

Doctoral thesis abstract
**Directions and trends in preparing 6-8 years old children for the
orientation towards the football game**

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The thesis contents includes a number of 221 pages, 211 pages are with text (inclusively the table of contents), and 10 pages are containing the bibliography.

In the thesis contents I have made an analysis of the issues of sports orientation and of the phenomenon of selection and preparation of young school age, 6-8 years old, in order to be classified in the phenomenon of juvenile football and also a critical analysis of the children's selection systems for efficient orientation towards the football game, the presentation of the results and the performance of some studies, experiments and measurements made with the experimental group during one year of sports preparation, during which I used a personal variant of test sets and appraisal scales deriving from the Romanian Football Federation's system, for the verification of certain children selectable from this age, for their orientation towards the performance football.

In parallel with the experimentation of a personal variant of the system for measuring the anatomic parameters and the 6-8 years old children's motricity, I have succinctly presented theoretical and methodical considerations about the issued of the tests concerning the motor ability, the means used, conclusions and perspectives about the optimization of the process of orientation towards performance sport of children of young school age.

The subject of the doctoral thesis presents highly topical priority issues having a particular praxeological importance, presenting an important instrument of knowledge and familiarity of the process of sports orientation, generally, and the orientation towards football game, especially.

This is a highly topical issue considering the sports development, especially football, which recently gained increased roles, which ends up to be a game of global interest. And from here the idea that the age, at which may be successfully done the children's orientation towards this sport, is 6-8 years old, by specifying that the preparation methods should take into account the age-specific effort ability and also the morpho-functional characteristics.

Reasons for choosing the theme

The requirements of a modern game are challenging the player, regardless of the permanent position had in the team's initial tactics, to be able to directly and efficiently act in all the field's areas, in offensive phases as well as in the defensive phases. Considering these requirements of contemporary football, requirements that, in substance, are representing increased dynamism, player's maximum stress, complexity and diversity, the training and improvement character of the process of selection and preparation of players and teams is permanently oriented towards the meeting of these new requirements of the football game. The well done sports orientation, the preparation on all centre lines, the ensuring of increased indexes of all factors for training a football player, benefit from their interdependence and mutual conditioning in their evolution in game, and the effects may be only qualitatively higher. A shortcoming of one of the factors of sports orientation and complex preparation becomes a braking factor in the ability to show the player's entire potential.

The originality of the thesis is given by the model elaborated and implemented by me in the preparation of 6-8 years old children for the football game, model that is successfully adapted to the physical, motor and psychical requirements of this age category. The model on which the study is based, has proved to be an efficient one, evidenced by the results obtained at the motor ability tests on the experimental group compared to the control group. The original contribution is also the inquiry made on a representative sample of specialists in the field, inquiry that showed certain essential characteristics of the process of preparation and selection of the young school-age children for the football game.

The bibliography herein presented includes 172 titles from the Romanian and international literature on this subject.

The doctoral thesis having the theme **“Guidelines and trends in preparing 6-8 years old children for the orientation towards the football game”**, elaborated and drawn up under the supervision of Prof. univ. dr. Vasile Marcu, is structured in three parts, as it follows:

Part I „Theoretic foundation of the research” is giving in three chapters (2, 3 and 4) and 7 sub-chapters a pertinent presentation of the theoretical aspects related to the place and role of sports preparation for the orientation towards the performance sport, about the anatomical and physiological, psychological and motor characteristics of 6-8 years old children, and also about the objectives, importance and purposes of the process of orientation towards sports.

The place and role of sports preparation in the orientation towards performance sport

Motivation for sport

The correlation between motivation and football practice is determined also by the age characteristics of players at each selection level (initial, intermediate, phase, permanent). Therefore, the first issue related to the selection of football players is, certainly, to determine the optimal age for making it. It is manifested worldwide the trend of making the selection at childhood age. The increasingly technical level of the football competition worldwide requires the detection of performance qualities at a very early age, in order to ensure a longer period of preparation and to fully use the optimal age for developing the qualities necessary to achieve high performance.

The reasons why children and youngsters are practising football or high performance sports, are very various and wide, some of them being mentioned among the specific interests. The need of performance, appreciation, success, social position and assertiveness, to which are added the direct and indirect satisfactions offered by activity, satisfactions that must be repeated, sustained and strengthened, are strong reasons for stimulating the football practice. The awareness of an above-average endowment, and also the desire for self-improvement may be doubled by superior, patriotic feelings or love for club, by the children's strong desire to achieve performance, so that those around him may take pride.

