

The Sportsmanship of Young Football Players: Challenge in Developing Character of Young Football Players

Sulistiyono¹, Sugiyanto¹, Agus Kristiyanto¹, Sapta Kunto¹

¹*Sport Science Faculty, Sebelas Maret University, Surakarta, Indonesia*

Keywords: Sportsmanship, Character, Youth Sport, Football and Coaching.

Abstract: Sportsmanship is supposed to be an obligatory character of football players and start to be habituated from the young ages. Various player behaviors in football competition have turned out to be different than they are expected. Aggressive behavior, fooling the referee, and provoking opponents show that sportsmanship has not been applied properly. Based on these conditions, this research aimed at investigating how sportsmanship among young club members of football schools in Special Region of Yogyakarta (DIY) Province, Indonesia. The method chosen was survey with questionnaires as measuring instrument. The questionnaire contains self-assessment of sportsmanship in competition atmosphere. The research findings show that the average sportsmanship of young football players is low. The study of the training model and coaching that seeks to develop the characters of young football players is a challenge in the future.

1 INTRODUCTION

Football competitions played from junior to senior level employ a coaching system so that expected achievements can be reached. Competition events are held from regional, national and international levels (Balyi & Way, 2014). Optimal achievements in football competitions require maximum performance from every individual player and performance of football team (Astagna, Mpellizzeri, Haouachi, & Anzi, 2013). As sport competitions, football matches have intrinsic values that can be learned indirectly such as hard work, spirit, team work, fairness, respect for other values (McFee, 2012), (Brackenridge, Pitchford, & Wilson, 2011). Football competitions that aim at determining and choose winners, on the other hand, have negative behaviors shown by football players; for example, rude behavior that makes injuries (aggression), cheating the referee (cheating) (Kamis, Newmark, Begel, & Glick, 2016), doping (Morente-Sánchez & Zabala, 2013), intimidating, harassing (Seamus & Ivan, 2006), and being racist (Burley & Fleming, 1997), (Cleland, 2014).

Aggression behavior (Gencheva, 2015), (Gümüşdağ, Yıldırım, Yamaner, & Kartal, 2011), done by football players in a match results in losses to opposing players, spectators, officials and the most

frequent victims are referees in which losses not only in the form of injury even more terrible to the extent of loss of human life. Felipe, *et al*, 2003 stated that injury to football players is caused by collisions of balls kicked by opponents or ball reflections (n = 129, 79.1%), foot trauma (n = 10, 6.1%), severe injuries due to scratches from opposing players. Other negative influence from aggression behavior is cheating in football matches witnessed by millions of people who are likely to imitate those negative behaviors, especially if done by star football players (Gladding & Villalba, 2014), (Shanklin & Miciak, 2005).

The concern on unsportsmanlike behavior performed by football players, especially young football players, must be considered by all stakeholders, especially coaches. Unsportsmanlike behaviors should be minimized and, conversely, sportsmanship must be developed and implemented in interaction of sport competitions or matches. In training process, football coaches prepare athletes or teams for achievement that are required to improve their technical, physical, tactic skills, and also the development of mental or athlete characters (Sandra Peláez, Mark W. Aulls, Amanda Rossi, & Simon L. Bacon, 2017), (D. Shields & Bredemeier, 2005).

Balyi, 2013 states that the development of athletes at young age should pay attention to the development of technical skills and characters. Developing and

fostering positive characters including sportsmanship require proper planning and strategy (Bolter & Weiss, 2012), (Roger Rees, Howell, & Miracle, 1990) that is reinforced by the environment (Stornes, 2001).

Directors, coaches, parents, audience and all parties involved in the coaching process must work together to ensure positive characters that can be built (Doty, 2006: 2).

