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COMPETITIVE PRACTICE IN FOREIGN CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH FOOTBALL

In the 1980s, experts from different countries with developed football, realizing that "street" football is a thing of the past, came to the conclusion that it is necessary to revise the system of training young talents and give children the opportunity to train and play according to their own rules i.e. to the "nature" of children's football. When licensing football clubs, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) defined the requirements for the development of training programs for young football players based on strategic tasks, where priority is given to the individual development of the player, and the achievement of sports results is secondary ("development first, then the result"). World experience shows that in order to create conditions for the gradual development of the diverse qualities of young players, it is necessary: firstly, to refuse to participate in official competitions up to 12 years old in order to focus on the quality and effectiveness of the training process aimed at individual development and training of a creative player; secondly, to conduct training sessions in a game form on a high emotional background with the obligatory consideration of age and individual characteristics of children. It is the application of the game method that is the key to effective learning, during which individual opportunities develop, game intelligence is formed, the foundations of the child's technical and tactical skills are laid, which in the future will determine the player's potential at a professional level.

Keywords: "nature" of children's football, Union of European Football Associations, official competitions, the effectiveness of the training process, game method.

В. Ніколаєнко, А. Осипцов, І. Дуб, А. Кошолоп, О. Вертель, М. Балічев. Змагальна практика в зарубіжному дитячо-юнацькому футболі. У 1980-х роках фахівці ряду країн з розвиненим футболом, усвідомлюючи, що «вуличний» футбол йде в минуле, прийшли до висновку про необхідність перегляду системи навчання юних талантів і надати дітям можливість тренуватися та грати за їхніми власними правилами, тобто повернутися до «природи» дитячого футболу. При ліцензуванні футбольних клубів Союз європейських футбольних асоціацій визначив вимоги до складання програм з навчання юних футболістів, засновані на вирішенні стратегічних завдань, де пріоритет віддається індивідуальному розвитку гравця, а досягнення спортивних результатів відходить на другий план ("спочатку розвиток, потім - результат"). Світовий досвід свідчить про те, що для створення умов поступового розвитку різнобічних якостей юних гравців, необхідно: по-перше, відмовитися від участі в офіційних змаганнях до 12 років, щоб зробити акцент на якість і ефективність тренувального процесу, спрямованого на індивідуальне розвиток і підготовку креативного гравця; по-друге, проводити навчально-тренувальні заняття в ігровій формі на високому емоційному рівні з обов'язковим урахуванням вікових та індивідуальних особливостей дітей. Саме застосування ігрового методу є ключовим моментом для ефективного навчання, в процесі якого розвиваються індивідуальні можливості, формується ігровий інтелект, закладаються основи техніко-тактичної майстерності дитини, які в подальшому будуть визначати потенціал гравця на професійному рівні.

Ключові слова: «природа» дитячого футболу, Союз європейських футбольних асоціацій, офіційні змагання, ефективність тренувального процесу, ігровий метод.

Problem statement. In the 1980s, experts from several countries with developed football, realizing that street football was a thing of the past, came to the conclusion that it was necessary to revise the system of training young talents and provide children with the opportunity to train and play according to their own rules, that is, return to the "nature" of children's football, Vargas F.S., (2005), Michels R., (2001), Ruiz L., (2002).

In particular, the technical department of the Royal Football Union of the Netherlands since 1985 began to look for an alternative to "street" football, realizing that "street" football was the most natural training system that can be found, Kormelink H.,

(1997). Over time, requirements were developed for the organization of the training process with young football players six to twelve years old, which reduced to the following, Van Lingen B., (1998):

- training should take the form of a game. You should not conduct classes aimed at teaching technical skills or the development of motor abilities, as well as working on what the player is unlikely to encounter on the field during the game;
- a children's trainer should offer various game options (5 x 2, 4 x 2, 6 x 3, etc.) from the simplest to the most difficult, taking into account not the calendar, but the "football" age (level of skill and preparedness);
- in addition to three hourly lessons, players should be given a "homework" weekly to practice the techniques;
- games 4 x 4 (6–8 years), 7 x 7 (9–10 years), 9 x 9 (11–12 years) 11 x 11 (13 years and older) should be considered as a means of developing children's ball possession skills in solving game problems;