Characteristics of the age for the orientation of children towards football.

The current directions and trends for the children's orientation towards football.

In modern football we note the existence of new directions for increasing its efficiency at all levels. The problem of selecting the football talent belongs to the most critical, and in the same time the most important area of the sports research as well as of the sports practice. The selection is nothing more than the process by which are identified children endowed with talent and abilities favourable for sport, by means of some scientifically valid methods and tests.

The general trend worldwide is the sharp decrease of the age when starts the practice of football. An early debut in football implies an early specialization and implicitly the sportive's particular efforts, not only physical (the body has the capacity to regenerate itself) but also psychical. Another aspect of the selection activity is connected to the system for eliminating the subjects, in the initial phase, subjects that seem not to have the necessary abilities. It is recommended that those children not fulfilling totally the requirements of the selection model, but having remarkable attributes in certain directions, to be accepted, monitored and guided thenceforth.

Anatomical and physiological, psychological and motor characteristics of 6-8 years old children.

Some of the functional characteristics of 6-8 years old children are: the cardiac frequency (pulse) is bigger in the initial stage; the blood pressure has also lower values; the intercostal muscles are not sufficiently developed, the thorax has a narrow form; the respiratory tracts have small diameters; the respiration reflects a small value amplitude; the ability of adaptation to effort is better and better.

Normally, at the age of 6-8 years, the child is able of sufficiently stable attention so he may integrate in the school activity. However, in the first year of school, the attention insufficiency of pupils is pregnant. Because of the novelty of the situations to which they must adapt, the 6-8 years old children are characterized by a particular low volume of attention and by the difficulty of its distribution on more activities or objects.

Influenced by the integration in the school environment, with wide resonances in psychical, personality, emotional terms, the young pupil is subject to some decisively increased requirements, differently felt, depending on his stage of biological development. In this period, the morpho-functional growth and development of pupils are more rapid and, generally, more uniform than in the previous stages. The motricity in this period is exuberant, the ability of motor learning is remarkable, but the possibilities of setting the new movements are reduced. Consequently, only the systematic repetition integrates and stabilizes the new structure in the child's motor repertory.

Objectives, importance and purposes of the process of orientation towards sports.

The main objective for identifying the talents is to be discovered and selected those sportives with the highest qualities for sport. The opinion of most specialists according to which the talent of selected youngsters is materialized in an optimal profile in morphological, functional motor and psychological terms, in a proper family turn of events is based on the fact that the exceptional talent, if found from a wide group of tested children and youngsters must be engaged in a particularly sustained activity, in a work without mincing manners, long lasting, extending up to the maximum biological and psychological limits.

The sports orientation is a primordial factor of the modern training. The duty of technicians is to find the element of exception, at an early age, with genetic dowry, competitive features and nature.

The II-nd Part titled „**Preliminary researches about the 6-8 years old children for the orientation towards the football game**” presents a detailed analysis of the FRF's testing system for children selectable for performance football activity, presenting here also the selection criteria for this age.

Current directions and trends in the football game

The sports selection and orientation is based on the accumulation and collection of some information about the sports future. To achieve this desideratum are used mathematical and more and more cybernetic methods that

convert usual information in a "model". The orientation towards performance sports refers to the activity of detection, selection and sorting of the elements with qualities proper for practising some sports branches and also to the activity of recovery and keeping of some elements that, even recruited, are leaving the branch for which were selected, with the possibility to be reoriented towards other branches.

The preliminary researches were made in the period 2012-2013, in the following sequence:

Initial phase (2012-2013) was made on two main directions and namely:

A. Study of the speciality literature, participation to training session sand trials made locally for young school age children, in order to detect and materialize the most efficient means and methods for selecting and training 6-8 years old novice footballers.

B. Elaboration of a preparation model for 6-8 years old novice football players, model consisting of a set of exercises created to guarantee the development of all motor abilities specific for practising the football game at this level. This model was offered for implementation to the experimental group, which used it during 3 weekly training sessions for a period of one year.

Secondary phase (2013) has targeted the time interval intended for identifying the opinion of Romanian specialists on issues of selection and of the possibility to improve it at 8=8 years old children selected for the football game. Therefore, was elaborated a questionnaire formed of 18 questions and applied to a number of 50 coaches and professors of physical education, specialist that are performing the professional activity in sports clubs and schools in this field in Romania.

