Polytechnic Institute of Guarda

School of Education, Communication and Sport

Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the Polytechnic Institute of Guarda for the degree of M.Sc. Sports Sciences

SEMIH KARA

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Guarda

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Abbreviations

APOM - Portuguese Association of Museology (A Associação Portuguesa de Museologia)

Etc- et cetera. (English: "and other things")

FA - Football association

FC - Football club

FIFA - International Federation of Association Football (French: Fédération Internationale de Football Association)

IFFHS - The International Federation of Football History & Statistics

SLB - Sport Lisboa e Benfica

UEFA - Union of European Football Associations

Resumo

O Futebol constitui-se como um dos desportos mais populares do mundo e envolve numerosos praticantes de diferentes escalões etários. Importa notar que o desenvolvimento da perícia desportiva, desde os escalões etários mais mais baixos até ao alto rendimento, depende de um processo de treino consistente e sustentado.

O estágio curricular constitui-se como uma possibilidade notável para um estagiário adquirir experiência com possibilidade de transferência imediata para o contexto profissional. Em geral, o estágio permite ao estudante identificar os pontos fortes e débeis do seu perfil tendo em conta o seu desenvolvimento futuro. Ao mesmo tempo, permite a aplicação de um conjunto de competências adquiridas ao longo do percurso académico.

Este estágio teve lugar no Sport Lisboa e Benfica, em Lisboa, no âmbito da escola Geração Benfica. As minhas funções passaram pela auxílio ao treinador principal de 6 equipas dos 7 and 13 anos de idade. De um ponto de vista prático, assumi responsabilidades na preparação do equipamento para a sessão de treino, supervisão dos atletas e organização da parte final da sessão. Tive ainda a oportunidade de acompanhar algumas equipas em torneio e competições.

Em geral, devo sublinhar que este estágio constituiu-se como uma experiência muito rica e interessante. Permitiu-me interagir de uma forma intensa com um conjunto de jovens atletas, e suas famílias, o que proporcionou a aquisição de experiências que serão sem dúvidas muito importantes para o meu futuro profissional como treinador de futebol.

Palavras-chave: Treino desportivo, metodologia de treino, planeamento a longo prazo, planificação do treino.

Abstract

Football is one of the most popular sports in the world, being played by numerous youngsters and adults. Worth of note is how the development of expertise from youth stages to top level takes place through a consistent and sustainable training process.

An internship stands as a remarkable possibility for an intern to acquire valuable experience to be transferred to professional environment. In detail, it helps students gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, in view of the future. It also provides with a relevant hands-on experience to apply the skills acquired along the academic process.

This internship has been developed in Sport Lisboa e Benfica, in Lisbon, within the Geração Benfica School. My roles implied assisting first coach of six different teams ranged from 7 to 13-years old. In detail, my main responsibilities were related with preparing the equipment for training session, supervising players' performance and organizing the end of the training session. I also had the opportunity to follow some competitions and tournaments.

In sum, I must underline that this experience was very rich and enjoyable. It allowed me to intensively interact with young athletes and their respective families and gain critical experience for succeeding in the future as football coach.

Keywords: Sports coaching, training methodology, long-term planning, training intervention.

1. Introduction

This document is part of the master degree internship in Sports Sciences within the School of Education, Communication and Sport, Polytechnic Institute of Guarda. This master program in IPG lasts for 2 years and this works stands as the epilogue of this process.

Training methodology has expressed a permanent evolution over the last decades. Coaches are required to integrate multiple streams of knowledge from biomechanics, physiology, psychology and other, aimed at promoting a consistent development of the athlete towards higher patterns of performance (Robinson, 2010). In the case of young athletes, performance-related objectives are replaced by other kind of priorities such has integral motor and personal development. The experiences acquired in young stages of development are crucial for the long-term achievements in sport either as an athlete or as an active member of society, from sports perspective. In this case, the role of coaches is fundamental to create positive experiences to young athletes, especially in football where the level of participation is very relevant.

Internship is required in some departments of faculties or fields. After concluding scholar education, professional domain shows a high demand of practical skills and experiences. In this way, internship stands as one of the most relevant paths to achieve this goal. An internship offers the chance to learn by doing, while supervised by a work-place professional, in order to achieve certain goals without the responsibilities of being a permanent employee. In my case, the choice of developing an internship was linked with a strong desire to embrace sports coaching as future area of intervention. With a previous background on sports management, in my bachelor degree, the opportunity to acknowledge the day-by-day work of a coach on a major club was a major asset on this decision.

My internship occurred at Sport Lisboa e Benfica (SLB). There were relevant arguments to choose SLB as host institution. First, Benfica is one of the biggest football clubs in Portugal

and also in the Europe. Also, Benfica football club is worldwide recognized due to its quality of youth academy. Benfica youth academy has risen up a lot of famous and good players that achieved their A team and were also sold out for other clubs by large amounts of money. Benfica club offers great conditions for internship students as they have the chance to work with high-level facilities and experienced human resources. Portuguese football clubs are also known well in Turkey and by this means this experience could stand as a positive point in my curriculum vitae. All of these positive things have made me choose Benfica as host institution.

Benfica football school normally ask internship students to participate in training sessions by assisting the coaches to prepare training pitch and materials. Also, internship students are also required to assist in supervising the players, identifying and correcting their mistakes and giving positive feedbacks. Depending on coaches decision interns may also have to join weekend competition or friendly matches with the purpose of assisting game preparation and player's supervision. This dissertation intends to illustrate the experiences and obstacles faced but also the skills acquired along this process.

To achieve this goal, this document is structured under five sections that have been outlined to faithfully represent the internship process, as follows:

i) Introduction – framing internship and dissertation;

ii) Theoretical background – body of knowledge dedicated to methodology of training and football topics;

iii) Characterization of Host Institution – description of Benfica football school organization, facilities and structure;

iv) Internship Aims – general and specific goals related with the internship process;

v) Activities of the internship – main activities conducted along the internship process;

vi) Research task – empirical study based on the comparison of structural adaptations to football rules between Turkey and Portugal, in youth stages;

vii) Conclusion – main conclusions of this dissertation along with relevant implications for the future.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Overview

Football is part of a group of sports which are known as team sports, and as such can be characterized by the relationship between cooperation (between team mates) and opposition (against an opponent) (Gréhaigne & Godbut, 1997). The game has 3 basic aspects: i) time-space - demonstrated in the attacking phase by using of the ball both individually and collectively to overcome barriers and opponents; also, in the defending phase by the creation of barriers to delay and stop movement of the opponents and the ball with the objective of regaining possession; ii) information - demonstrated by the uncertainty caused in opponent's movements displacements; and iii) organizational - established by the collective plan integrated with individual actions and vice versa.

There are crucial aspects that coaches should account for and which may influence their 'coaching model'; some factors which are player-related (age, psycho-motor development, level of practice, etc.) and other environmental issues (personal and material resources, club facilitates, parental relationships, etc.) According to Sir Alex Fergusson, to some degree, the attributes of a successful footballer are divided in technical, tactical, athletic and temperamental factors. The trick is to identify a child's potential and help him reach it (Marcotti, 2007). Thus, a plan as such should include physical and technical domains but also tactical work. In this latter case, more than just to promote a better understanding of the game, players need to develop their cognitive component. Of interest is also the psychological component. Sport psychology involves the study of how psychological factors affect performance and how participation in sport and exercise affect psychological and physical factors. In addition to instruction and training of psychological skills for performance improvement, applied sport psychology may

include work with athletes, coaches, and parents regarding injury, rehabilitation, communication, team building, and career transitions (Weinberg & Gould, 2010).

2.2. Tactical component

Before going deep in terms of definition and concept, we should remember the difficulties with separating technical and tactical work. The dictionary definition of tactics states: short term actions taken to solve or accomplish specific goals (Caplan & Smith, 2005). Rafa Benitez, a top level coach, defined tactics as the way the players and the team are organized at each moment in the game to achieve a specific objective while technique as the resources available to the player to achieve the tactical objectives in the context of the game (Benitez, 2016). In sport context, tactical component assumes a central importance to win the game and its development is strongly dependent of the training sessions (Caplan & Smith, 2005). Collectively, the application of tactical principles may help the team to better control the game, maintain ball possession, to perform variations in ball circulation, change the pace of the game and materialize tactical actions aiming to break up opponents' balance and, consequently, to more easily score a goal (Zerhouni, 1980; Aboutoihi, 2006).