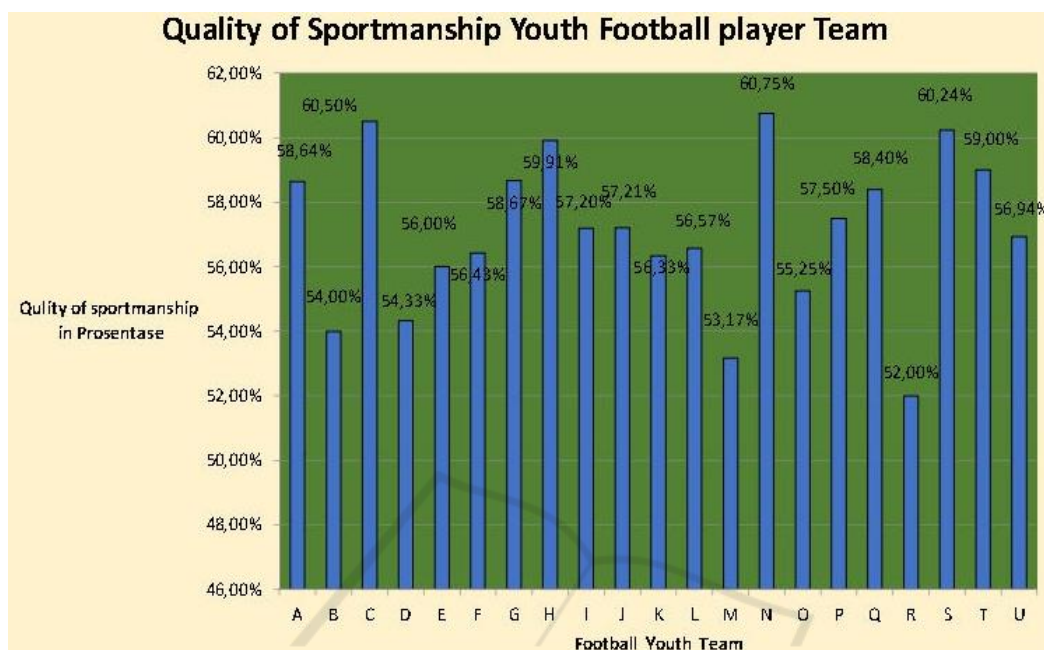


Figure 1: Sportsmanship of Young Football Players Based Teams in Sleman Distric, Yogyakarta Province.

Austin (2010: 1) argues that participating in sports can be used to build characters but does not happen automatically. However, to make it happen, it requires proper training plan. The coach is planner, executor, and evaluator of training with this position. In this case, the coach becomes the initiator of future changes so that football players at all levels of competition will have positive characters. By the underlying background above, this research was conducted to find out the quality of sportsmanship behavior of young football players who are members of football clubs in DIY Province, Indonesia. Research results are expected to be recommendations to stakeholders to choose and establish relevant policies related to the training model, and the appropriate competition model for young football players.

The data on young players' sportsmanship attitudes were obtained from all athletes who were willing to fill the questionnaire. After being collected, the data were then analyzed. This research's concern is on challenges in efforts to develop character in young football players.

2 RESEARCH METHOD

2.1 Research Type

Researchers conducted survey toward young players' sportsmanship at football clubs or schools in the Special Region of Yogyakarta Province, Indonesia.

2.2 Research Target/Subject

Young players who filled in the questionnaire came from 20 teams (football clubs and schools) with the total number of 320 male players. They were between 12-15 years old with average age (M) 13.17 years old, and SD = 1.15. Those research subjects have also got the experience in some competitions as of provincial level tournaments averaging 6.34 times in 2 years and have practiced football for average 3.23 years at the time the survey was conducted.

2.3 Data, Instrument, Data Collection Technique

The measuring instrument used to determine the sportsmanship of young football players was questionnaire. The questionnaire tried to reveal the players' sportsmanship when responding to various

situations in matches or competitions. The players were asked to assess themselves about their attitude responds to the situation faced by the team as well as the situation faced individually to friends, opponents, referees, and match organizers. The data collection was also assisted by the coaches who were still active to provide initial explanation of the purpose of filling the questionnaire for young football players. Then, the data obtained were analyzed by percentage technique. The score results obtained by players were compared to the maximum score as illustration of quality of the sportsmanship of young football players and the average was analyzed referring to the quality of sportsmanship based on origin clubs in DIY Province.