- the team must have trainers specially trained for working with youth;
- a training should take place in a favorable atmosphere, gives pleasure and contribute to the formation of positive character traits in children;

- as far as there are very few innate talents, coaches of youth teams need to pay attention to each player who, with proper training, can become a good football player. Particular attention is given to "reserve players". From a social point of view, this is the most important group. After their active sports career, they can become referees, board members or just loyal people. They are indispensable for any club. Therefore, in clubs, especially today, it is necessary to take care of maintaining a favorable social climate.

Analysis of topical researches. A similar approach has been widely used in Spain, where the training and development of young football players from seven to 15 years old is carried out through a large number of training and educational games. In addition to this (in particular, in FC Barcelona), in the activities with children, the education of the individual (in terms of human qualities) is in the foreground, general education is in the second, and football training is only in the third. Hence the main criteria for the coach to work with teams under 15 years old is his pedagogical abilities, the ability to prepare a football player, the ability to train, Guia Metodologica Del Programa De Formacion Del Barcelona F.C., (2014), Vargas F. S., (2005).

It should be added that in a progressive football community, the rules are followed: the coach is for players, not players for a coach. Do not suppress a personality, but develop it. The main stake is on the development of a vibrant personality. Here, the coach cannot afford to offend the player. Even training tasks are not given to players in an ordered tone, but they explain what purpose they serve and what effect they give. Thinking, developed personalities are always stronger than submissive performers. After all, it is they who make their trainers bad or good, Cale A., (2004), Carney J., (2002).

The renowned German specialist H.Wein, (2004) developed the children's program "FUNino", or, as it is called in many countries of the world, the "Renaissance of street football", for teaching children under ten years of age. He proposed more than 30 versions of this game where children play on a 32x25-meter court with four gates on each sideline. Two teams of three players and one with a substitution take part. The goal can be scored from within the six-meter zone. The goal of the game is to increase intelligence, develop creativity and analyze game situations young football players learn very quickly, because the game situations are repeated regularly, and all the children are constantly involved in the training process.

Numerous studies have found that with a smaller format of the game, children perform more touches of the ball, dribbling and shots on goal, more transitions from attack to defense and back, and a simplified tactical environment makes the decision-making process easier and the game visually understandable for children Almeida C.H., (2012), Andriatti P.E., (2009).

Presentation of the main material. The ideas of famous sports specialists I. Balyi, (2001) and Michels R., (2001), set forth in the athlete's long-term development programs and containing the provision that young children should not participate in competitions where tables are kept and distribution of places between participants are supposed, were found reflected in the progressive football community, Ruiz L., (2002), Talentförderprogramm, (2002).

Currently, the football federations of Australia, England, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, the USA, Scotland and others have officially banned the participation of children under 12 years old in regular competitions, Baan R., (2011), Van Lingen B., (1998). For example, the AFC Ajax program explicitly states that the result as such is completely irrelevant for players under 13 years of age. Coaches are guided by the fact that only in older age groups can the opponent's strength be taken into account when determining the composition of their team, however, even in such games, they must adhere to the club's philosophy of playing - to play creative and attacking football, Kormelink H., (1997).

Moreover, when licensing football clubs, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) defined the requirements for the development of training programs for young football players based on strategic tasks, where the priority is given to the individual development of the player, and the achievement of sports results is secondary ("development first, then the result.") UEFA Club Licensing System Manual (2006).

The actions taken by the English Football Association (FA), which prepared a strategic plan for the development of youth football, aimed at quality training of players and attracting a large number of children to the classes, The FA Group Strategic Plan (2010), The FA Youth Development Review (2010) are also indicative.)

Implementation of the plan will be phased. The changes will affect the leveling of the significance of the result and determination of the optimal number of teams of participants in the competition (Tables 1 and 2), which will be held over a three-four-year period.