Tactical behaviour is strongly dependent on cognition. According to Gréhaigne and Godbout (1995) during a soccer game, players are requested to coordinate their actions to recover, retain and move the ball to attack as well as to create goal scoring situations, which requires well-developed tactical skills to achieve successful performance.

2.3. Technical component

Football demands the players an excellent level of technical proficiency. Technical actions involve a lot of of multi-limb coordination to be performed at high levels of speed, control and intelligence. Without strong technical skills players will not be able to score goals or defend effectively. Dribbling, passing, shooting and heading are fundamental techniques all players must develop and continually refine, especially at youth level. According to Hyballa- Te poel (2011) “mastering basic technique of football such as dribbling, passing, shooting, heading, receiving and running can affect the learning of game intelligence, feel for the game and action of speed also player with good technique can find solution to particular match situation more quickly

Interestingly, Royal Dutch football association does not support isolated training of technique for children. Driving a car is best learnt when you sit behind the wheel and join traffic, and the same is also true for technique training. This approach is based on the principle that children must play football in order to learn the technique (van Amstel, 2003 cit. by Hyballa & Te poel 2011). According to Huub Stevens, former Dutch player and coach, there is necessity to give more time for technique and coordination training than tactical training with young athletes (Hyballa & Te poel, 2011). This does not mean that tactical training should not be linked with technical training. As we are talking here about youth athletes it’s important to try to ensure that young players acquire the best technical-tactical toolbox possible so that they can respond to the majority of the many problems they will encounter in the future, with the help of a devoted coach, within a specific model of play. Technical ability, coupled with tactical awareness, is a clearest differentiator between top level players and average players (Bird,

2014). A study that compared UEFA champions league teams and lower leagues in Serbia showed that technical skills is very important to succeed in winning a game and applying tactics as players in champions league presented greater ball possession and passing accuracy (Leontijević. Janković, & Sofronijević, 2015).

2.4. Game Phases

Footbal has different game phases which proceed over time on a cyclic sequence. There are main objectives of the game and the way each phase is developed depends on the behaviours of the players. In general, it all gets at what players should do or not do with ball and without ball. In the attack phases players should seek for keeping possession, progression and finishing. With regards to the defensive phase: regaining possession, stopping progression of the opponent's attack and defending the goal. Phases of the game are essentially related with the attacking and defending processes (Table 1).

Table 1 - Attacking and defending phases (Benitez, 2016)

Attack	Defense
Start of phase	Delay start of phase
Construction or progression of the phase	Delay construction phase
Finishing	Defend the goal (prevent finish)

Respectively, each phase of game (attack and defence) has subtended different specific principles as showed on Table 2.

Table 2 - Attacking and defending principles (Benitez, 2016)

Attack	Defense
Penetration (creation of an advantage in space and number; attack the goal)	Containment (Individual marking of the player on the ball to stop or delay opponent's attack)
Support the attack (support player with the ball; defensive balance)	Defensive cover (support for the team mate marking the player on the ball)
Mobility (interchange of positions; occupation and creation of space; create lines of pass; keeping possession; unbalancing opponent's defensive structure)	Balance (covering space and free players and cutting lines of pass)
Space (width and depth in attack)	Concentration (deny width and depth in the opponent's attack)

With this in mind, coaches can start thinking of shaping the organization of the offensive structure (counter-attack, quick attack or build up play) and also defense (man to man, zonal or mixed marking) so that a model of game is built to guide players behaviors over time in a coherent way. For instance, Benitez (2016) praises basic standards of attack and defense phases as behavioral patterns as follows (Table 3).

Table 3 - Attacking and defensive behaviour patterns (Benitez, 2016)

Attack	Defense
Don't lose the ball, protect it, keep it away from opponents, control the distances, pass quickly and unpredictably, create lines of pass	Get as many players behind the ball as possible
Create and occupy free spaces, play wide and deep, fix defenders in a zone and play to another one, channel the attack through the weakest areas of the opponent, alternate between short and long play, switch of play	Cover and strengthen the central channel forcing opponents to less
Create doubt in the opposition, alternating direct and indirect play, draw opposition to one zone to finish in another, change of tempo, numerical overload, disguise etc.	Reduce or prevent lines of pass
	Keep defensive cover and occupy spaces

2.5. Game Principles: attack and defence

Like all sports, football has developed its contemporary tactical systems through a permanent evolution over time. The five principles of attacking and defending in soccer were first posted in a manual published originally in 1967 by Allen Wade called "The F.A. Guide to Training and Coaching." "F.A" is the English Football Association, British soccer's governing body. The book is one of the central texts in the history of soccer's tactical evolution. The five principles of attacking and defending are a fundamental basis for a soccer coach to focus his team's broader objectives and strategies. According to Allen Wade and other proponents of the principles, every practice and match depends on the successful execution of the principles, so they are indispensable to success in the sport (Wade, 1967).

The five attacking principles are: I) penetration, II) support/depth, III) mobility, IV) width and V) creativity/improvisation. Penetration refers to getting inside and behind the defence’s shape. Mobility is an offense's movement and flexibility, thus its shape and direction are never predictable or repetitive. Width is the ability of an offense to use the entire width of the field to spread out a defence and enable penetration or dangerous one-on-one isolation around the field. Creativity or improvisation is the offense's attacking freedom. As much as the principles are critical, following rote attacking directions make an offense easy to oppose. Improvisation allows attackers to express themselves, be unpredictable and find new ways to forge chances (Wade, 1996; Daniel, 2003).

In turn, the five defensive principles are: I) delay, II) depth, III) balance, IV) concentration and V) composure/discipline/patience. Delay is the defence’s ability to slow down an offense to disrupt the pace and/or numerical advantage of an attack. Depth is a

defence's placement on the field if it is too deep and there is too much space for an offense to hold the ball in front of them to be shallow, it will give them time and too much space for an offense to get behind defence. Balance refers to a defence's strength all over the field, not just those directly defending the ball. Concentration is a defence's focus, which is critical to avoid simple mistakes like miskicks that can give opponents undeserved opportunities. Composure/discipline/patience is an intangible that an entire team must possess to maintain defensive shape and the other four principles even while under constant pressure (Wade, 1996; Daniel, 2003).

2.6. Tactical systems of play

Football match is structured on different referents for spatial organization of the players in the field in view of the match circumstances, movements of the ball and the alternatives of action of both teammates and opponents (Duprat, 2007). A system of play is the arrangement and organization of the 10 field-players, each with a particular assignment and responsibility. A system is always numbered from the backfield forward. For example, a 4x2x4 system denotes four back players, two midfielders and four forwards.

Next, we will present the most popular tactical systems used in football game.

2.6.1. The 4x4x2 formation

This is the most frequently used system in football. Its success ıs due to the fact that it gives a balanced placement of the players on the field, favouring good coverage and doubling up defence, while at attacking team the chance to control the ball and utilize the whole attacking

front. In this system side backs needs to be excellent physique and speed and tactically flexible with good abilities. Side backs should be good short and long passes. Center backs should have god stamina, capable of organizing defence in line. Midfielders should have good dribbling skills, good acceleration, good crossing and passing at depth, tactical intelligence and playing both side of game. Strikers first should work well with each other and then good protecting ball skills, good in area to create a space, mobile and quick, capable of shooting distance (Lucchesi, 2001) (Figure 1).

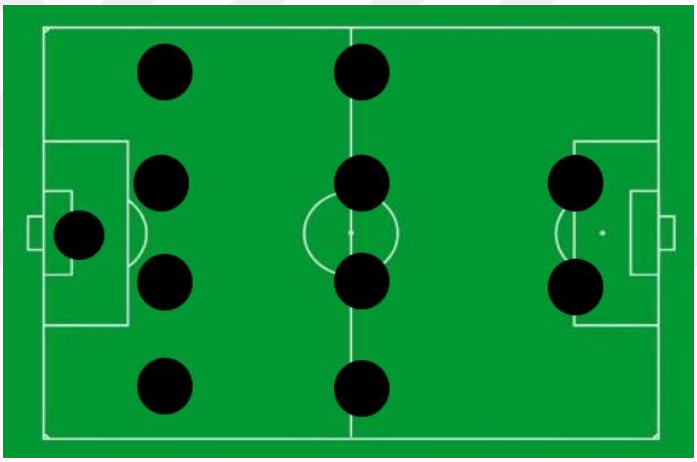

Figure 1 - Tactical formation 4x4x2

2.6.2. The 4x4x1x1 formation

This is a variation of 4x4x2 with one of the strikers playing slightly behind their partner. The second striker is generally a more creative player, the playmaker, who can drop into midfield to pick up the ball before running with it or passing to teammates. This formation allows a creative player a bit more freedom to operate. He has more options, to pass short or long, dribble, cut wide or bear down on goal (Figure 2).

