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ABSTRACT OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS

***WAYS OF INCREASING THE EFFICIENCY OF GAME
ACTIONS BY EXPLOITING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL
FACTORS WITHIN THE FOOTBALL TEAM***

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Part I, entitled **CONCEPTUAL ASPECTS, TOPICALITY OF THE THEME AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF ITS REFLECTION IN THE SPECIALTY LITERATURE**, consists of 4 chapters: Chapter 1, **Game systems in performance football**, Chapter 2, **Phases and tactical forms specific to defense and attack**, Chapter 3, **Game relations between compartments and by phase** and Chapter 4, **Conclusions**.

Motivation for choosing the theme

The evolution of the modern game of football towards the total commitment of players, with the decline of excessive specializations on positions, with the use of highly refined and subtle procedures, with increasingly flexible tactics in the offensive and defensive compartments, able to meet the requirements of practicing a collective game over the entire duration of the contest, creates more and more problems for obtaining favorable results, promoting young players and tailoring the players who make the step towards high performance football, towards the great powers of international football.

In this context, through this research we aimed to highlight the role of psychological and social factors in the manifestation of an efficient technical and tactical behavior under adversity conditions, concretized in solving the problems issued during the game by making the right decisions and winning the victory.

Research objectives:

- to highlight the game systems used in performance football and to analyze the effectiveness of technical and tactical actions, in attack and defense, carried out by the team “C.S. Pandurii Lignitul Targu-Jiu” in the official games played during the National Football Championship - Junior B;
- to establish how the level of mental processes and phenomena (topographical memory, analogical transfer and spatial orientation) and of interpersonal relationships correlates with sports performance;
- to optimize the technical and tactical preparation by delimiting the psychosocial factors and implementing a preparation program designed to lead to the achievement of sports performance.

The systematization of information identified in the specialized literature and its critical analysis have allowed us to draw the following **conclusions**:

- ✓ The organization of football game is increasingly complex and quite poorly predictable, given that, in the defensive system, there are involved between 3 and 5 players, in the midfield area, 4, 5 or 6 players with dual, complex and varied tasks, and in attack, 1 or maximum 2 players, which leads the coach to lay in the field the suitable football players on the right positions, so that they benefit from the best options to defend themselves and to attack.
- ✓ An effective game system must be established depending on the players' skills, the coach's ideas and conceptions, the own purpose and tactics and the information obtained about the opponent.
- ✓ The specific tactical preparation must include gestural patterns of movement replication, principles or rules of practical action, typical global game situations and, not least, situations that involve problem solving.
- ✓ Successful performance is ensured only through an impeccable organization of the entire preparation, through the exploitation by the coach, in the training process, of the information obtained about each player regarding their level of physical preparation, technical and tactical behavior and attitude towards the teammates.

Part II, **PRELIMINARY RESEARCH ON THE ANALYSIS OF GAME SYSTEMS BASED ON THE CRITERION OF EFFICIENCY IN THE ATTACK AND DEFENSE ACTIONS USED BY JUNIOR FOOTBALL TEAMS**, includes: Chapter 5, **Methodological and operational framework of the preliminary research**, Chapter 6, **Presentation and interpretation of the results** and Chapter 7, **Preliminary research conclusions**.

The research purpose consists in the complex analysis of game systems, of each player's technical and tactical actions and behavior within the tactical conception, in order to increase the efficiency of the team in the official games from the second phase of the National Football Championship - Junior II.

For this purpose, there were developed and completed two recording sheets focused on aspects related to the tactical and technical behavior specific to each player, their attitude towards the teammates and opponents manifested in training and the official games, concurrently with the analysis of the forms for finalizing the attack actions and tactical defense combinations used in the official games played in the first round of the championship.

Preliminary research conclusions

- ✓ Knowing the bio-motor data and the attitude of each player in training and competition, correlated with the player's behavior in attack and defense, in their relationships of collaboration with the teammates, represents an extremely important factor in planning the preparation, from the annual one to that preceding an official game, because the players' potential can be exploited much better according to the game system intended to be applied.
- ✓ Achieving the technical and tactical profile of each player, member of the team "C.S. Pandurii Lignitul Targu-Jiu", with reference to personal aspects, provides us a true picture of their value and possibilities to integrate into various game systems, in attack and defense.
- ✓ Tracking the training status and the reactions of each player in certain circumstances created by their own game, the opposing team's game, the teammates' game, the referee's attitude, helps the coach to make important decisions in the key-moments of the game, leading the team to reach the proposed objective.
- ✓ As to the technical and tactical factor, centralizing the data from the records of the 11 games played in the first part of the championship and interpreting the results allow us to draw the following conclusions:
 - the team achieves more finalization actions in the second half than in the first half;
 - the team has constancy in the individual actions of overtaking the opponent, demarcation, exchange of places, but it encounters problems in executing the free kicks, organizing the attack in numerical superiority, and the tactical schemes;
 - the team has problems related to both concentration and the creation of

relationships between athletes in those combinations where several players are involved;

