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SCIENTIFIC AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF TEACHING BASIC TECHNICAL ACTIONS IN FOOTBALL

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Abstract
This scientific and methodological article provides a systematic analysis of the theoretical and practical foundations of teaching the basic technical actions in football (ball receiving and passing, dribbling, feints, shooting, ball control, heading, and defensive technical elements). Special attention is given to the priority principles of systematization, step-by-step progression, individualization, variable practice, and the approximation of exercises to real game conditions in the development of technical preparedness. The principles of motor learning theory (stages of skill acquisition, variable practice, contextual interference, and types of feedback) are adapted to the football technique teaching process. In addition, a four-stage teaching model (demonstration–simplification–complication–game integration), an algorithm for diagnosing and correcting typical technical errors, training session structure, planning of technical load within a microcycle, and control criteria are proposed. The presented approach contributes to improving technical consistency, accelerating decision-making in game situations, and reducing technical errors during competitive activity among young football players.

Keywords: Football; technical preparedness; methodology of teaching technique; step-by-step progression; individualization; variable practice; feedback; technical errors; control criteria; small-sided games.

Introduction

In modern football, as the game tempo, pressing intensity, and tactical variability increase, the demand for precise execution of technical actions also rises. Under conditions of reduced playing space and limited decision-making time, technical

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mastery is no longer limited to clean execution of movements; it is defined by the ability to quickly read situations, adapt actions, and perform consistently under opponent pressure. Therefore, in the training of young football players, the teaching of technical elements (receiving, passing, dribbling, feints, shooting, etc.) must be organized in harmony with the laws of motor learning, age-related characteristics, and the functional demands of game activity.

One of the common shortcomings in practice is the prolonged repetition of technical skills in "sterile conditions" (without opponents, time pressure, and at low speed). Although skills may appear to be formed during training, transfer to competition conditions is often incomplete: first-touch quality deteriorates, passing accuracy decreases, and shot selection time increases. Hence, teaching methodology should be based on progressive complication of tasks, increased variability of practice, and approximation of exercises to real game situations.

Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of the article is to systematize the scientific and methodological foundations of teaching basic technical actions in football and to develop practical recommendations for coaching practice.

Objectives:

1. To determine the classification of technical actions and the logic of teaching them;
2. To substantiate teaching principles and pedagogical conditions;
3. To develop a four-stage teaching model;
4. To propose an algorithm for diagnosing and correcting typical technical errors;
5. To present planning of technical load within a microcycle and relevant control criteria.

Literature Review and Methods

The theoretical and methodological foundations of football players' technical preparedness are closely linked to the general theory of sports training, pedagogical principles, and stages of motor learning. Scientific sources explain effective teaching of technical actions through the sequence of skill acquisition,

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criteria for exercise selection, variable practice, and control-correction mechanisms.

Domestic studies emphasize the priority of the demonstration–explanation–repetition–error correction–consolidation sequence in teaching football techniques, while the use of game-like conditions enhances the formation of stable skills [1–2].

Platonov highlights the importance of integrating technical mastery with functional preparedness and tactical thinking within the athlete training system; coordination, rapid decision-making, and stability of motor stereotypes directly affect the quality of technical actions [3]. Bompa's periodization approach enables targeted planning of technical-tactical tasks throughout the season and optimization of the load–recovery ratio [4]. FIFA methodological guidelines recommend the "simple-to-complex" and "slow–accurate–fast" progression, as well as the use of small-sided games to accelerate transfer to game performance [5].

This study employs pedagogical observation, analysis of training materials, and practical modeling methods. Based on work with 12–14-year-old football players, an algorithm for teaching technical elements and a system of control indicators are proposed.

Scientific Foundations of Technical Preparedness Development

Technical preparedness is the process of forming skills that enable football players to perform actions with and without the ball in a purposeful, economical, and consistent manner. It is advisable to evaluate technical quality through three interrelated components:

(a) biomechanical accuracy (movement structure);

(b) temporal indicators (speed and rhythm);

(c) situational adaptability (decision-making and execution harmony).

The development of these components corresponds to the general stages of motor learning: at the cognitive stage, the player understands the "rules" of movement; at the associative stage, errors decrease and consistency increases; at the autonomous stage, movements become automated and attention shifts to tactical situations.

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Accordingly, teaching methodology should rely on the following principles:

1. systematization (regularity and sequence);
2. step-by-step progression (controlled increase in complexity);
3. individualization (age, coordination, dominant foot, positional demands);
4. variable practice (changing conditions and tasks);
5. feedback (immediate and delayed);
6. approximation to game conditions (opponent pressure, time/space constraints, goal-oriented tasks).