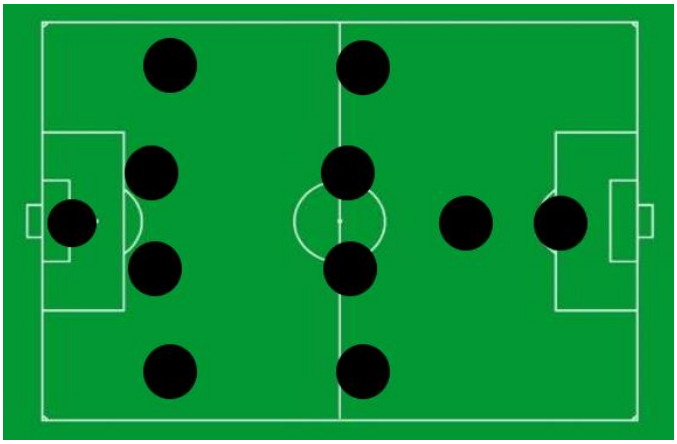

Figure 2 - Tactical formation 4x4x1x1

2.6.3. The 4x3x3 formation

The 4x3x3 is a frequently used system (Figure 3). The 4-3-3 allows the team to cover the entire offensive front and gives the players the chance to use their technical ability in attack. The three forwards split across the field to spread the attack, and may be expected to mark the opposition full-backs as opposed to doubling back to assist their own full-backs, as do the wide midfielders in a 4-4-2. The team must be able to build up play with confidence, flow and variation. It is important never to lose possession when the team is off balance (too far forward for example) or near or around the area. At the same time, play must be fluid and well-timed. Two touch plays will help the team to move the ball quickly and give consistency to the operations (Lucchesi, 2001).

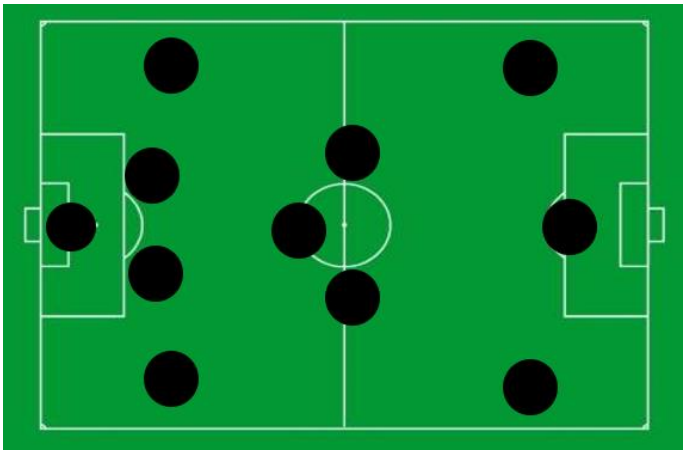

Figure 3 - Tactical formation 4x3x3

2.6.4. The 4x5x1 formation

The 4x5x1 is being increasingly used in modern soccer. Coaches like to have numerical superiority in the center of the field and do not hesitate to bring back the striker, changing the 4-4-2 into a 4-4-1-1 (which is, in fact, a 4-5-1), or putting the wings of the 4-3-3 at the same level as the midfielders so that they have a five-man unit (Lucchesi, 2001). A formation which has grown in popularity in recent times, the 4x5x1 is fundamentally defensive, but can be tweaked to provide more of an offensive threat. The essential qualities of this formation are a three-man central midfield and a lone striker, typically a target man. Packing the midfield makes it difficult for the opposition to build-up play & the opposing team's forwards will often be starved of possession because of the "closeness" of the midfield. When on the attack, the 4-5-1 is heavily dependent on the wingers supporting the lone striker (Figure 4).

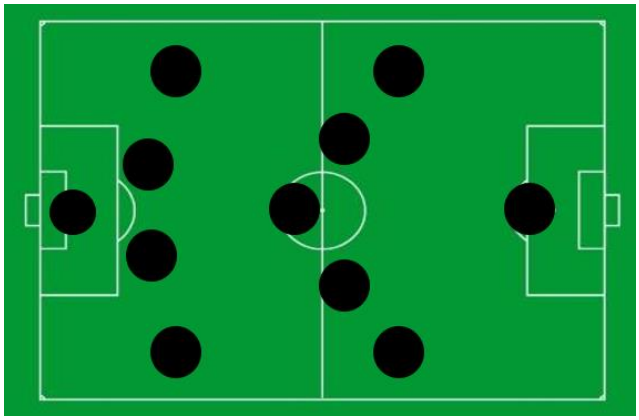

Figure 4 - Tactical formation 4x5x1

2.6.5. The 4x1x2x1x2 formation

Also known as the diamond formation, its key characteristic is the diamond in the midfield made up of an attacking midfielder and a holding midfielder flanked by two wingers, who move in-field slightly to shore up the gaps in the center (Figure 5). The defensive midfielder is also used sometimes as a deep lying playmaker. In order to cover for the lack of width in the side, the full-backs become wingbacks and start slightly higher up the pitch (Askham, 2015).

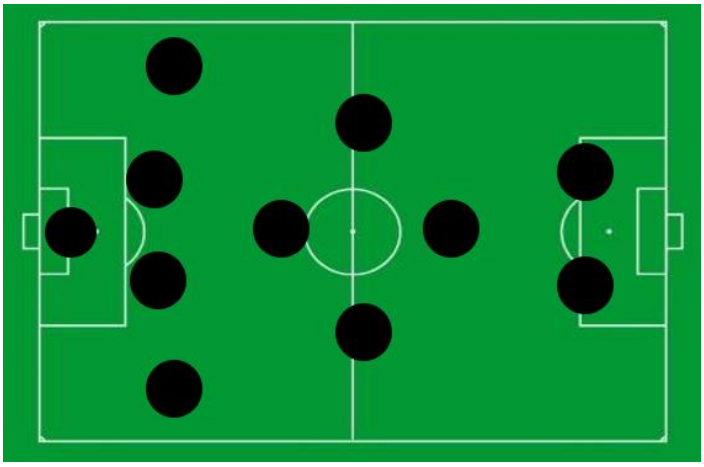

Figure 5 - Tactical formation 4x1x2x1x2

2.6.6. The 4x2x3x1 formation

This formation is based on a solid support of the striker which is usually a target man able to hold ball and perform passes to the upcoming midfielders (Figure 6). At first place it may seem defensive but if applied it well it turns to 4-3-3 in the attacking sections. The midfielder on the back of the striker as a major role. It must be is creative player competent in organising the team. One of the midfielder is usually more defensive who can tackle. Full back need to be good in defence and help attackers in the offensive phase by invading opponent half-.pitch. Central defenders should be good at tackling, heading and marking players (Orejan 2011).

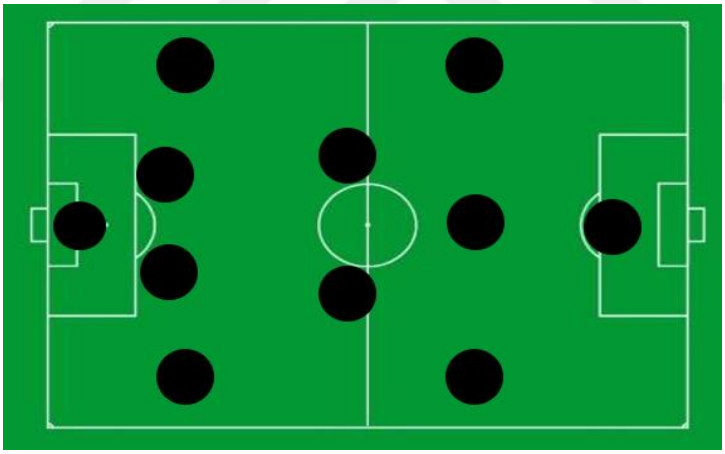

Figure 6 - Tactical formation 4x2x3x1

2.6.7. The 4x6x0 formation

This system is also called as a self-organised formation as it requires a lot of mobility (Figure 7 and 8). At the same type is dependent on a high level of passing abilities. In this sense, there should be pursued an extreme coherence between players abilities as to the collective performance is strongly dependent on those assumptions (Chassy, 2013).

