

Football in Early Childhood, Achievements as Processes or Goals?

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Abstract: Early childhood is the phase when children progress into adolescence and adulthood. In early childhood phase, children have to find cheerful feeling and happiness in playing football. Therefore, they keep loving football without any boredom in practicing and children should have the appropriate training program which based on their ages. Parents and the coach should lower their ego to accomplish achievements in the golden age of football. Thus, at childhood age, achievement should be considered as a process to progress and to reach the next stage in acquiring achievements at adolescence or adulthood period. Hence, it is not the period to achieve purposes in early childhood.

1 INTRODUCTION

Principally, playing a game is part of the children's world. In this case, football is one of the sports games. Thus, playing football has to be surrounded with enjoyable atmosphere, but the structured and measured methods need to be considered. Therefore, the highest achievement in the golden age of football can be achieved.

According to Smith and Pellegrini (2008), playing is self-interest activities conducted in fun ways which is not oriented to final outcomes, but to be more flexible, active, and positive. It means that playing is not the kind of activity done to satisfy others but it is done merely because of the players' willingness.

In regard to football, children in early childhood (in the age of 6-9 years old) should be happy when they are playing football. Therefore, this sport becomes one of the media in education and learning besides the lesson in formal school. The factor that supports children's success in loving football is the role of people around them, like the parents, the coach, and their friends. Those elements have to work together in accordance with their respective roles.

Early childhood is the proper age for physical and emotional growth of a child. Children in this age, in the golden age, also have significant development of skills, like in playing, learning new things, increasing curiosity, imitating whatever they

see. Therefore, at this age, children are more active (Rahman, 2009). According to Syaodih (2008), all these development aspects in children should be considered by the educators in optimizing their potentials. If these development aspects are underdeveloped, the future of the children will be affected. Thus, the children's development in the next period will be hampered and the children will also find difficulties in facing their future lives.

The intellectual aspect of growth starts with the development skill in observing, finding correlation and solving simple problem. Then, this development grows into comprehension and more complicated problem solving. This aspect grows rapidly when children start to enter elementary school (in the age of 6-7 years). It will develop constantly during the learning period and reach the highest stage in high school period (in the age of 16-17 years old). The development of social aspects starts in childhood era (in the age of 3-5 years old). Children love to play with their peers. This friendship continues and occurs rather fast during the school era (in the age of 11-12 years old) and grows rapidly during the adolescence period. Social development in childhood occurs through the relationship between friends in any forms of game (Syaodih, 2008).

The purpose of football game which is to gain victory should not be mixed with the goal of football in early childhood that does not concern about victory. The football match in early childhood indeed prioritizes more on the learning process.

However, football in early childhood still principally looks for victories (PSSI, 2017).

2 DISCUSSION

2.1 Early Childhood Development

Children in early childhood are those who still in the development process. At this age, every aspect of child's development undergoes rapid progress (Saputra, 2017). Some development aspects of children in early childhood were related on intellectual, psychomotor, social-emotional, language, moral, and religious aspects. In individual development, common development principles are as follows (1) development lasts a lifetime and encompasses every aspect. Development does not only relate to certain aspects but includes every aspect. The course of individual's development is rhythmic and the rhythm of the development of each child is not always typical, (2) every child has different tempo and quality of development because they have distinctive nature of growth, (3) development is relatively dynamic, following certain patterns. The development of a domain precedes by other domains, (4) development occurs gradually, little by little, (5) development occurs from general abilities into more specific skills, following the differentiation and integration processes. The differentiation or disintegration into smaller things and the process of integration occur in the development. In this integration, some small/special skills merge into a skill or proficiency, (6) normally, the development of individuals follows every phase. However, due to specific factors, certain phase is passed rapidly so it looks like this phase has been skipped while other phases are passed slowly. Due to that matter, the development seems hampered, (7) to certain limits, the development of an aspect can be accelerated or hampered. The development is influenced by the innate and environmental factors, (8) the development of certain aspects correlates or parallels with other aspects. The development of social skill emerges along with language skill, motoric skill emerges along with observation skill and etc.