- most actions to recover the ball take place in the 2nd or 3rd zone, and taking the ball or regaining possession of the ball directly from man-to-man marking are the prevailing actions;
- the pressing performed in zone 1 has proven its effectiveness, the actions to recover the ball through interception recording a pretty good percentage compared to other actions.

Part III, **RESEARCH ON THE LEVEL OF COGNITIVE PROCESSES AND INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS SPECIFIC TO THE FOOTBALL PLAYERS OF THE TEAM “C.S. PANDURII LIGNITUL TARGU-JIU”**, includes: Chapter 8, **Methodological framework of the research**, Chapter 9, **Operational approach to the experimental research**, Chapter 10, **Presentation and interpretation of the results**, Chapter 11, **Conclusions**, Chapter 12, **Elements of originality, practical exploitation of the research and result dissemination**.

The research purpose is to highlight the influence of psychosocial factors on the effectiveness of technical and tactical actions in attack and defense, and implicitly on winning the victory in the official competitions.

Research hypotheses

The level of mental processes and phenomena (topographical memory, analogical transfer and spatial orientation) specific to football players correlates positively with their performances in the official games.

The level of team cohesion assessed in terms of interpersonal relationships influence the effectiveness of technical and tactical actions in the official games.

Research methods: bibliographical study, observation, experiment, application of the topographical memory trial within the Psiselteva test battery, computerized tests for orientation and analogical transfer, sociometric method, statistical and mathematical method, graphical method.

Organizing and conducting the experiment

The experiment was conducted in the second phase of the National Football Championship - Junior B (January to May 2013), having as subjects the players from “C.S. Pandurii Lignitul Targu-Jiu” (technical and tactical, psychological and sociometric analysis). For the comparative psychological analysis, there were also tested the players of the team “LPS Targu-Jiu”, participants in the same championship.

To optimize the behavior of football players from “C.S. Pandurii Targu-Jiu” in

terms of their collaboration relationships by compartment, in both the attack and defense phases, we designed several preparation contents focused on these issues.

Conclusions

Football, a sports game polarizing around it an impressive number of practitioners and spectators, with a spectacular character given by the varied and unexpected tactical situations that must be solved, the multitude of technical and tactical actions and combinations in attack and defense that succeed at fast pace, requires changing the preparation methodology through the innovative exploitation of the scientific information and practical experience, in order to increase the athletes' efficiency in the official competitions, concretized in winning the victory.

The game systems have continuously evolved, currently recovering the ball as quickly and as far as possible from the own goal, in the defense phase, becomes increasingly important, sometimes crucial in the game progress, which requires the preparation of players towards the upper limits, a visible aspect in the today's defenders, who are technical and smart players, with a spirit of anticipation and mutual support within the game.

Analysis of the results obtained by the athletes of the team "C.S. Pandurii Lignitul Targu-Jiu" in the psychological tests and the performance achieved by them at the end of the National Football Championship - Junior B, concretized in their getting the second place in the official ranking, allows us to assert that in sports games the efficiency of competitive activity depends on the cognitive ability level of the team members, transposed into the game by finding the best solutions to solve the tactical problems created by the opponent, thus *confirming hypothesis no. 1* of the research.

Analysis of the 22 official games in terms of the number of technical and tactical actions, the forms and phases of attack and defense, has shown that the players from "C.S. Pandurii Targu-Jiu" mobilize much better in the second half, where the number and density of actions was higher; in the second phase of the Championship, the players showed an improved performance behavior due to the emphasis put in training on the consolidation/improvement of specific technical and tactical skills.

The sociometric test has revealed that interpersonal relationships are not at the best level because of the large number of marginalized players, but relating these results to their performance achieved at the National Football Championship - Junior B, we can state that the level of interpersonal relations established between the team players does not decisively leave its mark on the success in competitions, which *invalidates hypothesis no. 2* of the research.