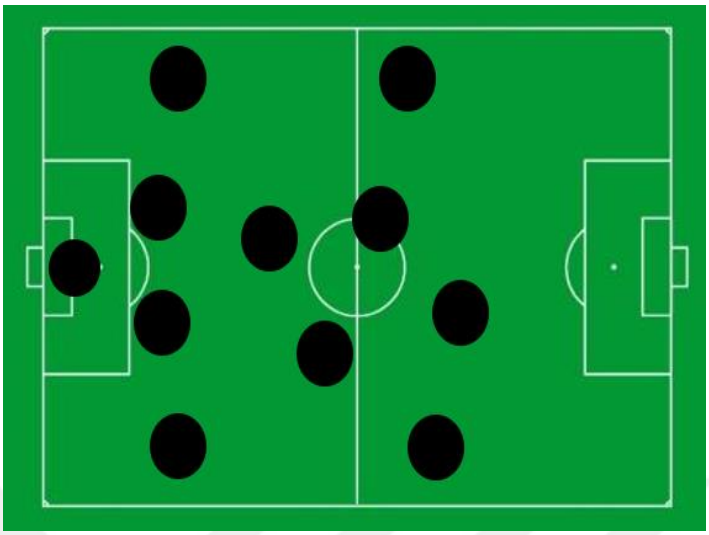

Figure 7 - Tactical formation 4x6x0

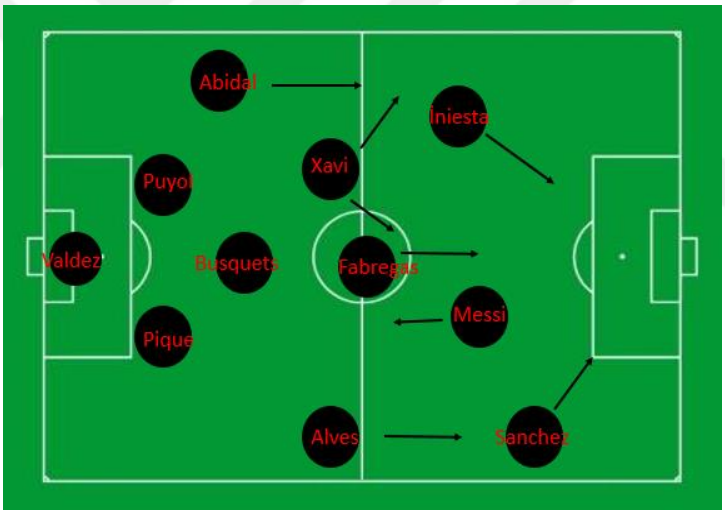

Figure 8 - Barcelona tactical formation 4x6x0

2.7. Offensive and defensive styles of play

2.7.1. Offensive styles of play

In football game there are different offensive styles of play:

i) Possession Football – This is good style to play when opponent team is well organized and it is difficult to do counter attack. Attacking team plays steady with consecutive touches that aim to find the player in better position to receive a pass. The objective of the possession attack is to safeguard possession and to calmly build an attack in search for potencial opportunities to unbalance the defensive structure (Schreiner & Elgert, 2013). The player who has intercepted the ball can consolidate possession either by keeping it himself or by passing to a teammate who is in a better position to play it well. In modern soccer more and more goals are scored as a result of quick, incisive actions subsequent to regaining possession of the ball in the opponent's midfield. As a result, moving instantly into attack as soon as the ball has been recovered possession is clearly a detail that can make the difference. For the same reason, it is of the utmost tactical importance to organize the team in such a way that the player who has regained the ball, and who cannot counterattack immediately, finds, nevertheless, a certain amount of support nearby in order to pass it on to a teammate and so limit the effects of his opponents' pressing unit (Lucchesi, 2001). This style of play has been popularized in recent times by the tiki-taka revolution of Barcelona and Spain.

ii) Counter-attacking Football - The aim of this type of football is to catch the opponent on the "break". When a giving team looses ball possession in midfield or attack, opposing players will tend to progress fast in the pitch in the direction of the target. During the game, all players closely watch the opponent's defence so they can offer a coordinated and appropriate reaction to possession lost. They read the opponent's game independently but also view it through the same eyes. A counter attack is always preceded by a mistake by the opponent. The idea that use this style of play, in many occasions, is to provoke this mistake. Teams with a counter attack mentality always anticipate the possibility of a counter attack and are prepared to

quickly switch to attack mode after gaining possession of the ball. All players keep constant track of the game and know the exact location of ball, opponent, and teammates attackers (Schreiner & Elgert, 2013). Counter-attacking football may involve leaving one or two strikers near the half-way line in the hope that a through ball can be played to catch the opponent off guard.

iii) Long Ball – This style of play is good to build up quick attacking but team should have proper features. The long-ball is dealt in the air most of the time so any team employing it needs to have a strong target man. First of all, the players at the back must be able to kick long balls. At the same time, the receiving players must be well up to the mark (Lucchesi, 2001). Using a long ball can be a good tactic when the field is not good but it has very limited variations. Long ball game is easy to defend against and it is not good for developing of players (Wymer, 2004). This style of play may also limit the decisional skills and creativity of young players.

iv) Positional play – This style of play depends on keeping ball under pressure. This doesn't guarantee winning but it makes the team set pace and rhythm of the game and the opponent team run a lot. Most important to keeping possession of the ball is the play with the ball to master accurate passing techniques, even at the fastest speed. This style of play requires solid coordinated position changes to disturb opponents' stability and create scoring opportunities (Schreiner & Elgert, 2013). The goalkeeper has an important role in the passing network especially if pressed in area he must be able to send ball to where there is space available to play (Davies, 2013).

2.7.2. Defensive styles of play

There are to main styles of play in defence, which are man to man and zonal marking even that between them there may be different variations

i) Man-to-man Marking – In this style a player (usually a marking back) will be assigned responsibility to mark a specific individual opponent. Often, this option is used to neutralize a particularly dangerous and mobile attacking player. If the strategy is effective, the neutralized player is said to have been "marked out of the game”. For younger players it is easy to understand, however it can bring some problems when player loses track of their mark. Additionally, it may impair the development of decision-making skills of young players. It can be a good strategy when a team has a few good defenders to defend opponent team good players (Borden, 2005).

ii) Zonal Marking - This defending style attributes for each player their own field which is under their responsibility and when attackers come into that area, they should be marked. This kind of defending style requires more communication between players (Borden, 2005). Zone defence helps to eliminate the disadvantages of mismatches in ability level, especially physical, that may occur in man to man marking (Beim, 1977).

3. Characterization of host institution

3.1. History of Sport Lisboa e Benfica

Sport Lisboa e Benfica (SLB) commonly known as Benfica, is a sports club based in Lisbon, Portugal. It is best known for its professional football team, who play in the premier league, one of the top team of Portuguese football.

Founded in 1904 by a group of people led by Cosme Damião, Benfica is one of the "Big Three" clubs in Portugal that have never been relegated from the Primeira Liga – the other two are rivals FC Porto and Sporting CP. The team nickname is *Águias* (Eagles) for the symbol atop the club's crest, and incarnated (Reds) for the shirt color. Since 2003, their home ground has been the Estádio da Luz (Stadium of light), which replaced the original one. Benfica is the most supported Portuguese club and the European club with the biggest percentage of supporters in its own country, having more than 156,000 paying members. The club's official anthem, "Ser Benfiquista", refers to its supporters who are called *Benfiquistas*. Benfica is honored in three Portuguese Orders: order of Christ, Merit and Prince Henry.

Benfica is the most successful Portuguese club in terms of both domestic (73) and overall titles (75) – 76 including the Latin Cup, and the only one to have won all national competitions. They have won a record 34 Primeira Liga titles, a record 25 Taça de Portugal(Portuguese cup) (10 doubles), a record 6 Taça da Liga (one treble), 5 Supertaça Cândido de Oliveira and 3 Campeonato de Portugal. Internationally, Benfica won two consecutive European Cup titles, in 1961 and 1962, a unique feat in Portuguese football. In addition, they were runners-up at the Intercontinental Cup in 1961 and '62, at the European Cup in 1963, '65, '68, '88 and '90, and at the UEFA Cup/Europa League in 1983, 2013 and '14. They

have reached ten European finals, which ranks seventh all-time among UEFA clubs and is a domestic record.

In 2000, Benfica was ranked twelfth in the FIFA Club of the Century award. In 2009, it was ranked ninth in "Europe's Club of the Century" by IFFHS(The International Federation of Football History & Statistics). Benfica have the second most participations in the European Cup/UEFA Champions League (35), after Real Madrid.