2.2 The Method of Football Practice in Indonesia

The method of practice and training is the approach used in delivering football ideas to the players being

trained. This approach considers the effectiveness of message delivery as well as the demand in football learning on each age group, while practicing phase is the classification strategy in the phases of age grouping and its coaching focus. This strategy was selected by considering the growing age as well as physiological development of human in general. Therefore, the right football materials for specific ages need to be determined. All these efforts are performed so the players in their adolescence period will be ready to play the philosophy of Indonesian football (Indonesian football coaching curriculum, 2017).

PSSI as the parent organization of Indonesian football divides ages into four phases. The first phase is the age group of 6-9 years old named as Football Excitement Phase. The second phase is the age group of 6-9 years old named as Football Skill Development Phase. The third phase is the age group of 14-17 years old named as Football Game Development Phase while the last phase is the age group of above 18 years old (senior) named as Performance Phase.

The basis of the training phasing strategy is initiated from the weaknesses of Indonesian football which are linked to the demand in the top-level football. The early basis is the target to create 18 years old-Indonesian players who have reached maximum performance in which these players have the ability to do attack-transition-defend based on the football philosophy of Indonesia.

2.3 Training Method for Children in 6 to 9-year-old and 10 to 13-year-old Training Concept

The training method for 12 to 13-year-old children is focused on the movements/ actions in football game. Football game requires seriousness in learning and prime motoric movements. Four years before the players learn football action skills, they need to like football. In addition, the players also need to be taught about the variety of movements, so they will easily learn the skills of football actions. Therefore, the age of 6-9 years old serves as the phase when the players are having fun in learning the movements. This phase is referred to as Football Excitement Phase.

Football Excitement Phase is for 6-9 years of age. The 6-9 years old phase is the first phase of rapid development where legs and hands grow longer than the torso. At the same time, the organs in cardiac respiratory system are expanding on their sizes. As the consequences, the players move a lot,

have rough coordination of movement, untrained muscles, low concentration level, dominant sensitive attitude, and having adult idol as the role model.

This early phase is also the time when the children start their schools. With new environment outside the school, the children are in the transition phase to discover new social environment. In this context, football school becomes the third new environment after home and school. The football school must become a place that is similar to school in which the children are able to learn how to socialize, accept the presence of the coach and the peers.

According to PSSI (2017), the training used in football game is play-Learn-Play method. It is related to the structure of daily practice made for the players at this age in which the training is started with short and fun warming-up. After that, the training is directly started with a game, for instance 2 vs 2, 3 vs 3, to 4 vs 4. The purpose of Playing (M) at this early stage is to make the players happy and able to seize the big concept of football game itself. After the players seize the big picture of football game, they need to do Learn (B) phase.

In this stage, the players will be introduced to various actions in football that will be useful if they do the actions properly in the game. At the end, the football actions that have been studied can be done in the Play (M). The recommended game is 4 vs 4 without keeper. In this M-B-M method, the topic that being given should not only one. In psychology, a single topic will bore the players at this age. 2-3 types of topic can be given in this stage (PSSI, 2017).

Another crucial thing to do is that this training phase has to be fun. One of the ways is by arranging the training in a tournament format. The tournament format will increase the fun and enthusiasm of the children in the learning process. The coach also has to show full enthusiasm and spirit. Positive energy shown by coaches will make the players passionate. Especially in 4 vs 4 game (M), the players will naturally play without any rule and gather around the ball. As an initial step, this condition is a common thing and can be ignored. The correct use of proper language becomes the success key to introduce the game rules.

2.4 Football Skill Development Phase (10-13 years old)

The phase of 10-13 years of age is commonly called as the golden age of learning. In this stage, the important materials of football will be taught and

absorbed quickly by the players. Better movement coordination makes the players learn various actions of football easily.

The advantages are as follows (1) more proportional body, a biological and physical balance, competitiveness attitude increased, craving to win, (2) prime movement coordination, be enthusiastic about new things, eager to learn, (3) increased concentration and the ability to observe situation.