Table 1. Classification of Basic Technical Actions and Teaching Focus

Block	Technical elements	Methodological focus (main objective)
Ball control	receiving, stopping, first touch, turning	direction and speed control in first touch; body position
Passing and finishing	short/long pass, through pass, shots (inside foot, instep), heading	accuracy + timing; support foot and contact point
Opponent-related techniques	dribbling, feints, tackling, blocking, pressing footwork	timing, distance, rapid decisions; stability under pressure

Four-Stage Model of Teaching Technical Actions

Dividing the "instruction–practice–game transfer" chain into clear stages allows the coach to manage learning tasks effectively:

1. **Demonstration and explanation:** the coach demonstrates the technique, highlights 2–3 key cues (support foot, body position, contact point), and provides concise verbal signals.
2. **Simplified practice:** repetition without opponents, at low speed and stable conditions; objective — formation of correct movement structure.
3. **Complication and variation:** increased speed, changes in angle/distance, time constraints, and inclusion of decision-making elements.
4. **Game integration:** small-sided games (3v3, 4v4, 5v5) and situational drills linking technique with tactical tasks.

Feedback methods should also vary by stage: initially, external feedback from the coach dominates, followed by self-assessment and video analysis.

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Table 2. Typical Error Diagnostics and Correction Algorithm (Example)

Element	Typical error	Cause (diagnosis)	Correction (brief cue)
First touch	ball rebounds	rigid foot contact; knee not flexed	soften foot; flex knee; lower contact point
Short pass	low accuracy	support foot too far; body misalignment	support foot close; body toward target
Dribbling	ball too far ahead	disrupted step–touch rhythm	touch every 2–3 steps; slalom rhythm drill
Shooting	ball flies high	leaning back; wrong contact point	lean forward; support foot beside ball
Tackling	foul risk	poor timing; wrong distance	delay–press; side approach; first contact to ball

Planning Technical Load in a Microcycle (Ages 12–14)

For young players, the volume and intensity of technical training should be optimally distributed within a weekly microcycle. Load increases primarily through complexity and game proximity rather than sheer volume. Below is an example of a five-session microcycle (non-competition period).

Table 3. Sample Five-Session Microcycle Plan

Day	Main technical focus	Methodological emphasis	Game integration (SSG)
Monday	receiving + short pass	movement structure, two touches	4v2 rondo, 5v5 (two-touch)
Tuesday	dribbling + feints	rhythm, speed control	3v3/4v4 zonal, 1v1 duels
Wednesday	long pass + first touch	angle/distance variation	6v6 (wide field), switch-play task
Thursday	shooting + finishing	support foot, shot selection	4v4 + neutral, “finish in 6 sec”
Friday	combinations + repetition	error correction, quality	7v7, scenario-based tasks

Results and Discussion

The study involved 24 football players aged 12–14, divided into experimental (n=12) and control (n=12) groups. Over eight weeks, the experimental group followed a program based on the four-stage teaching model, including regular use of small-sided games and feedback (observation protocols and short video analysis). The control group followed traditional training content.

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Performance indicators measured before and after the intervention included: slalom dribbling time (s), passing accuracy (%), shooting accuracy (goals/10), and receiving errors (times/10). Results are presented as mean ± standard deviation; group differences were assessed using Student's t-test ($p<0.05$).

Table 4. Changes in Technical Indicators in Experimental and Control Groups

Indicator	Experimental (pre)	Experimental (post)	Control (pre)	Control (post)
Slalom dribbling, s	15.8±1.2	14.1±1.0	15.7±1.1	15.2±1.1
Passing accuracy, %	62±8	76±7	63±7	68±8
Shooting accuracy, goals/10	4.1±1.0	5.8±1.1	4.0±0.9	4.6±1.0
Receiving errors, times/10	3.2±0.8	1.9±0.7	3.1±0.9	2.8±0.8

The results demonstrate a clear positive dynamic in the experimental group across all indicators. Improvements in the control group were smaller and mainly attributable to general training effects. These findings confirm the effectiveness of variable practice and small-sided games in facilitating the transfer of technical skills to game performance.

Conclusion

1. Effective teaching of basic technical actions in football requires integration of motor learning principles, age characteristics, and game demands.
2. The four-stage model (demonstration–simplification–complication–game integration) ensures stable execution of technical skills under opponent pressure and time constraints.
3. Variable practice, small-sided games, and regular feedback (observation and video analysis) reduce technical errors and improve passing, dribbling, and shooting accuracy.
4. Gradual increase of complexity, speed, and situational factors within a microcycle helps maintain technical quality and reduce injury risk.

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Practical Recommendations for Coaches

- Define 2–3 key verbal cues for each technical element in advance.
- Increase exercise complexity primarily through speed and decision-making, then add opponent pressure.
- Allocate at least 10–15 minutes per session to small-sided games linking technique with tactics.
- Apply the principle "one exercise – one correction" to avoid overload of feedback.
- Use control rubrics to teach players self-assessment skills.

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