3 RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Research Result

The average sportsmanship attitude of young football players in Sleman Regency was on low category (57%) of the maximum score 100%. Furthermore, in terms of teams, their level of sportsmanship was categorized as follows; 0 of 21 teams (0%) for very low category, 18 of 21 teams (85.71%) for low category, 3 of 21 teams (14.29%) of medium category, and 0 of 21 teams (0%) for high and very high categories. The young football team which has the lowest sportsmanship attitude is R team with the average score of 52%, while the team with the highest average sportsmanship attitude is N team with the score of 60.75%.

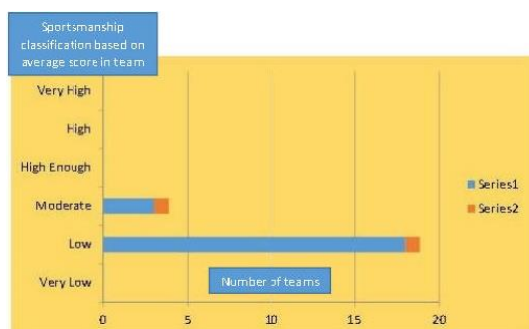


Figure 2: Number of Football Teams in Sleman District, Yogyakarta Province based on their Sportsmanship Classification.

3.2 Discussion

The research findings showed that the sportsmanship level of young football players was on low category.

The low athletes' sportsmanship is usually shown in some sports with body contact and played as teams such as football, basketball, and hockey. Coaches and teammates play significant role in the level of sportsmanship of young football players in Special Region of Yogyakarta, Indonesia (Kavussanu et al., 2002; Shields et al., 1995, University & Widh, 2002; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996). Unsportsmanlike behavior seems to be justified because it is done by all team members as the responsibility of the team, not the individual's. The situation will get worse when the coach agrees to aggression attitudes shown by team members.

The atmosphere of team with sportsmanship is influenced by how the coach spends his/ her time conveying the values, norms, and attitudes that an athlete should do in competition or match situation (Bolter & Weiss, 2012). The role of coach in developing athlete attitudes is influenced by how the leadership model is implemented (Seamus & Ivan, 2006). The model of coaching performed by the coach is the best model that should be done by the coach. Situation of winning and losing in competition or match is certain and how the coach behaves and responds to the match situation will affect the athletes' attitude (Vella, Oades 2012).

Supporters or spectators at young football matches are mostly the athletes' parents. Supporter is one of dominant factors that influence the behavior of players or athletes. Established values or supports that are jointly in particular towards response to match situation even though it may be wrong will be considered by the players to become justification if the supporters support. Low category of sportsmanship performed by young football players in DIY province was also possibly because of influence of the supporters who have inappropriate views on how players should behave in matches (Wann, Carlson, & Schrader, 1999; Wann, Schrader, & Carlson, 2000) The behavior of parents (supporters) that justifies unsportsmanlike attitudes and puts high pressure on children to achieve will cause several possibilities, i.e. severe fatigue, stress and reluctance experienced by young players. This is in line with Thomas (2005) stating parents' much pressure on young athletes results in bad experience for them to develop.

Coaches, friends, and parents play important role in shaping the attitude of young football players but there are others who contribute to the development of young football players' attitudes in a match or competition; that is the referee (Friman, Nyberg, & Norlander, 2004). The sportsmanship of the football players is highly influenced by the quality of the

referee. Referees are somehow the reasons for justifying unsportsmanlike behavior or sportsmanship in low scale. Bad performance of referees makes players act various aggression behaviors. Referees who make inconsistent decisions or perceived as taking another side with one team when leading the match can trigger emotion and anger of players. In addition, the referee's decision to fouls committed by the players without punishing results in repeated actions (Coakley, 1998; Shapcott et al., 2007).

