EVALUATING THE LEVEL OF CREATIVE SUPPORT IN TEACHING FOOTBALL GAME TACTICS

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Abstract

Aim. Teaching tactics in team games is a difficult process, because it requires not only the optimal preparation of the player in the physical and physical sphere, but above all, deliberate action in the sport. Situations that arise when playing football usually require selecting one of several possible decisions. Not all decisions are optimal. It is on the basis of the optimal decision that you can judge the advantages of a player and then interpret his/her abilities. In order to rationally solve a task in a game, a player must have the best knowledge about effective action, and such tactical preparation methods also need to be used so that the player can consciously and creatively participate in the training process. The purpose of research. To determine whether modern football clubs use tactical training based on creative support in teaching football tactics.

Basic procedures. The empirical material was collected by anonymous polls conducted among randomly selected football players in two age categories: juniors (140 CLJ players and MW leagues) and seniors (160 players IV and III leagues). Research was conducted in the years 2015-2017 in randomly selected Polish clubs, with the largest number (about 80%) being players from the Małopolska, Świętokrzyskie, Podkarpackie, Silesia, Opole and Lubuskie Provinces.

Results Main findings. Analysis of the research results shows that football players from the surveyed clubs are less likely to benefit from the knowledge transfer which facilitates learning tactics. The reason for this situation is not only due to the limited organizational conditions for rational training but can also have its basis in the competence of trainers. This problem is significant for young athletes, which can limit not only the smooth operation of the game but also hinder the process of full development of the player.

Conclusions.
1) Tactical training dominates traditional forms of instructions which limit a player’s conscious participation in the game.
2) Among trainers, there is a low level of knowledge about the use of tactics to help teach game tactics.
3) In order to make more use of tactic teaching aids, there is a need to include this learning direction in the training of coaches and football instructors.
4) Base conditions at football clubs limit the use of modern laboratory measures in teaching tactics.

Introduction

Teaching tactical actions in team games is a difficult process, as it requires not only optimal preparation of a player in motor and physical spheres, but above all, effective conduct for achieving the goals of a game [1]. Such a requirement in a sports game is related to the situational specificity of the game, which requires creativity in action – that is, conscious and purposeful task solving during a game [2] – Fig. 1.

The situations which arise during a football game, as a rule, make it necessary to choose from one of several possible decisions. Not all decisions are optimal. It is on the basis of the optimal decision that one can judge a player’s merits and then interpret his/her abilities.
In order to rationally solve tasks during a game, the player must have optimal knowledge on effective action [3], hence, it is required to use such methods in tactical preparation so that the player can consciously and creatively participate in the training process [2]. This means that tactical training should take the impact on a player’s intellectual sphere into account [4, 5]. It is believed that the training process should use effective methods of communicating messages regarding how to effectively solve tasks during a game, as they can facilitate fast and accurate decision making [6].

It seems that these conditions in teaching game tactics can be met through theoretical preparation using audiovisual means (video-camera-computer), performing the function of strengthening message transmission – e.g. teaching in simulated laboratory conditions [2, 7]. Also, the use of intellectual exercises (task-oriented, problem-based methods) can to a great extent develop a player’s creativity [2]. These methods are used with great conviction in the training of Western European footballers (the Netherlands, France, Germany), whose sports level sets the direction of training in modern football [8, 9]. It seems that the target-matter in such an organized training process is to achieve a high level of sports, i.e. the physical (motor), technical and mental development of a player, thus, his/her rational preparation with a wide spectrum of knowledge about the game, and in the conditions of sports competition, to make conscious and accurate decisions, making full use of one’s own disposition in the game [10]. By choosing this way of educating a player’s tactical training, nowadays in Poland, training content that includes creative programs is becoming more and more appreciated (in training materials for coaches this problem is often discussed). The Polish Football Association, in the newly developed National Programme [11], also emphasizes the obligation of such training. Taking the essence of creative preparation in the effective action of a player [1, 2] and requirements in modern training of football players in our country [11] into account, the study attempts to analyse tactical training in terms of shaping creativity in football players. It seems that recognizing this problem can significantly facilitate the process of rational management of footballers’ education.

**Study aim**

In this work, the tactical preparation of football players in the field of intellectual training (shaping creativity) in teams of randomly chosen clubs in Poland has been analysed. The aim of the research is to determine whether football clubs use modern trends in tactical training based on the means of creative support in teaching football tactics.

**Research questions and hypotheses**

Analyses of available research papers [1, 7, 12, 13] and the author’s own experiences allowed to formulate research questions.