In England, the participation of children under 12 years old in regular competitions was officially prohibited. The main changes occurred in the 2014–2015 season, when players seven and eight years old played in 5x5 format, and teenagers aged 11,12 and 13 years old played in 9x9 format. Their Game Youth Football Development U7 - U8 (2012), Their Game Youth Football Development U9 - U10 (2012), Their Game Youth Football Development U11 – U12 (2012).

Table 1. Scheme of participation of children in football competitions in England
 The FA Group Strategic Plan (2010)

Season 2013/2014		Season 2014/2015	Season 2015/2016	Season 2016/2017
Children under 7 years old No tables		Children under 7 years old No tables	Children under 7 years old No tables	Children under 7 years old No tables
Children under 8 years old No tables		Children under 8 years old No tables	Children under 8 years old No tables	Children under 8 years old No tables
Children under 9 years old No tables		Children under 9 years old No tables	Children under 9 years old No tables	Children under 9 years old No tables
Children under 10 years old League Tables		Children under 10 years old League Tables	Children under 10 years old League Tables	Children under 10 years old League Tables
Children under 11 years old League Tables		Children under 11 years old League Tables	Children under 11 years old League Tables	Children under 11 years old League Tables
Children under 12 years old League Tables		Children under 12 years old League Tables	Children under 12 years old League Tables	Children under 12 years old No tables

Among experts, it is widely believed that football is a very difficult game, where a large number of tactical decisions are possible only in games on large fields. Despite this, when teaching the game of football, in order for the process to be effective, it is necessary to move gradually step by step in accordance with the age characteristics of the children, and not quickly "immerse" the children in adult football.

It is a known fact that children under 14 years of age do not usually experience significant growth spurts and are not yet ripe for playing in large fields, Barbero Á. J. C., (2007). Thus, when changing the game of indoor football at the age of ten to the 11x11 format at 11 years, the goal parameters increase by 265%, and the fields increase to 400%, while the fastest growing children add only 5 cm in growth in a few months, Rodríguez-Marroyo J.A., (2009).

Table 2. The number of teams participating in children's football competitions in England The FA Group Strategic Plan (2010)

Season 2013–2014	Season 2014–2015	Season 2015–2016
up to 7 years old 5x5	up to 7 years old 5x5	up to 7 years old 5x5
up to 8 years old 7x7	up to 8 years old 5x5	up to 7 years old 5x5
up to 9 years old 7x7	up to 9 years old 7x7	up to 9 years old 7x7
up to 10 years old 7x7	up to 10 years old 7x7	up to 10 years old 7x7
under 11 years old 9 x9	under 10 years old 9 x9	under 10 years old 9 x9
under 12 years old 9x9 or 11x11	under 12 years old 9x9	under 12 years old 9x9
under 13 years old 11x11	under 13 years old 9x9 or 11x11	under 13 years old 9x9

Note. The maximum size, but you can play in smaller team squads.

It is another important point. Overcoming long distances, young players do too much anaerobic work, which leads to an increase in heart rate to a level corresponding to the signs of a "diastole defect". It is believed that as a result of a decrease in the duration of diastole, myocardial blood supply is disturbed, and hypoxia causes the development of anaerobic glycolysis. Accumulation of hydrogen ions in the myocardium to the optimal concentration stimulates myocardial cell hypertrophy, and if the duration of the action of such or a higher concentration of hydrogen ions in the myocardium is too long, catabolic reactions can develop. Thus, when conducting games in large fields, conditions are created for the appearance of signs of myocardial dystrophy, Seluyanov V.N., (2012), Capranica L., (2001).

