

What Training for the Young Soccer Player?—A Letter to Editor

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Dear Editor,

We have read the original article entitled “*The Effect of Basic Technical Training on Performance Capabilities of Young Soccer Player*” by Yossi Haleva, Yoav Meckel published in *Advances in Physical Education* (2020, 10, 19-30).

We want to congratulate the authors for this successful original study, and make some contributions on the issue to highlight some related aspects.

The authors dealt with a very topical issue in the literature with particular reference to the 6 - 14 age group, namely the training of the young soccer player. In fact, the literature offers the possibility of identifying numerous studies that have compared the effects on the performance of very different methodologies (Ramirez-Campillo et al., 2020).

In this age group, it is not only important to identify the methodology that increases performances immediately, but above all is to understand which methodological line can allow the young soccer player to reach the best performances when the context and the competitive matches will be a high level (or elite).

Furthermore, in the age group considered by the study, the level of early specialization is very high, which can frustrate the future soccer player training.

In fact, the early specialization increases the injury risk and drop out risk (Jayanthi et al., 2015).

Precisely for these reasons, the study by Yossi Haleva and Yoav Meckel correctly focuses on the need to identify the young soccer player integrative training.

A session training that does not only include sport-specific exercises.

The technical training proposed in the study, in fact, allows the young player to experiment with a series of new and functional movements for learning soccer skills.

This diversification of the motor tasks with which the young soccer player is confronted, involves a continuous search for solutions to motor problems in order to find the most adequate, economical and correct coordination.

The idea of verifying the effectiveness of this supplementary training is consistent with the proposals of models of talent development or young sportsmen present in literature: the Long-Term Athlete Development (LTAD), the Developmental Model of Sport Participation (DMSP), the Athletic Skills Model (ASM) and the Composite Youth Development (CYD) are just a few examples of long-term training patterns.

The LTAD, for example, provides a very broad basis for experimentation with all the fundamental movements and constitutes a real point of reference for planning multi-year training.

For these reasons, the integration of knowledge of fundamental movements, the knowledge of correct execution technique and the introduction of sport-specific exercises with constraints manipulation (Small-sided games) can represent a functional methodological orientation end to the soccer player development.

The demands of mastering a soccer game require much more than just physical or technical skills (Barba-Martín et al., 2020; Pizarro et al., 2016).

In fact, in sports open skills, the perceptual, decisional and cognitive aspects play a very significant role in solving motor problems.

In this regard, the relationships between motor and cognitive functions have been highlighted by neuroimaging studies providing evidence that motor and cognitive processes draw on common neural mechanisms and resources (Stuhr et al., 2018).

In addition to the evidence suggesting that motor skill components are linked to specific cognitive control processes, a number of studies have indicated that the relationship between these two processes is influenced by the novelty and difficulty of the task (Stuhr et al., 2018; Diamond, 2012).

Therefore, a re-elaboration of the technical, tactical (and therefore cognitive) and athletic aims is necessary, which must characterize sports programs from under 9 to under 13 and identify some learning areas that present a progressive executive difficulty.

Therefore, an analysis of the methodologies implemented and the organizational aspects that derived from traditional methodologies was started, noting that some significant aspects related to motor learning were strongly influenced by this type of communication and the motor tasks chosen by the coaches.

The last considerations concern the young practitioner's health: although it may be a common opinion that an accumulation of greater volumes and inten-

sity of sports practice at a young age leads to sporting success, the attention to the type of load and its distribution on a multi-year basis is the most accredited scientific evidence for many years (Lloyd et al., 2014).

In conclusion, the diversification of motor tasks and integrative training can represent a way forward in youth soccer training, both if you want to achieve high long-term performance, and if you want to protect the young soccer players' health.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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