3.2.1 A Challenge on Character Development of Young Football Players

Sportsmanship is an attitude that is expected to be consistently acted by young football players in various match situations that are always changing with various influencing factors including behaviors of opponents, referees, spectators, coaches, atmosphere and position of the team in a competition. The sportsmanship performed by football players makes the atmosphere of the match safe and minimizes the occurrence of violence and riots in football matches. Thus, the players' sportsmanship is expected to be sportive character that is attitude characterized or consistently performed by the player in any situation. The synergy between family (parents), schools in formal and non-formal contexts, and environment is very influential on sportsmanship. Schools in this context are organizations consisting of managers, coaches, and staff. The environment means friends to play well together at home or at school.

3.2.2 Coach Role

A coach becomes the most important person in an effort to develop sportsmanship in sports development interactions. The players' sportsmanship character and other positive characters in sport matches, especially football, become the challenge that must be tackled by coaches so that they can be owned by football players from the young age. Bredemeier and Shields (1995) state that with the appropriate teaching and coaching methods, and trying to focus on character development, sports and physical activity can be the right media for character development. Sports can be used as a medium to develop character with planning, meaning that the experience of sports does not necessarily make the character of an athlete good, Doty (2006: 6). Sport experience must be planned aimed at developing character which means that all involved parties, such as players, coaches, officials, and parents (stakeholders) must create the environment that

supports the development of athletes' character. Coakley (2001) recommends modified game rules where participants (players) are rewarded for sportsmanship attitudes or behaviors when playing not only for winning the game. Hellison (2003), Parker, and Stiehl (2004) are experts who believe that positive characters (individual and social responsibilities) can be developed through sport activities.

Football players sometimes make deliberate movements to cheat the referee to get advantage so that the team wins in a match. In this case, the coach can actually make a discussion about morals, deceptive attitudes and characters in discussion class session, Schonert-Reichl, K.A. (2004). Moral dilemmas are often experienced by players when making decisions in match situations. Strategy of presenting moral issues by coaches aims at generating interaction between athletes' thinking to overcome dilemmas. It is also for increasing moral reasoning and skills in resolving conflicts and dilemmas they face on the playing field. This discussion strategy of moral characters done by the coach is appropriate to attract conscience of athletes who engage in provocation activities against opponents to win the game.

The attitude or character of sportsmanship in football match is essentially an attitude that if studied is a behavior that must be known (moral knowing), conscious behavior (moral feeling), and behaviors that can be implemented in various match situations (moral action). Coaches must understand basic theories about developing attitudes of human behavior. Some models that have been done so far are for example: Teaching Responsibility Through Physical Activity (TPSR) program (Hellison, 1995), Sport United to Promote Education And Recreation (SUPER) program, and Fair Play for Kids Curriculum program (Gibbons, Ebbeck, & Weiss, 1995), (Danish, Forneris, Hodge, & Heke, 2004). Models or strategies and approaches in the training process must be continuously innovated so that effective model is especially found in the training model for young footballers and this is a challenge that must be accepted by young football coaches who work professionally.

Goldstein and Iso-Ahola, (2006: 23) give six recommendations that can control aggression of young athletes and encourage good sportsmanship values. The following are strategies for coaches in efforts to strengthen students' character through the training process in sports:

- 1) Rules and playing structures must be modified to meet the needs and development of young athletes;

- 2) Media and referees must encourage, facilitate, and develop sportsmanship behavior and punishment/sanction to inappropriate behavior;
- 3) Young athletes must be encouraged to study formally (academic class) with the same enthusiasm as when practicing very seriously;
- 4) Coaches may not be promoted or fired solely based on their record of victory; and
- 5) Coaches need to help each participant develop better level of moral reasoning and develop sport strategies and skills in education system.

3.2.3 Parents Role

Coaches and schools' efforts will get better results if parents and athletes are involved to develop sportsmanship in coaching interactions. The athletes' parents are the ones who become supporters during match. Sheldon & Epstein, (2015) state that parental involvement is an effective way to develop disciplinary attitudes which means other attitudes will also be effectively developed if parents are involved. The results of Sheldon's research state that partnership programs between schools and parents can reduce students' disciplinary violations. Parents are expected to establish harmonious relationship with coaches especially in formation of young players. The important role of parents in supporting the creation of sportsmanship includes morally building shared commitments related to values, kindness that becomes a mutual agreement in providing support to athletes when competing.