This phase is very effective for the players to learn new football skills. In addition, the meaning of these skills should not be simplified merely as the execution of movement but as functional action skills of football. It means that every action that is created has benefit toward the game achievement, like scoring goals as much as possible and getting conceded as minimum as possible (PSSI, 2017). Training method being used is learn-Learn-Play in which the content of learning (B) is the Introduction of Skill Practice. This training could also be functioned as warming-up to take the players into the next training. Although this training is the opening session and be functioned for warming up, the materials of the introduction of skill practice should contain the process of communication making decision-execution. Multi-options should be available in the materials, so the players have to communicate and take decisions frequently.

The content of Learn (B) is the Practice of Skill Components in which this practice is quite similar to the game situation. There are friends and opponents and the chain of communication-making decision-execution. The practice is a game-based activity with certain rules and formats, so that the game will unconsciously stimulate the football action skills that want to be trained to occur more frequently.

Although every practice always covered with a specific topic, the application of the topic should be realistic and functional for the game. The topics related to the skills in dribbling, passing, shooting, and the others are the means to attack. However, they are not the purpose. Therefore, the coach should not be trapped in the coaching topics.

A coach has massive responsibilities. The progress of Indonesian football is determined by the quality of players created by football coaching in early childhood. High and low qualities of the players are certainly determined by the quality of the coaches. The philosophy of Indonesian football will be meaningless if the coaches do not take their responsibilities properly. According to PSSI (2018), the coach has 3 main competences. First, the football knowledge competence. It is described as follows (1) the coach is obligated to have deep

understanding about football and how to play it. The understanding/ comprehension toward the way to attack-transition-defend as well as the principles contained within it, (2) coaching competence. After having knowledge about football, the coach should understand how to transfer the insight/ knowledge to the players. The coach should have didactic skill and training methodology. Therefore, the training and the match (learning process) could occur systematically, (3) managerial competence. The meaning of managerial in this context is related to administrative management as well as human management. Administrative management includes recording and documentation while human management is associated with the relationships with players, staffs, management, etc.

2.5 The Process of Proper Training

The success of team in match is determined by the success of team in training. The success of team in training is highly determined by the degree to which the coach conduct proper training processes. In general, training processes are divided into several stages: planning, preparation, implementation, and evaluation. These processes are the continuously-rotating cycle (Rosca, 2017).

2.5.1 Planning

Planning is the first stage. The most important thing in creating a planning is making the Game as the starting point. From the game or practice, the coach then has to define the issues. Based on the defined issues, the coach designs the practice. For football in early childhood in particular, the game analysis has to be linked to weekly/ monthly practice plan. The coach has to be able to analyze the problems that will and may occur during the practice, then define them. The instrument to help the coach define the problems is by answering 5W questions. After the football issues/ problems are defined, they become the basis for the coach to design the training. The principle being used is “training like playing, playing like training!”. In other words, the created training design has to be similar to the game in which the purpose of training has to be focused on solving the problems.

2.5.2 Preparation and Implementation

After creating the training plan, the coach can take the field with a directed reference. The next stage is preparing the training. Training preparation is

associated with players, field, and training equipment. The coach has to consider the number of players. In the case of football school with fluctuating presence of players, make sure that the coach creates a rule that the players who unable to attend the training must inform the coach. Other things to consider are the available field and the training equipment. Make sure that the coach creates efficient practice grid from the beginning until the session is over by using efficient location of the field.

The coach explains the regulation and the procedure of training while demonstrating them. After being demonstrated, the players should try. If the players have tried correctly as the indication of understanding, the training can be started. The tasks of the coach are to observe the training performance then identify the mistakes. When mistakes occur, the coach must shout “STOP”! The purpose of this shouting is to evaluate while freezing the situation. All players have to stop immediately and should not move. When the situation is frozen, the coach can come to the player/ players who make the mistakes. When correcting the mistake, it is important that the coach should not do direct coaching by directly punishing the players for the mistakes but explain the solution. The coach should conduct question and answer session to guide the players in finding the solutions (guided discovery). This effort is done for the players so that they can always think and analyze. If the players are able to find their own solution, the solution will be embedded in their brain memories.

