

Talent Selection

Though contentious, the selection process in football determines accessibility to advancement opportunities for talented prospects. Young footballers' early participation in specialized competitive teams coupled with engagement in an extensive volume of training seems to be a fruitful recipe for later success (Ford & Williams, 2017; Sieghartsleitner et al., 2018). Most football clubs and associations' talent selection rely solely on subjective data from coach assessments and intuition (Bergkamp et al., 2022; Christensen, 2009). A recent study highlighted Swiss national team youth coaches' "expert eye" were both reliable and valid in their appraisal of players' overall potential (Jokuschies et al., 2017). Motor and soccer-specific skill tests for talent selection has also been demonstrated, yet neither approach in isolation controls for developmental influences such as maturation and relative age effect (Huijgen et al., 2013; Slimani et al., 2019). Combining coach assessments with objective multidimensional performance data together were shown to be significantly better at predicting U19 footballers' professional or non-professional status (Sieghartsleitner et al., 2019). Use of video analysis and GPS with heart-rate monitoring system technology to track players' motor activity and technical execution during practice and competition has become a prevalent practice in soccer (Buchheit, 2014; Buchheit M Fau - Simpson & Simpson, 2017). Performance data collected from these tools are more contextually specific and applicable to soccer compared to other physiological assessments such as VO2 max. Coaches' assessment supplemented with evaluation of soccer players' training performance should be considered in future talent selection research.

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