3.2.4 Organization Role

Youths participating in sport clubs have strong relationships to the decrease of aggressive behavior (Mutz & Baur, 2009). Clubs or football schools must make regulations related to how athletes should behave and sanctions received if they break the rules. The importance of this school rule is proposed by Curvin & Mendler (1999: 8) stating that the occurrence of negative behavior performed by students is due to one of the contributing factors which is unclear restrictions. By making it into school rules and class rules to school discipline, the barriers of student behavior at school become clear. The importance of making school rules and classroom rules is in accordance with the opinion of Chiu & Chow (2011: 517) that to create a culture of good behavior in clubs or schools will be influenced by one of the factors, namely school rules and applied norms. Another opinion related to the importance of rules in schools is the opinion of Nucci & Narvaez (2008:

122) which explains that norms function to regulate human behavior. This rule is made with the aim at providing guidance to athletes about what actions should be done in everyday life of schools.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The sportsmanship of the young football players in Yogyakarta was categorized low or it can be said that on average, the young players are bad in terms of sportsmanship based on the average of each team. This sportsmanship is actually influenced by many factors including individual attitudes, coach behaviors (Sandra Peláez et al., 2017), parental behaviors, norms built into the team, supporters (DL Shields, LaVoi, Bredemeier, & Power, 2016), and referee performances (Coulomb-Cabagno, Rasclé, & Souchon, 2005). The sportsmanship of football players allows reducing aggressive behavior which results in various losses to players, referees, and triggers sporting violence. The research results are expected to be a study and a basis for appropriate policy making by all parties involved in the development specifically coaches.

Sports or physical activities like football should be able to give moral values to life skills but the reality is not as expected. A big challenge for coaches is to be able to design training program, model, or practice concept that is able to develop the moral character of young football players. The training model designed to be socialized to be able to make changes is not as easy as it is imagined. Football is right organization to develop character. Therefore, organizing football training such as clubs, football schools must support football programs as a medium for character development of the young football players.

REFERENCES

- Astagna, C. A. C., Mpellizzeri, F. R. M. I., Haouachi, A. N. I. S. C., & Anzi, V. I. M. 2013. *Preseason Variations In Aerobic Fitness And Performance In Elite-Standard Football Players: Ateam Study. Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 27(11), 2959–2965.
- Balyi, I., & Way, R. 2014. *Long-term athlete development. Choice Reviews Online* (Vol. 51). <https://doi.org/10.5860/choice.51-5081>
- Bolter, N. D., & Weiss, M. R. 2012. *Coaching for Character: Development of the Sportsmanship Coaching Behaviors Scale (SCBS)*, 1(2), 73–90. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026300>