FA's next step was to ban the eight-month competition season for children 7–11 years old. At the same time, a flexible system for conducting children's competitions was proposed. This approach is based on the educational model of learning, in which children are involved in the learning process with in-session participation in games and festivals, where the result fades into the background, and individuality, development of the child's creative abilities, and satisfaction of his needs come first. The FA Youth Development Review, (2010). In the new competition structure, the season will be divided into three parts, each of which ends with a tournament or festival. The duration of each part will increase as the children get older. Thus, children of seven and eight years will participate in two-week, nine and ten years - in four-week, and eleven-year-olds in six-week Developing football for everyone (2011) tournaments.

Instead of a long championship, it is more expedient to organize short tournaments - for one, two, three days or more. This structure of the competition reduces the significance of the final result, and, as a result, the children do not get nervous, relax and increase their creative potential. Thus, a flexible competition system will allow managers and trainers to be creative in their learning process and thereby better meet the needs of children and reduce the impact on them of the established mentality expressed in the motto "win at all costs" The FA Youth Development Review, (2010), Eskandarian A., (2012).

Football Academy Manager F.C. Liverpool Frank Skelly notes: "Not only in Liverpool, but in all the academies of the Premier League clubs, children under the age of twelve are prohibited from playing in regular tournaments, where there are tables and distribution of seats. Work on the result can psychologically break a young man who at this age, individual qualities need to be developed. Pupils are allowed to play only in friendly matches with other academies, and their number for the season should not exceed 30. This is the academy that gave the world Gerard and Owen (2014).

In addition, a player who has signed a contract with the Academy is guaranteed to play at least 24 games a year. It should be noted that FA exercises strict control over the competitive activity of young football players, regulating the number of matches played (Table 3.).

Table 3. *Competitive practice mode for young football players in England Youth Development Rules (2013)*

Age, years	Number of games per season
9–11	18–30 (all in small fields)
12–16	18–30
17–21	24–42

A similar method has long been used in FC Barcelona. Pupils of the club in the year-round championship begin to play from 12-13 years old, participating only in short tournaments Guia Metodologica Del Programa De Formacion Del Barcelona F.C., (2014), Vargas F. S., (2005). One should dwell on such a phenomenon as the “effect of relative age”. Unfortunately, in all sports the influence of the calendar date of birth of the child takes place. So, children born at the beginning of the calendar year have a clear advantage over those born at the end of the year. It was found that more than 80% of children who fell into elite (professional) sport were born in the first three months of the year, and less than 10% were born in the last three months of Martin R. P., (2004), Morris J. G., (2006). In particular, in football, children born in winter have 4 times more chances to achieve sporting successes than their peers born in September and December. If we take this moment into account, we will be able to save up to 50–70% of all promising children, and not use the existing competition system from an early age, Lesma M. L., (2011), Simmons C., (2001).

The Scottish Football Federation has proposed its reaction against the “relative age effect” by moving from a calendar year to a school year. The result of these changes was an increase in the number of children playing football and the retention of children born in the summer of Scottish FA in football, (2010), McLeish H., (2010).

And yet, the easiest and most effective way to influence the “effect of relative age” is to cancel official competitions up to 12 years old, and ideally - until mid-adolescence. Thus, when victory is less important than development, all players will receive an equal opportunity to play and better training.

It is important to note that the long-term program for training football talent in Western Europe has a common periodization structure. Thus, in Germany and Spain, the process of training football players is divided into two periods, in accordance with which the priorities of the Guia Metodologica Del Programa De Formacion Del Barcelona F.C. (2014), Oscar P. (2012):

- the period of development and training (7–15 years) ensures the development of individual abilities of young football players through the use of a large number of game tasks, training and educational games;
- the competition period (from 16 years to a professional team) ensures the development of the game potential of each player through active participation in games for the result.