**Research questions:**

1. Is support for a better understanding of the structure and essence of a player’s activity during a game used in the process of teaching game tactics?
2. Are training conditions for creative training used in the process of teaching tactical actions?

**Research hypotheses:**

1. Most trainers in teaching game tactics use traditional methods based on a spontaneous manner of passing...
knowledge on the game during practical exercises, omitting the forms of knowledge transfer in laboratory conditions (fulfilling the function of support in teaching).

2. Among football players, there is a need to use intellectual support for the effective reception of information about actions during a sports competition.

**Study material and methods**

The research material consisted of players practicing football in two age categories: juniors (140 CLJ and MW league players) and seniors (160 players of IV and III league). Research in 2015-2017 was conducted in randomly chosen Polish clubs, of which the largest number (around 80%) were players from the Małopolskie, Świętokrzyskie, Podkarpackie, Śląskie, Opolskie and Lubuskie provinces.

The empirical material was collected via anonymous survey among randomly selected football players.

The survey questions concerned the following issues:
- rational (action-based) manner of teaching football tactics,
- use of methods and means in providing information on the game,
- reasons for using (or not using) support methods in teaching game tactics,
- the legitimacy of using audiovisual measures in training players,
- knowledge and competence of the training staff in developing a rational teaching manner
- transfer of information about the game, taking the club conditions allowing the use of support measures in teaching game tactics into account.

**Presentation and discussion of research results**

First, the material concerning knowledge of the subjects on creative support and the use of these methods in teaching game tactics was analysed (Tab. 1).

The data contained in the table above show that almost 50% of respondents have not encountered support methods shaping action creativity while teaching game tactics. It can therefore be assumed that the process of teaching tactical actions may be limited due to its effectiveness.

Further analysis of the research results indicates that the junior group of players is characterized by greater knowledge of measures supporting creativity in teaching tactics. This is a very significant observation, indicating that in organized football training, the level of the training staff’s competence in training junior groups regarding the aspect of creative support in teaching tactical actions is more interested in this teaching direction. Although the values obtained are higher within this context than in previous studies [13], the obtained values are of low diagnostic value for the effective training of tactical actions.

The next juxtaposition of research results referring to the previous one concerns the actual use of support measures in teaching game tactics by coaches according to the opinions of the athletes (Tab. 2).

Table 2. The level of using creative aids in teaching game tactics among football players

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of answer</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>40.1%</td>
<td>J = 50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S = 41.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td>59.9%</td>
<td>J = 49.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>S = 58.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From analysis of the presented data, it can also be stated that the use of support is at a low level. This may be due to the lack of trainers’ confidence to use such measures for effective training. This may also be due to the lack of trainers’ knowledge on the need for such activities in the effective teaching of game tactics – the necessity of a logical understanding of game activities for making accurate tactical decisions [14]. This problem may also result from the requirement for trainers to prepare materials for creative training, but this is illusive, as well-developed materials can be used many times [2]. If such assumptions were correct, then obviously this approach of trainers would be a mistake, because numerous studies [1, 2, 4, 7] indicate that the use of support measures shaping the player’s creativity not only facilitates the mastery of tactical actions but more thoroughly shapes the process rational decision making in game conditions. The obtained data also indicate (which is positive prognosis) that forms supporting the creative teaching of game tactics are applied to a greater extent in work with the youth. This value (51.4%), however, is still not satisfactory from the point of view of effectiveness in teaching game tactics and indicates high traditionalism in training.
The level of effective football training is also influenced by the training base which allows the use of optimal means for tactical preparation. Fulfilling this condition can significantly shape a player’s creativity [13]. In Table 3, the possibility of implementing tactical preparation is illustrated, indicating the low possibility of using aids in the teaching process. The results of the research indicate a low possibility of using teaching support in laboratory conditions (computer or audiovisual labs), which may limit conscious analysis of the tactical structure, reducing the process of creative teaching [2]. Research values indicate that the main place to teach tactics is on a football pitch, which is often training on a poor quality surface. This fact not only hinders the effective performance of motor activities but also confirms that the teaching of tactical actions is conducted without any intellectual preparation and done rather mechanically. A disturbing signal regarding the conditions of teaching game tactics is the fact that young players have worse educational conditions in this area, which in the future, does not promise good mastery of this game element.

In the opinion of the players, analysis of teaching game tactics, due to the teaching methods used, still confirms the low degree of using creative support while teaching game tactics (Tab. 4). The low percentage of developed didactic computer programmes, also based on animation, can be noticed, which according to [2], have great value in supporting the process of teaching tactics in sports games. A disturbing element in teaching tactical actions is the lack of detailed instructions in decision-making actions. In the research by Panfil [2, 7, 12], the authors indicate that mechanical teaching of game tactics without a detailed understanding of goals does not only limit the understanding of these actions but also contradicts the essence of tactical teaching.