After studying the data obtained from the inquiry, taking into consideration the statistical interpretations of the results obtained from the 50 respondents sample, we may draw a series of conclusions concerning the specificity of the initial selection in the football game, at 6-8 years old children.

Most of the respondents are of the opinion that the selection process in sports games, generally, and in football games, particularly, is a fairly good process used inside the clubs/schools in Romania. Even though, there are many things that may be improved, among which :

- The increase in the interest of the local authorities competent in this filed (AJF - County Football Association) in promoting organized sports and competitions at the youngest age categories.
- The organization with their support of as much as possible selection actions like trials in schools, inter school cups, area tournaments, for the purpose to bring as many 6-8 years old children as possible to the attention of the specialists.

- The family's involvement in keeping the children's interest for making sports activities and using each opportunity to motivate the sportives; prizes awarded in competitions, positive appreciations, etc.
- Keeping the increased interest of the coaches/professors for the development of motor abilities at 6-8 years old children in order to obtain better results in the selection process and in all the phases of the sports training;
- Attracting as many young children as possible to the sports phenomenon, through actions of popularization in all media of the sports actions and activities.

III-rd Part „Personal researches about the preparation of the 6-8 years old children for the orientation towards the football game" is the fundamental part of this thesis, where the author presents, besides the specificity of the selection in the football game at novice level, the model of the football player of young school age, requirements for the successful orientation of young footballers and exercises for developing the abilities necessary to a good football player.

Hypothesis of the research

The use of proper methodological model, correlated to the stage of preparation and development of 6-8 years old children, may substantially improve their motor development and implicitly the carrying out of an efficient process of sports orientation towards the football game.

The main objectives of our study were:

1. The determination of the level of the physical, motor and technical preparation of 6-8 years old children involved in the practice of football game at novice level.
2. The carrying out and implementation of a model of preparation corresponding to the requirements of the age of 6-8 years and having as effect the improvement of all criteria requested by selection.
3. Experimental argumentation of the efficiency of the model applied in the preparation of the 6-8 years old novice football players by making a study for two groups of pupils of the mentioned age.
4. Drawing conclusions and proposals concerning the process of sports orientation towards football game for young school age children, ways to improve it, methods and means for extending this phenomenon towards mass sports, allowing a bigger base of talents discovered for the future performance sports.

For carrying out the proposed experiment on which is based the conception of the doctoral thesis we have collaborated with a series of specialists in the football field of the country, especially of the city where I carry out my activity - Arad. For the elaboration, experimentation and implementation

of a primary selection system project, I did cooperated with the Arad County Football Association, the Arad county School Inspectorate, the Club U.T.Arad, the Sports Club Atletico Arad, the Gymnasium Aron Cotruş - Arad, the Gymnasium no. 1 Mihai Eminescu - Arad, the Sports Medicine Consulting Room.

The subjects covered by this research, the experimental batch, are sportives already selected in the clubs above mentioned. They have been subjected to an initial test and shall be subjected to a final test, on the basis of the same tests that we shall apply in the selection of 6-8 years old pupils from the school environment. The goal of this pilot experiment is to compare the results of the sportives already involved in the performance activity with the results of the pupils from the school environment.

In the part of processing and interpretation of the results are presented the data of the anthropometric measurements and the data obtained at additional tests concerning the motor abilities specific to the football game. The proposed model of preparation is a valid one, the results of tests in the final variant for the experimental group compared to the control group, show a considerable improvement of the motor criteria specific to the football game.

In the final part of the thesis are presented the main conclusions and perspectives of personal character, based on this study, conclusions underlining the idea that the children's orientation towards the football game may be successfully done starting from a young school age (6-8 years), because a further efficient speciality preparation is conducive and suitable for the development of their psycho-motor abilities. We mention some of these:

- All the registered values, at functional parameters or motor tests, were situated below the reference values, except for the knee flexion test where the average registered for the experimental group exceeds a little the reference value, and in all cases the arithmetic averages of the experimental group were over the arithmetic averages registered for the control group also in case of this test (intermediate);
- Generally, at the motricity tests were registered homogeneous results, for example at all categories of liftings, flexions, body extensions, we may note an almost homogeneous repartition of the registered averages.
- The improvement (growth) of all functional parameters of the experimental group and their closeness to the reference values for this category of age, proves that the 6-8 years old children's orientation towards the football game was an efficient, well organized process and the model of preparation proposed by us was a viable one.

In conclusion, the process of sports orientation towards the football game is efficient even at this age if are pursued and respected the requirements laid down.