Benfica's crest is composed of an eagle – as a symbol of independence, authority and nobility. Positioned at top of the shield with the colours red and white, it symbolises bravery and peace respectively. The motto *"E pluribus unum"* (One for all, all for one), defining union between all members and the club's initials.

The club has had four main crests since its inception in 1904. The origin of the current crest goes back to 1908 when Sport Lisboa merged with Group Sport Benfica. Back then, only red and white colours were displayed on the crest. In 1930, the crest was altered and the colours from the flag of Portugal were added. Sixty-nine years later, in 1999, the crest was changed again. The most significant changes were the modification and repositioning of the eagle, and the reduction of the size of the wheel. Benfica has used commemorative crests since 2010 by adding stars on top of it. They started by adding one star to celebrate their first European Cup. In 2011, they added two stars to commemorate their second European Cup. In 2012, they started using three stars, each star representing 10 league titles won by the club (Figure 9) (http://www.slbenfica.pt/en-us/slb/historia/simbolos.aspx; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S.L._Benfica).

Figure 9 - Evolution of Benfica crest (1904 to present)

During their history, Benfica had to play (mostly) in rented fields until 1925. Then, after their own stadium was built (Estádio das Amoreiras), they played there until 1940. In 1941, they started playing at the rented municipal stadium (Estádio do Campo Grande) before moving to their own second stadium, thirteen years later. From 1954 to 2003, Benfica played at the previous Estádio da Luz, the largest stadium in Europe and the third largest in the world in terms of capacity at the time. It was demolished and the new stadium was built in 2003, with a construction cost of almost €119 million. Since then, Benfica have played at the Estádio da Luz (officially named Estádio do Sport Lisboa e Benfica), located in Lisbon, Portugal.

The Museu Benfica – Cosme Damião, located near the stadium, was inaugurated on 26 July 2013 and opened to the public three days later on 29 July. It was considered the Best Portuguese Museum in 2014 by the *Associação Portuguesa de Museologia*

(http://www.slbenfica.pt/en-us/slb/historia/simbolos.aspx; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S.L._Benfica).

3.2. Management structure

As highlighted on the following table (Table 4) SLB structure is divided in three levels: Board of directors, General Assembly and Fiscal Board. With regards to the Board of directors Luís Filipe Vieira, President of the Club, has in charge the management of football department, event that in close relation with other members such as Rui Costa and Nuno Gomes.

Table 4 - Club Governing Bodies

Board of Directors	***General Assembly***	***Fiscal Board***
President Luís Filipe Vieira Member no. 5199	**President** Luís Nazaré Member no. 7.136	**President** Nuno Afonso Henriques Member no. 3.792
Vice-President Rui Cuhna Member no. 4.533	**Vice-President** Virgílio Vieira Member no. 11.770	**Vice-President** Rui Barreira Member no. 41.445
Vice-President Rui Gomes da Silva Member no. 3.144	**1st Secretary** Jorge Arrais Member no. 1.715	**Councilor** Gualter Godinho Member no. 9.768
Vice-President Domingos Almeida Lima Member no. 5.652	**2st Secretary** Bernardo Sousa Member no. 5.632	**Councilor** José Appleton Member no. 2.862
Vice-President José Eduardo Moniz Member no. 6.804	**Secretary (surrogate)** Ricardo Martorell Member no. 1.920	**Councilor** João Quinta Member no. 17.516
Vice-President Nuno Gaioso Member no. 46.635		**Councilor** João Paço Member no. 34.463
Vice-President João Varandas Fernandes Member no. 69.993		
Vice-President (surrogate) Alcino António Member no. 13.710		
Vice-President (surrogate) Sílvio Cérvan Member no. 62.526		

3.3. Benfica Football School (Escola Futebol Geração Benfica)

3.3.1. Contextualization

Benfica football school is located in Estádio da Luz, Estádio do Sport Lisboa e Benfica, Avenida Eusébio da Silva Ferreira, 1500-313 Lisboa (Figure 10).

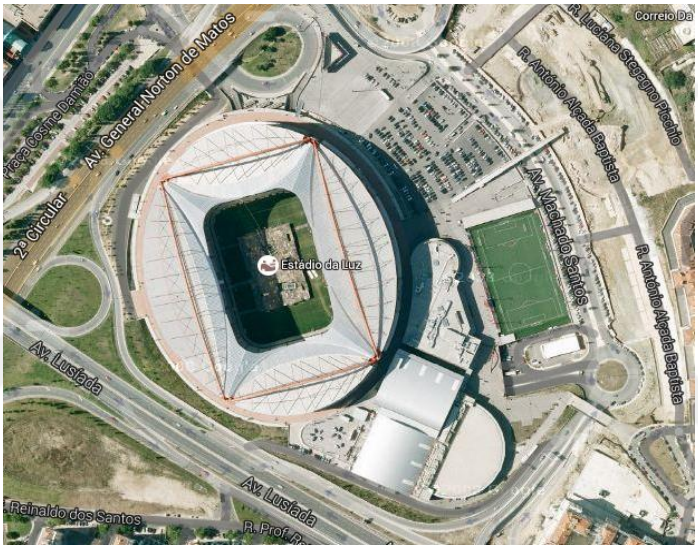

Figure 10 - Location of Benfica stadium and training pitch for youth teams

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Benfica football school is one of the biggest football schools in Portugal and Europe. They have a solid list of national and international partners spread by Angola, Cape Verde Spain, and others In Portugal they have 36 schools. All schools are connected and have same mentality in terms of project implementation and sports development Their shared objective is to grow up players and educate them in view of culture and values of Benfica.

3.3.2. Human resources

Benfica Football School is structured upon the levels showed on image 12. Human resources of Benfica works very beneficently. They have a solid network that is built on interpersonal relations between roles in a proficient manner (Figure 11).

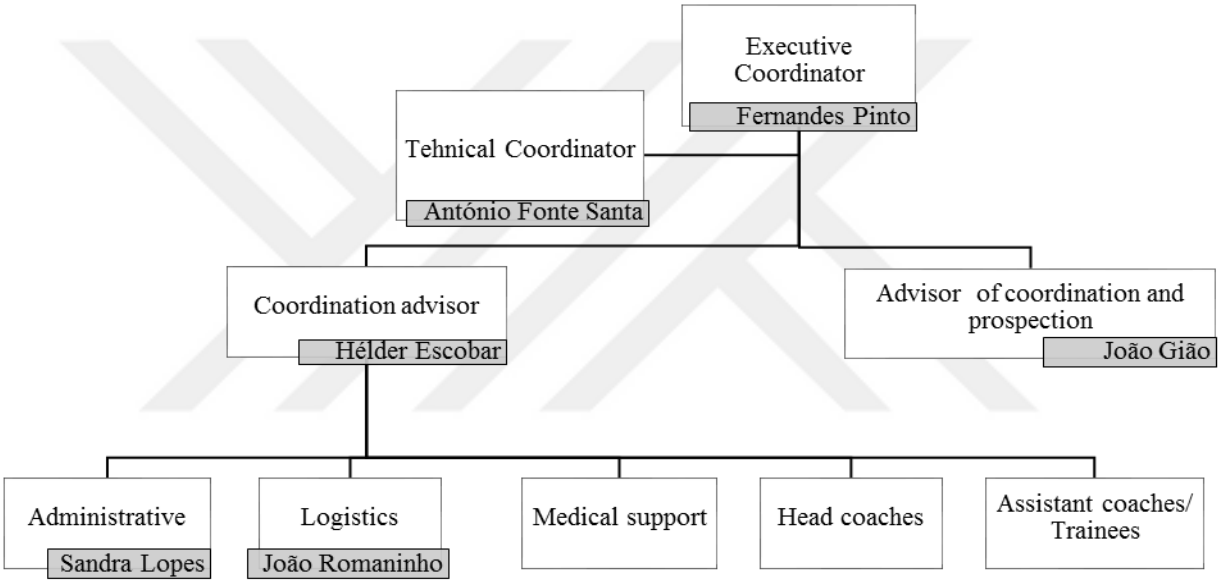

Figure 11 - Human resources

Fernando Pinto is the head of school and connection of Benfica football club. António Fonte Santa has the control of football school and supervises the main activities of the school from coaches to players, including internship students, too. He is extremely dedicated to the football school project. He is very kind and experienced person. Fonte Santa not only he schedules the training sessions and controls all of the coaches at the same time, but also, he is the one who is responsible for all interns. He is in charge of pedagogical and technical project for geraçao Benfica schools. Professor Antonio Fonte Santa attended to Universidade Lusófona

de Humanidades e Tecnologias, graduated and started to work in Benfica football schools as a coordinator and coach since 1996.