Additionally, the dominance of tactical training on training pitches, the conditions and surfaces of which leave much to be desired, is probably not conducive to mastering efficient interaction during a game. Also, the already mentioned low degree of utilizing teaching in laboratory conditions may improve the efficiency of the conscious participation of the player in the difficult process of teaching game tactics to a small extent [2, 7]. This analysis unambiguously indicates limited possibilities of using teaching aids. It follows that the trainers slightly diversify the difficult process of teaching game tactics. It seems that in the education of the surveyed players this state may, on the one hand, indicate low skills of professional trainers, and on the other, their routine (non-creative) workshop. The only justification for this state of affairs may be the limited base possibilities at sports clubs, in which to raise the level of training, the didactic and sports base must be unquestioningly raised (requirement for newly emerging football academies).

Further analysis on the type of measures used in teaching game tactics among the studied players shows (already confirms) the dominance of the traditional way of preparing players (Fig. 2).

It can be noticed that tactical training is dominated by forms of practical classes and current information transfer (“operating instructions”). It seems that the advantage of these forms of teaching and the low degree of using creative support methods can significantly limit the conscious participation of a player in the manner of solving tasks during a game (Panfil 2000). Empirical data confirm the results of previous studies [13], and although the level of obtained results is slightly better for the current state of training, this level is still unsatisfactory. At this point, one should consider answering the question – what influences the poor diagnostic results obtained in the tests? Is it the low level of performed training activities, or the base conditions at the clubs of

### Table 3. Place of carrying out tactical training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of place</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Club rooms for theoretical classes</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>J = 9.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club libraries</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>J = 1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audiovisual rooms</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>J = 8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer labs with tactic teaching software</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
<td>J = 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports training pitches</td>
<td>51.3%</td>
<td>J = 69.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main sports pitch</td>
<td>38.4%</td>
<td>J = 11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4. Means used in teaching game tactics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Means/tools</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical lectures on the rules of tactical action</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>J = 4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presenting fragments of tactical actions (photos, developed video material)</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>J = 2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training videos</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
<td>J = 5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer programmes</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>J = 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials developed on the basis of video-graphics technique</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>J = 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching game tactics through practical exercises with detailed instructions</td>
<td>24.7%</td>
<td>J = 36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching game tactics through practical exercises without detailed instructions</td>
<td>47.1%</td>
<td>J = 51.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the studied players? It seems that a partial answer to the above questions may be the general summary of data regarding base conditions in the studied football clubs, professional competences of trainers and the use of didactic aids as support. Unfortunately, from the presented data (Fig. 1), the significant dominance of traditional methods in tactical training of a player can be noted. This fact indicates that the training staff bases more on mechanical ways of teaching the game, it also seems that the coaching workshop lacks coaching reflexivity. Such an attitude of the coaching staff in the teaching process may limit a player’s preparation in understanding the content of tactical tasks [1, 2].

The information (knowledge) in tactical exercises facilitates making the right decisions in motor actions, hence the requirement of conscious participation of a player in the process of tactical preparation is necessary [2, 7, 12, 15]. Therefore, it seems that this process can be greatly facilitated by laboratory-based exercises, for example game action simulation [13] treated as reinforcement in teaching game tactics. It also seems that this way of preparing the player can significantly improve the level of tactical training, thus contributing to their effectiveness in the game [16].

From analysis of the collected research material, it can be assumed that in Poland, despite significant accents of creative training in football players’ game effectiveness, there are still considerable deficiencies in this area. It seems that the problem of shaping creativity in players may result from ‘headworded’ notions [2]. It is talked about (training courses), but there is no development or adherence to methodological requirements in creative teaching of football players. At this point, the reason for such a situation should be considered. There may be many reasons, but according to the author, it is mainly due to the lack of competence in this field not only regarding trainers but also the institutions responsible for devising programmes and supervising the aspects of organized training of football players.

Conclusions

1) Tactical training is dominated by traditional forms of teaching which limits a player’s conscious participation in the game.
2) Among trainers, there is a low level of knowledge about the use of support resources in teaching game tactics.
3) Base conditions at football clubs limit optimal conditions for teaching game tactics (unfavourable terrain conditions, low level of modern laboratory tool usage).
4) In order to make greater use of the aids supporting teaching game tactics, there is a need to include this teaching direction in the training of coaches and football instructors.
References


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