- Brackenridge, C., Pitchford, A., & Wilson, M. 2011. *Respect: Results of a pilot project designed to improve behaviour in English Football. Managing Leisure, 16*(3), 1360–6719. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13606719.2011.583406>
- Burley, M., & Fleming, S. 1997. *Racism and regionalism in Welsh football. / Racisme et regionalisme dans le football gallois. European Physical Education Review, 3*(2), 183–194. Retrieved from <http://articles.sirc.ca/search.cfm?id=450701%0Ahttp://ezproxy.library.ubc.ca/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=sph&AN=SPH450701&site=ehost-live&scope=site>
- Cleland, J. 2014. *Racism, Football Fans, and Online Message Boards: How Social Media Has Added a New Dimension to Racist Discourse in English Football. Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 38*(5), 415–431. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723513499922>
- Coulomb-Cabagno, G., Rasclé, O., & Souchon, N. 2005. *Players' gender and male referees' decisions about aggression in French football: A preliminary study. Sex Roles, 52*(7–8), 547–553. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-005-3720-z>
- Danish, S., Forneris, T., Hodge, K., & Heke, I. 2004. *Sport Enhancing Youth Development through Sport. World Leisure Journal, 3*(October 2014), 37–41. <https://doi.org/10.1080/04419057.2004.9674365>
- Friman, M., Nyberg, C., & Norlander, T. 2004. *Threats and aggression directed at football referees: An empirical phenomenological psychological study. The Qualitative Report, 9*(4), 652–672.
- Gencheva, N. 2015. *Aggression in youth athletes. Research in Kinesiology, 43*(2), 205–209.
- Gibbons, S. L., Ebbeck, V., & Weiss, M. R. 1995. *Fair play for kids; effects on the moral development of children in physical education. Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport, 66*(3), 247–255. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.1995.10608839>
- Gladding, S. T., & Villalba, J. 2014. *Imitation, impersonation, and transformation: Using male role models in films to promote maturity. Journal of Counseling and Development, 92*(1), 114–121. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.2014.00137.x>
- Gümüşdağ, H., Yıldırım, İ., Yamaner, F., & Kartal, A. 2011. *Aggression and fouls in professional football. Biomedical Human Kinetics, 3*, 67–71. <https://doi.org/10.2478/v10101-011-0015-4>
- Journal, B., & Sport, O. F. 2017. *Qualitative investigation of coaches' perspectives on moral education in sport, 4*(4), 46–56.
- Kamis, D., Newmark, T., Begel, D., & Glick, I. D. 2016. *Cheating and sports: history, diagnosis and treatment. International Review of Psychiatry, 28*(6), 551–555. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2016.1208162>
- McFee, G. (2012). *Olympism and sport's intrinsic value. Sport, Ethics and Philosophy, 6*(2), 211–231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17511321.2012.666994>
- Morente-Sánchez, J., & Zabala, M. 2013. *Doping in Sport: A Review of Elite Athletes' Attitudes, Beliefs, and Knowledge. Sports Medicine, 43*(6), 395–411. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40279-013-0037-x>
- Mutz, M., & Baur, J. 2009. *The role of sports for violence prevention: sport club participation and violent behaviour among adolescents. International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics, 1*(3), 305–321. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19406940903265582>
- Roger Rees, C., Howell, F. M., & Miracle, A. W. 1990. *Do high school sports build character? A quasi-experiment on a national sample. The Social Science Journal, 27*(3), 303–315. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0362-3319\(90\)90027-H](https://doi.org/10.1016/0362-3319(90)90027-H)
- Sandra Peláez, Mark W. Aulls, Amanda Rossi, & Simon L. Bacon. 2017. *The Coach as a Contributor to the Socio-moral Context: A Literature Review. Journal of Psychology Research, 3*(3), 113–128. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2159-5542/2013.03.001>
- Seamus, K., & Ivan, W. 2006. *Abuse, Intimidation and Violence as Aspects of Managerial Control in Professional Football in Britain and Ireland. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 41*, 147–164. Retrieved from <http://ejournals.ebsco.com/direct.asp?ArticleID=478996212119FB77F4FC>
- Shanklin, W. L., & Miciak, A. R. 2005. *Selecting Sports Personalities as Celebrity Endorsers. Journal of Promotion Management, 4*(1), 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1300/j057v04n01_01
- Sheldon, S. B., & Epstein, J. L. 2002. *Improving student behavior and school discipline with family and community involvement. Education and Urban Society, 35*(1), 4–26. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001312402237212>
- Shields, D., & Bredemeier, B. 2005. *The sport behavior of youth, parents and coaches. Journal of Research in..., 3*(1), 43–59. Retrieved from https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=Nxs4I_9fQYUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA43&ots=2vXILSC7eO&sig=glo0rzJPdDaAaxmtxthy1Vxs_i8
- Shields, D. L., LaVoi, N. M., Bredemeier, B. L., & Power, F. C. 2016. *Predictors of Poor Sportsmanship in Youth Sports: Personal Attitudes and Social Influences. Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology, 29*(6), 747–762. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jsep.29.6.747>
- Stornes, T. 2001. *Sportspersonship in elite sports : on the effects of personal and environmental factors on the display of sportspersonship among elite male handball players. European Physical Education Review, 7*(200110), 283–304.