Hélder Escobar works in office and coordinates interns, coaches, players and interns. João Romaninho, who is in charge of the logistic, is always present in the training facility, talks to families, help coaches with materials and interns. He coordinates every small details during training. Sandra Lopes - administration staff, has the role of registering players to training system and database so that they can check players attendance.

3.3.3. Objetives and contents of training

This Football School aims to achieve three objectives of a general nature:

a) Have young people who attend school acquire social and human values that gives them balance, responsibility and ability to have an in an active role in society. For this purpose, it creates conditions to facilitate proper identification among young people and the values of SLB;

b) Create the necessary conditions within the club, allowing proper access for the introduction to sports;

c) Ensuring young people who had no chance (by criteria of strict selection in the area of skills for the practice of football) to join the competition teams SLB, an opportunity to highlight and to acquire more knowledge to a possible selection to those teams.

On the other hand, its teaching methodology was supported on different contents of training**.** From a technical perspective the contents were:

i) Ball touch;

ii) Pass;

iii) Reception;

iv) Ball drive;

iv) Shot;

vi) Feint;

vii) Header;

viii) Goalkeeper technique;

ix) Throw;

From a tactical and technical perspective the contents were organized in general and specific principles of play, as follows:

a) General principles of play:

i) Create numerical superiority;

ii) Avoid numerical equality;

iii) Refusing outnumbering;

b) Specific principles of play:

i) Progression;

ii) Offensive coverage;

iii) Mobility;

iv) Space;

v) Marking;

vi) Coverage;

vii) Balance;

viii) Concentration;

From a physical perspective the conditional and coordinative contents of training were:

i) Specific endurance;

ii) Speed;

iii) Reaction

iv) Execution

v) Displacement

vi) Strength;

vii) Flexibility;

viii) Agility;

ix) Dexterity;

x) Eye-hand coordination;

xi) Oculus-pedal-time coordination;

xii) Spatial orientation;

xiii) Laterality;

xiv) Balance;

xv) Rhythm;

xvi) Motor control;

xvii) Running technique.

The psychological, social and emotional traits to be developed were:

i) Attitude;

ii) Values;

iii) Standards;

iv) Interpersonal relations;

v) Cooperation;

vi) Solidarity;

vii) Concentration;

viii) Confidence;

ix) Courage;

x) Humility;

xi) Combativeness’;

xii) Determination;

xiii) Posture;

xiv) Persistence;

xv) Improvisation;

xvi) Creativity;

xvii) Resilience;

xviii) Fair-play.

From a cognitive perspective the contents were:

i) Analysis and perception;

ii) Anticipation/predicting;

iii) Colleagues and opponents behaviours with the ball;

iv) Quality and speed of decision;

v) Tactical creativity;

vi) Improvisation;

vii) Unpredictability (Fonte Santa, 2015).

3.3.4. Training methodology

In the 70's and 80's, the coaches had the idea that the improvement of the physical condition was decisive in achieving good results in competition (Matveiev, 1990) Later, it started to create, by football coaches, an obsession towards technical aspects, leading them to conclude that by this way, the team's success was guaranteed.

Nowadays, football is not only based on physical and technical aspects. The game has evolved into a more rapid activity, which induces quick, creative and informed decisions.. Accordingly,, different features arise such as intelligence, creativity, speed and decision-making. In a football game, the player must be able to identify what to do (tactical component) and how to do it (technical component).

"The most appropriate method to teach football is creating interest for the practitioner, using motivating ways, implicating him in problematic situations bearing the key ingredients of the game. That is the presence of the ball, contrast, cooperation, choice and completion. According to this frame of mind, it is not to adopt conditions providing for the

drilling and analytical decontextualized of technicalities (pass, dribble, shoot, and so on), as executing thus realized has different characteristics from that which occurs in the context of random match. "(Throat, 1994). Within this perspective, the coaches in Benfica Football School should follow this game-based approach in view of keeping a fun atmosphere during practice, with specific training methods appropriate for their age. Child is viewed according to their specificity and not as not as a miniature of an adult. Accordingly, analytical models are not a reference. Instead, the learning will be phased and progressive, from the known to the unknown, from the simplest to the most complex, stimulating the decision-making (developing speed of thought) and intelligence (creativity). It is proposed that the training exercises should not address a single goal as the development of performance is considered as a result of technical, tactical, physical and psychological influences.

This line of reasoning is put in practice by using structures involving a reduced number of players such as: 1x0 + Gk, 2x0 + Gk, 3x0 + Gk, 1x1 + Gk, 2x1 + Gk, 3x1 + Gk, 3x2 + Gk , 4x2 + Gk, etc., or two Goals: Gk + 2x2 + Gk, Gk + 3x3 + Gk, Gk + 3x2 + Gk, Gk + 3x5 + Gk, Gk + 5x5 + Gk, Gr + 4 (+ 2j) x4 (+ 2j) + Gk etc. In most workouts, a performance division will be made in two or three working groups (introductory level, basic and advanced), fulfilling the principle of teaching differentiation. Most of this work should be carried out in small fields with few players, affording consistent opportunities for practice and development.

At the end of each quarter (December, April and June) there will be an inter-class tournament, so that all young athletes can express their skills within a competitive setting, even that with proper adaptations. There will also be different evaluation phases that will provide relevant information to guide the whole process of teaching and learning (Fonte Santa, 2005).

3.3.5. Training facilities and equipment

Benfica facilities meet all UEFA standards. Football school has three dressing room: one for coaches, one for players and one for small players coming with family and one more room for the equipment.

Table 5 - Equipment available

Material	Number	Quality average (1 to 5)
Size 4 balls	40	4
Size 5 balls	10	5
Size 3 balls	15	4
Disc cones	45	4
Plastic cones	25	4
Football bibs	100	5
Skipping stairs	4	5
Mini goals	8	5
Soccer 5 goals	8	5
Soccer 7 goals	10	5
Pitch dimensions	Length 110 meter	Width 90 meter

School's equipment is sometimes not adequate, in terms of number, for all coaches and teams (Table 5). However, coaches are able to use creativity to find some other ways to carry out their training plans.

4. Internship aims

4.1. General

This internship process developed according to the following general aims:

- Promoting a full integration within an organization;
- Develop internal skills within the organization;
- Improve language (written and oral) skills;
- İnside organization having responsibilities and organization patterns;
- Learning future job from inside the field;

4.2. Specific

This internship process developed according to the following specific aims:

- Gaining experience about being coach;
- Improving skills of micro and macro cycles of training;
- Developing skills of communication with players;
- Learning how to apply training plans in the field and feedback to players;
- Preparing training field and after training communication with players family as a group.

4.3. Timetable of internship

Our time-table content involved 3 trainings per day except for Thursdays. In the schedule, weekends are not included since it was not mandatory to attend but from time to time I was asked by coach to participate in competition during the weekends.

Table 6 - Working schedule

Hours	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
16:50	Pedro Fernandes 2007	Pedro Pires 2004	Pedro Fernandes 2007	Paulo martins 2009	Pedro pires 2004
18:30	Ricardo Guerra 2003	Rui Faria Ramos 2004	Ricardo Guerra 2003		Rui Faria Ramos 2004
20:00	Rui Pires 2002		Rui Pires 2002		

My working schedule started every Monday with coach Pedro Fernandes (group born in 2007). Second training session on Monday was with coach Ricardo Guerra (group born in 2003) and third with Rui Pires (group born in 2002). On Tuesdays, I worked with coach Pedro Pires (group born in 2004) and Rui Faria Ramos (group born in 2004). On Wednesday the schedule was the same as Monday while on Tuesday was the same as Fridays. On Thursdays I worked with coach Paulo Martins (group born in 2009) (Table 6).

4.4. Internship intervention

Benfica interns have three stages in Benfica football school. In the first period, the technical trainees are framed with the methodology of the training of Football School. Later, they go in charge of the execution of warm-ups and stretching exercises.

In the second period, these interns plan and implement three training plans by taking into account the organization and time available for practice, in order to maintain all elements of the group in activity.

In the third period, interns begin to develop and implement the training plan, every fifteen days. At the conclusion of training, it is contemplated a meeting of reflection and examination.