Such a practical approach in football fully corresponds to the key provisions of the theory of periodization of sports training, Platonov V.N., (2013). It is clear that each country, each club has its own subtleties and differences associated with both historical and cultural traditions, Report on Youth Academies in Europe (2012). This is reflected in the preparation and selection. There is such a conceptual approach to the training of young football players, which is the abbreviation “TIPS”: “technique, intuition, personality, speed.” For example, the Spaniards (and they put this in the first place) when selecting guys for teams of an older level have an understanding of the game Problems in Geometry - FC Barcelona football school (Spain) (2014). The Dutch have technical equipment. Starting from the 1990s, FC “Ajax” pays great attention to how a football player works with the ball, to the speed and focus of a young player on achieving victory, Michels R. (2001), Kormelink H. (1997). But among Italians, the most important aspect of upbringing is the clear implementation of game discipline, and they are actively starting to practice tactics at the age of 14-15. This can be seen by watching the ACF Fiorentina training. A very strict implementation of the trainer’s instructions plus everything is a modern scientific approach to the training process, Arcelli E. Calcio (2004).

It is worth stopping at the philosophical approach to physical training, adopted in the Netherlands, which boils down to the fact that in the process of physical preparation the main focus is on the work of muscles through the understanding of the fact that muscles execute commands sent by the brain. Muscles are not able to learn, unlike the brain. It is incorrect to argue that players will play better if their lung capacity is increased, or it is better to play their head if the strength of the leg muscles increases. In order to learn how to play football at a good level, you do not need to simplify football to the level of physical activity, but you need to focus on solving motor problems in the process of playing soccer. If the player knows how to solve game situations, then his brain will adequately control the muscles. The more experience a player has in solving situational problems, the faster he makes the right decision.

Therefore, the task of physical preparation is to improve the quality of the game of football, Van Lingen B. (1998), Wein H. (2011).

When assessing the effectiveness of the game, the level of physical fitness of the player is always taken into account. For example:

- ability to solve problems faster, over a long period of time, under pressure from the opponent and the audience;
- ability to pressure, play extraordinary, move from defense to attack and vice versa.

The coach must know the basics of physical fitness, choose the right training tools (table. 3.1), which are reduced, first of all, to create such game situations that will encourage players to perform actions better, more often or faster. The quality of the game is based on the ever-increasing difficulty in completing motor tasks. It is necessary to give the players with a challenge that they must willingly accept. Evaluation of the effectiveness of such motor tasks will not consist of heart rate, distance covered, kilograms or minutes, but the player’s ability to complete the task, Michels R. (2001).

Table 4. Regulation of the orientation of the training load, Michels R. (2001)

Methodological conditions	Effect
Reducing the size of the playing space	Less time to make a decision
Increase the size of the playing space	More time, longer distances for running and passing the ball
More competitors	Less time, harder to "read" the game
Less competitors	More time, easier to "read" the game
Opponent pressing	Less time, harder to "read" the game
Using "Offside"	Less space, less time
A sufficient number of balls outside the playing pitch	Continuous play
To score balls only with your head	Play winger and a lot of head game
Time limit (play only 5 min, last minute)	Players are forced to more effectively attack, fight for the ball, control the ball, etc.

Conclusions. The analysis of literary sources and the generalization of the practical experience of training athletes in team sports games, and in particular in football, indicate the presence of a large number of scientific knowledge on various aspects of the process of many years of player development. However, these data are disparate in nature, are not integrated into an integrated system, which complicates their implementation in the process of many years of improvement of athletes. The studies do not fully take into account that the training of qualified football players is a long, multi-stage process, the content of which should be subject to the creation of conditions for the full realization of the natural inclinations and individual capabilities of young athletes, taking into account the requirements of modern high-speed football. World experience shows that in order to create conditions for the gradual development of the diverse qualities of young players, it is necessary: firstly, to refuse to participate in official competitions up to 12 years old in order to focus on the quality and effectiveness of the training process aimed at individual development and training of a creative player; secondly, to hold training sessions in a game form on a high emotional background with the obligatory consideration of age and individual characteristics of children. It is the application of the game method that is the key to effective learning, during which individual opportunities develop, game intelligence is formed, the foundations of the child's technical and tactical skills are laid, which in the future will determine the player's potential at a professional level.

The results can be used as the basis for research on the scientific substantiation of approaches to adapting the experience of leading countries in organizing the training process and holding children's competitions to the conditions of other countries.

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