2.5.3 Evaluation

Evaluation starts directly when the training session is over. When the training is almost over, make sure that the coach asks some questions to the players. Based on the players’ answers over the coach’s questions, the success rate of the training can be measured. If the players are able to answer correctly, thus they understand the training given. Besides questioning the players, the coach also needs to make reflections. This effort is conducted by doing self-questioning. Honest answers of these questions will become the crucial evaluation materials for the coach. With reference of evaluation from players, himself, and the game, the coach can redo the planning of training.

2.6 The Coach is the Role Model

Besides core competences and mastery toward training processes, another thing that not less important is becoming a coach with integrity. Coach is the main representative of football game. What the coach does on and off the field will be an example for the players, administrators, parents and the community. Due to that matter, the coach should act based on what he says. Before the coach demand something to the players, he has to demand it toward himself. If the coach wants the players to be punctual; thus, he has to show that he is being discipline about punctuality. If the coach wants the players to communicate actively on the field, the coach must be communicative as well. With the integrity and professionalism, the respect of players toward their coach will grow. The players should not respect and appreciate the coach due to hierarchy or fear.

The respect comes from the players because they see the coach as the role models that always giving the best. Giving the best in running the profession as a coach is becoming a learner in football game. Therefore, the coach has to always learn either formally or informally. Having formal learning is by following the coaching certification of D, C, B, A, and Pro licenses. Whatever background the coach has, coaching course is obligatory.

The experience as ex-player or having Bachelor Degree in Sports will become valuable qualifications for the coach. However, the primary knowledge in training football is acquired from formal training courses.

The learning to become a reliable coach has to be done informally as well. The most effective learning medium is the game itself. Football coaches have to spare their time to watch football matches as many as they can. Watching football games while taking positive/ negative things from the games is an up-to-date learning process. The learning can be done with other supporting references like reading books and articles. By reading, the coach will have newperspectives and improve the coaching knowledge. The presence of internet will facilitate the coach to find the latest coaching information as many as possible.

3 CONCLUSION

Considering the above explanations, the accentuation that has to be emphasized on the coach and children's parents who participate in football (in

early childhood) in the age of 6-9 years old and 11-13 years old is the process toward maximum achievement on the golden age of football and to prepare the proper basic technique. Therefore, physical, tactical, and mental developments of players will grow properly and appropriately. Children in early childhood in football (6-9 years old) have to feel happy in playing football. Thus, football sport becomes one of the education and learning media besides the learning in formal school. The supporting factor of one of the children's successes in loving football is the role of the people around them, like the role of parents, the coaches and the peers/ friends. All these elements have to work together in accordance with their respective roles. The purpose of football game which is to find victory should not be mixed with the football in early childhood which does not prioritize victory. The football game in early childhood prioritizes more on the learning process.

The training method for the ages of 6-9 years old used is play-Learn-Play (m-B-M). The meaning of this m-B-M is associated with the structure of daily practice arranged for the players in that category of age. In this m-B-M method, the topic that be given should not be a single-topic. In psychological manner, single topic will bore the players in this category of age. The method used in the ages of 11-13 years old is learn-Learn-Play (b-B-M) in which the content of learning (b) is the Introduction of Skill Practice. This practice/training also can be functioned as the warming up stage in taking the players to the next training.

A coach has massive responsibilities. The progress of Indonesian football is determined by the quality of the players created by the football coaching in early childhood. High and low qualities of the players are certainly determined by the quality of the coachess. The philosophy of Indonesian football will be meaningless if the coaches do not take their responsibilities properly. According to PSSI (2018), the coach has 3 main competences related to football knowledge competence. They are described as follows. 1) The coach is obligated to have deep understanding about football and how to play it. 2) Coaching competence and training methodologies. 3) Managerial competence. The training processes are divided into four stages: Planning, Preparation, Implementation, and Evaluation. The coach is the main representative of football game. What the coach does on and off the field will be an example for the players, the administrators, the parents and the community. Having formal learning is by following the coaching

certification of D, C, B, A, and Pro licenses. Whatever background the coach has, coaching course is obligatory. The experience as ex-player or having Bachelor Degree in Sports will become valuable qualifications for the coaches. However, the primary knowledge in training football is acquired from formal training courses. The learning has to be conducted in informal manner as well.

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