Trainees must attend to all training sessions in advance (fifteen minutes) with the goal of analyzing the training plan, placing the equipment in the field and assist the arrival of the practitioners in the pitch.

If, for any reason, the trainee cannot attend the training session, they must text in advance, to inform the Coordinator of School and Chief Technical about the reasons to not be present.

5. Activities of the internship

5.1. Planning of training

Planning is a controlled evolution process that requires setting targets to be achieved. For this to happen is fundamental to know the starting point (baseline) in order to define the point of arrival. Implementation, in turn, should be appropriated to the plan when it is necessary to achieve the previously defined objectives.

The training plan defines the general objectives to be achieved, as well as the specific objectives: technical, tactical, physical and psychological.

The training plan includes learning objectives adapted to the levels of development presented by the young athletes. Training sessions usually last for ninety minutes and are divided in three main parts:

i) Part Introduction - warm-up;

ii) Main part - Achieving the goals set;

iii) Final Part - Stretches.

An effective planning requires an accurate definition of the materials to be used in order to maximize player's practice time. Establishing routines is a way to minimize the time spent on material handling, training groups and the transition exercise.

The training session in Benfica Football School usually begins with *Casa bola* meaning *ball home* that lasts around 10 to 15 minutes of training for players to warm up. This exercise implies that players should be divided into 2 groups while half of the players should have the ball. The aim is to afford contact with ball, dribble and tackle according to their respective goals.

Generally, after *casa bola* training pitch is separated into 3 part depending on the age group and in each field different trainings methods are applied. Normally, in this fundamental part of the session coaches use 3vs2, 2vs2, and 4vs3 game situations. If the players are older, field is made 2 parts and based on numbers of players 4vs3, 5vs4, 6vs5 are applied. In these game situations it was recurrent to explore numerical superiority in order to facilitate identifying the available player to receive a ball or score goal. Furthermore, last part of training implies dividing players in 7vs7 or 6vs6 to promote an approach to competition requirements.

5.2. Training intervention

First few weeks before the beginning of training practice were dedicated for interns to adapt to the club. After second week, our training schedules were defined and we began to get to know the teams we would work. After this phase I started working with six teams permanently as it was exposed in the previous section.

My daily routine implied arriving 15 minutes earlier than training to get dressed properly and prepare the training session. When I arrived at the field, usually I started talking with the coach about the training plan and started to prepare the pitch for the training session. Then, players usually arrived to field by first greeting the coach and interns.

On the first few weeks of my internship process it was hard to communicate with players and coaches because of my lack of understanding of Portuguese language. Even football terms I found it very different from those we learn at school and the ones we use in our daily life, due to their specificity. With this difficulty in mind I started to ask for terms to coaches or friends who were able to explain them to me. Step by step I slowly began to understand terms and concepts that permitted to better used them in the training session with the players.

After this phase I was more adapted and 4 weeks later I was able to express myself enough for the coaches and team to get to know me. Fortunately, coaches understood my worries and they began to talk to me to explain the ideas behind each training session and respective exercise. This process was very rich because I was able to link the performance of the athletes with the contents of training and objectives associated to each exercise. Despite this improvement I still exhibited some timidity, especially when there was a need to volume up or stop the game to talk to the players and correct some behaviors.

Second month came very quick. At this time, I felt very motivated and fully adapted to the club, players, coaches and workers around. Coaches started to stimulate me to be involved in trainings more. In many situations, coach stopped the exercises to show me how to give feedback to players. At this point I was still not much confident on my ability to communicate in Portuguese, but I needed to start at some point. In this context, I must underline the role of Benfica players. They were amazingly respectful and when I tried to explain something they did their best to understand and even some of them sometimes tried to translate the things that I was not able to communicate (Figure 12).

Figure 12 - Exemplar training session

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The ability to improve my communication level with the players made me more confident. On the third month I could make my voice heard in the pitch, which was really difficult for me, but I was already beyond that stage. The fact that coaches were happy with my performance originated ore intervention and responsibility in some training sessions.

I must highlight one of the most enjoyable moments of the year. One week in my third month a coach asked me if I wanted to supervise the team during the competition in the weekend. I was shocked and at the same time very excited. Of course I accepted it. Two more interns and I met at the weekend and we assume the role of coach. Being in stadium as a coach was indescribable feeling. We were talking to each other how to start match preparation and which team to put on first 11. Families were watching the game and cheering for their kids. Standing in that corner of team makes you understand what we are learning, what we are studying for and what we can be in future. Game started. Everything was good and our team began to score goals. Game finished 7-3 and it was really a good result for us. At the end of the game, we interacted with the young athletes and their respective families about the dynamics of the game. After this experience, other opportunities in different teams came up.

On some weekends we were having internal league games that was an internal competition between different teams. Those internal league weekends were so crowded which demanded more responsibility to myself in terms of supervising the athletes and delivering them at the end of the activities to their families.

The relation with the families of the athletes was very interesting. In many situations families wanted to hear the feedback of the coach regarding the evolution of their children. In

the beginning it was hard to speak with families, due to language, but slowly after time I started to meet up player's families, get use to their faces and they started to know me, also. They realized that I was foreigner and trying hard to speak Portuguese. Everybody encouraged me to talk in Portuguese which made me more confident to talk with them. I was really glad that after many training sessions some of the interns were already gone while I kept interacting with the families. I feel that this kind of closeness at these ages is very important for the development of the young athletes

Benfica training plans did not change a lot over the season. However, there were many changes on the players allocated to each team. If one player is showing good performance he was moved to a different team with greater demands in terms of performance. This was a very interesting strategy in my point of view. It was a complex and demanding process that required accurate planning and control. Surely, due to experience gained over the years in Benfica they can achieve a high level of proficiency. This process involved the observation of the athlete appointed to change group by other coach in order to have a second-line opinion. Finally, there is also an opinion given by the coordinator. Thus, if the coach and coordinator of school agree that player is better than his group, he upgrades to better team.

There was a set of features, in terms of model of play that Benfica elicits as determinant to be promoted in the athletes that I found very important such as:

- First, not to lost ball in defence;
- Second, open the game which means playing wider with wingers;
- Third, help team mates. Get closer and be in position to receive pass;
- Fourth, when has a chance head up and shoot;
- Fifth, decide quickly;

- Sixth, when one side of field is full of defenders turn game to other side;
- Seventh, be aggressive to ball.

These are mottos that Benfica coaches tries to apply every moment in each one of the player. I have learned this perspective overt the trainings but also due to a participation on a seminar promoted by Benfica for interns. They have showed us how to apply his mentality to training sessions.

Time was passing and I was feeling like a part of that coach group. They were always nice to me and really helpful. In some trainings there were not equal number of players so we, interns, participated as extra players. Curiously this made players more motivated as they were trying to show how good they are.

After six month, coaches were giving me more control of trainings. Time to time, depend on players mood, we changed the training plan in order to stimulate changes in behavior of the athletes It was really enriching for me to participate in this process. It demanded an accurate observation, decision and investigation on specific topics.

In terms of training methods there novel aspects for me. For example, in this school there weren't specific physical or technical trainings. Almost exercise was made with the ball. Also, cool down period wasn't being applied for every section of training. In my opinion this was a negative part of Benfica School. Sometimes coaches showed up how to do cool down but in the end of training there was not time for it. There was also a very distinct aspect in comparison with my experience of coaching in Turkey. Trainings in Turkey are applied with very strict rules but here I experienced that trainings in many times do not comply with football in terms of physical rules aggressiveness but with no violence. This was kind of a positive side in my opinion because it promotes a greater dynamics over the game and training session.

5.3. Complementary activities

5.3.1. Fathers's day

In this event players invited their fathers to participate in the training session. Depending on the age children and their respective fathers could participate on the general training exercises or in football matches especially suited for them. This was a very important day for players, families and coaches to create a bound and get to know each other better but also to share different perspectives of the training session.

5.3.2. Liga Interna *(Internal league)*

This was an event created by Benfica Football School in order to stimulate competition of certain group ages almost every two weeks. However, there is a really nice atmosphere and competition is not associates to winning at all cost. There are no referees. Interestingly, the coaches of both teams decide on what's a fault or not. Also, after every game they decide the best player of each team and they notate the score of the game. From the players' and coaches perspective this activity is very fruitful.

5.3.3. Sports Seminar: Benfica football school

This event occurred on January and its goal was for Benfica coaches to educate interns from a theoretically and practically perspective so that their quality of intervention in training would get better. Seminar started with a theoretical part related with what Benfica football school is, what their system is and what they intend to do. After each part, interns were allowed to ask questions and clear the doubts in their head. Second part of the seminar is practical part,

Benfica coordinators and coaches show interns what they are trying to mean in theoretical part. They demonstrate us how to speed up training and variations of training on the training field. It was very effective for interns to understand mentality of Benfica football school.

