing off.

The relationship between endurance and technique is objective. A fatigued player cannot perform precise and delicate movements. Tired muscles fail to respond effectively to the nervous system regardless of the game situation. Lack of endurance eventually leads to technical mistakes.

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The connection of technique with speed, agility, flexibility, and other physical qualities is therefore of great importance. Coaches must pay close attention to these factors.

Technical training itself contributes to the development of physical qualities, although it may not be sufficient on its own. As specialists often note, a good football player is also agile.

Considering the constantly changing conditions of play, a football player must adapt quickly. An agile player is one who rapidly masters movements, uses them effectively during games, finds quick and accurate solutions to emerging situations, anticipates developments, and selects the best possible actions.

However, the ability to juggle the ball several times does not necessarily indicate agility. A football player must possess both the ability to perceive and select game situations and the skill of controlling the ball.

One of the most effective methods for developing agility is assigning tasks that are slightly more difficult than the player's current level of preparation. Any exercise can be made more challenging. For example, combining several technical actions into a sequence improves coordination skills.

Unexpected tasks can also be effective. Players should be given situations where they must choose among several options and independently decide which action to perform. This increases the variety of football movements and promotes the development of new coordination skills.

Agility exercises primarily affect the central nervous system and may cause mental fatigue. Therefore, such exercises should be performed when players are well-rested or at the beginning of training sessions.

Ball juggling is considered a special exercise that develops agility and facilitates learning football technique. Simple exercises performed with the ball in increasingly complex forms produce positive results. Game-based exercises, activities involving technical and tactical elements, and athletic games with the ball are especially beneficial.

General Methodological Guidelines

The technical preparation of football players should never be left uncontrolled. Good results can only be achieved through systematic training.

In sports schools, teaching game technique should follow the principle:

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From easy to difficult; from simple to complex.

Initially, players should learn the simplest techniques, such as:

Passing with the inside of the foot;

Kicking with the inside of the instep;

Stopping the ball with the inside of the foot.

At the same time, coaches do not need to wait until these techniques are fully mastered before introducing other technical elements.

After practicing kicking and ball control, players should learn:

Heading;

Dribbling;

Feints;

Tackling.

Goalkeepers should simultaneously learn the basic techniques of catching rolling, medium-height, and high balls.

Goalkeepers require somewhat different physical and mental abilities compared to field players. Therefore, young players who are selected as goalkeepers should be carefully evaluated.

Methods of Teaching Technical Skills

Complex movements and technical elements can be taught using two methods:

Whole (global) method

Part-by-part method

In the whole method, technical elements are taught as complete actions. There is generally no need to divide simple actions such as kicking, receiving the ball, heading, or dribbling into separate parts.

However, if a movement cannot be mastered smoothly, it may be divided into parts and taught separately.

The part-by-part method is particularly useful for teaching more complex skills such as:

Kicking with the middle of the instep;

Kicking with the outside of the foot;

Jumping headers;

Tackling by poking the ball away;

Goalkeeper dives;

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Falls;

Punching the ball away.

This method is effective only when the player understands the complete movement.

The following teaching tools are commonly used:

Explanation;

Demonstration;

Practical performance;

Error correction.

During training, physical and nervous-system loads should correspond to the player's technical level. Excessive loads, overexertion, or high-speed demands may hinder learning. Training conditions should therefore be simplified when necessary.

For beginners learning heading, softer and lighter balls should be used. Goalkeepers should practice on soft surfaces such as sand or padded areas.

Developing movement awareness is highly important. During skill acquisition, muscles send feedback signals that inform players whether their movements are correct or incorrect.

When teaching technical elements, coaches should encourage the development of skills with both the dominant and non-dominant foot. Each technique should first be practiced with the preferred foot and then with the other foot.


Correcting Errors and Monitoring Learning

Timely correction of technical errors is extremely important, especially for young players.

Insufficient understanding of a technical element may lead to incorrect perceptions about how the movement should be performed. This can be corrected through repeated explanations, demonstrations, or other visual teaching methods.

Comparing correct and incorrect actions is also effective. Sometimes players believe they are performing a movement correctly when they are not. In such cases, further explanation and enhanced self-monitoring are required.

In some situations, players may independently recognize their own mistakes while performing a task.

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Insufficient physical preparedness can be overcome through targeted development of the necessary physical qualities. Poorly mastered movements should be broken down into separate elements for correction.

Self-control develops alertness and self-confidence in players.

Coaches evaluate players in two ways:

1. Subjective Evaluation

The coach observes the player's movements and continuously evaluates performance. Praise, criticism, and corrections serve as ongoing guidance. The quality of such evaluation depends on the coach's expertise and experience.

2. Objective Evaluation

Technical skills are assessed through testing and periodic control examinations. Evaluations should be as objective as possible. Coaches should keep detailed records of each player's abilities and characteristics.

Technical readiness should be tested 2–3 times per year, particularly:

Before the championship;

After the first round;

After the second round.

Examples of Technical Tests

Long-Distance Kicking

Three kicks with each foot from below.

Distance between the kicking point and the stopping point of the ball is measured.

The average result is recorded.

Curved Kicks

Three curved kicks with each foot.

Distance to the first contact point with the ground is measured.

The average is recorded.

Target Kicking

Low shots aimed at both corners of the goal from 16.5 meters.

Three attempts with each foot.

Scores are based on successful hits.

Curved Kicks into a Circle

From 25 meters away, players attempt to curve the ball into a marked circle.

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Three attempts with each foot.

Assessment is based on successful hits.

Crossbar Challenge

From 16 meters away, players attempt to hit the crossbar.

Evaluation depends on the number of attempts required.

Long-Distance Heading

The ball is tossed vertically and headed forward using the forehead.

Average distance from three attempts is recorded.

The same exercise is then performed using the side of the forehead.

Target Heading

From 11 meters away, the player heads the ball toward the crossbar.

Scores depend on successful hits.

A second exercise is performed from 18 meters using the side of the forehead.

Ball Juggling

The ball is juggled with both feet and the head.

Evaluation is based on the number of touches before the ball touches the ground.

Conclusion

In conclusion, when a football player fully understands the distinctive features of football technique, greater opportunities emerge for improving and developing technical mastery.

Summary

This article discusses the distinctive characteristics of football technique and the methodology for developing a player's technical skills.

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