6. Research task: structural and functional adaptations in youth soccer –a study case involving Portuguese and Turkish Football federations

6.1. Introduction

Football has different organizations throughout the World which have a certain level of autonomy. For instance, with regard to youth stages, different countries decide to implement different kind of rules and modifications in the game. There are different organizations that rule the game across different continents such as UEFA in Europe or CAF in Africa, even that in compliance with FIFA referents (Fédération Internationale de Football Association). In Europe UEFA is responsible for supervising European football organizations. Each of them possesses certain independence on game rules, especially on youth stages.

Worth of note is that Long-Term planning models such as LTAD (Long-term Athletic Development) propose crucial adaptations both on contents, means and methods of training in order to promote a solid and consistent sportive development (Baily et al., 2005). A previous study has analysed the structural and functional adaptations of Portuguese and Brazilian organizations, in different sports, at youth level (Millisted et al., 2014). Their findings were discussed with regards to the timing to begin specialization process.

Accordingly, this case study aims to compare the structural and functional adaptations in football game rules between Turkey and Portugal across different age stages.

6.2. Methods

This research was conducted by documental analysis of available on official websites of Portuguese and Turkish federations. Whenever this information was not available, personal interviews were made with technical members of football associations of each country.

The variables to be considered were: i) pitch size; ii) ball size; iii) number of players; iv) game time; v) offside; vi) substitution method; vii) goal size; viii) gender adaptations; ix) sanctions; x) refereeing.

6.3. Data presentation and discussion

Next, we may find the following table (table 7) that exposes Turkish adaptations in football matches form under 7 to under 19. First of all, it is possible to identify major changes till 11 years old. Especially, between ages 7 and 11 there is an increase on the complexity of the rules. After 11 years old the main differences are related with game time. Apparently, Turkish football federation tries to implement most of general senior football rules to young players from age 11.

Table 7 - Game rules in Turkish Football Federation across different ages

	U19	U17	U15	U13	U11	U9	U7
Pitch size	Normal field	Normal field	Normal field	Normal Field	50x70	35x50	25x40
Ball size	No 5	No. 5	No. 5	No. 4	No. 4	No 3, light.	No: 3, lightweight.
Game format	11 x 11	11 x 11	11 x 11	11 x 11	8x8	7x7	6x6
Game Duration	2x45 min	2x40 min	2 x 35 min	2 x 30 min	2x20 minutes	2x20 minutes	2x15 minutes
Offside	Normal rules applied	Normal rules applied	Normal Game Rules Apply	Normal Game Rules Apply	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Substitution method	Substitute player : 3	Substitute player : 3	Substitute player: 5	Substitute player: 5	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Goal size	Normal	Normal	Normal	Normal	2x5 Meter	2x3 Meter	2x3 Meter
Gender adaptations	Separate	Separate	Separate	Separate	Separate	Mixed	Mixed
Sanctions	All standard rules applied	4 yellow card not applied	4 yellow card not applied	Cards applied as normal	Warned through coach	No	No
Referee and assistants	One referee, 2 assistant and 4th referee, 1 observer	One referee, 2 assistant and 4th referee, 1 observer	One referee, 2 assistant	One referee	One referee	One referee	No need

Next table (table 8) shows us Portuguese adaptations in football matches form under 7 to under 19. There are not that many changes till age 15 in Portugal. The most relevant adaptations when comparing to senior level are related with field size, ball size and game time.

Table 8 - Game rules in Portuguese Football Federation across different ages

	U19	**U17**	**U15**	**U13**	**U11**	**U9**	**U7**
Pitch size	Standard	Standard	f-7 (75x55)	f-7 (75x55)	75-45x55-40	30-35x30-40	16-20x25-30
Ball size	5	5	5	4	4	4	3
Game format	18	18(11x11)	18(9x9)	16(8x8)	16(8x8)	12 (6x6)	10 (5x5)
Game Duration	2x45	2x40	2x35	2x30	2x25	20-30 min.	10-20 min
Offside	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Substitution method	Max:5	Max:5	Max:5	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited	Unlimited
Goal size	Standard	Standard	6x2	6x2	6x2	3x2	1x1
Gender adaptations	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Sanctions	Standard	Standard	Standard	Standard	Cards applied	No cards applied	No cards applied
Referee and assistants	1 referee– 3 assistant	1 referee – 3 assistant	1 referee – 2 assistant	1 referee - 2 assistant	2 referee	Can be player	Can be player

Next table (table 9) synthesizes the most relevant differences between Portugal and Turkish football system, both at the level of functional and structural adaptations. First, the greatest number of differences (7 differences) is located at 11 years old: pitch size, game format, game duration, goal size, gender adaptations, sanctions and referee and assistants. In fact, there is an increase on the number of differences till this age and then a decrease thereafter till senior level.

While at older age's substitution methods and referee standards are different, when we start to check younger ages, field size, goal size and game format stand as major differences.

Table 9 - Main differences in game rules between Portuguese and Turkish Football Federations

Age	Number of differences	Differences
U19	2	Substitution method Referee and assistants
U17	3	Substitution method Sanctions Referee and assistants
U15	4	Pitch size Game format Goal size Sanctions
U13	4	Pitch size Substitution method Goal size Referee and assistants
U11	7	Pitch size Game format Game duration Goal size Gender adaptations Sanctions Referee and assistants
U9	4	Pitch size Ball size Game duration Referee and assistants
U7	3	Pitch size Game duration Goal size

6.4. Conclusion

Long-term player development program shows us that there are crucial phases for player development. Also, the FA (Football Association – UK) long-term player development model highlights that players should be trained different differently between ages 5 to 11, 11 to 16 and 16 to 20. This implies that football organizations should consider these phases and organise the game accordingly.

Both of the Portuguese and Turkish football systems show many changes between ages under 7 and 11. In Turkey changes in the game are especially made till age 11. After 11 years old the game format does not change that much which, in our opinion, is not correct. At this age the players still need adaptations in the game, as they are not mentally and physically similar to the adults. In turn, Portuguese keeps changing the game across different ages such as on the pitch size, game duration, game format, etc.

In sum, despite of general rules, football game exhibits important changes, both at function and structural levels, in different countries. This fact is even more relevant as at youth stages of development the need for proper adaptations is very important.

These kinds of studies are very important to inform national and international governing bodies on how to promote and spread the football game with greater potential of integration and development for young athletes.

7. Conclusion

At this point is required to underline the main concluding topics that arise from the internship experience at Sport Lisboa e Benfica. The opportunity to experience my internship in Benfica Football School was very impressive from a professional point of view. The name of Benfica is well known all around world and it's a great reference for my CV when searching for future job applications.

Along this process I went through some obstacles and difficulties that forced me to analyse the situation and execute some strategies to overcome it. First days in Benfica were quite hard in terms of integration for many reasons: being a foreigner, a new intern, not to know enough Portuguese language to communicate effectively, not having friends, getting use to club procedures, and staff etc. In addition, there were personal traits that also influenced this situation, such as lack of self-confidence. To overcome this situation was critical for me to keep a close interaction and support with Benfica staff. They were really important to handle all this difficulties. Benfica staff, coaches, workers and even players were all very helpful in helping me to join their "family". Every day they showed interest in knowing if the things were getting better. Along this process I gained very important social and communication skills. After few weeks most of my difficulties were gone as I began to adapt myself into trainings, system and context.

On a second phase, after being integrated, I acquired very relevant knowledge on planning and periodization of training process, training intervention and organization. Worth of note was the possibility to supervise team performance during competition. In that sense, I was able to develop my skills in terms of group leadership but also on decision-making as I

had to evaluate and act during competition. After almost a year in Benfica football school I acquired lots of experience in tournaments and weekend games.

An important element of this process was the research task that I developed, focused on the comparison between structural and functional adaptations in Portuguese and Turkish football system. This study made me understand better the importance of adapting the conditions of practice and play to the process of development, without committing the error of replying the conditions at senior to youth level. I noticed that younger age's rules changes should vary in order to create better conditions for them to explore the game. Interestingly, in Turkey these changes were not as clear and solid as in Portugal which may have some implications in the future.

In sum, I feel extremely positive after concluding this process and I hope it will bring me relevant skills for my future as a football coach.

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