FOCUS OF ATTENTION DURING SOCCER PRACTICE

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FOCUS TO ENHANCE PERFORMANCE

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THE MENTAL ASPECT OF THE GAME

“Football is played with your head, your feet are just the tool”

Andrea Pirlo

WHAT THE PLAYER HAVE TO FOCUS

▪ on while practicing a skill (TRAINING)
▪ on while performing a skill (MATCH)
SKILLS AUTOMATICITY
nonconscious attention to the act itself while executing, and not being vulnerable to external and internal distractors.

It is usually the result of learning, repetition, and practice.

- TOTAL TIME (10,000 hours over 10 years)
- NUMBER OF TRIALS PER PRACTICE
- INTERVAL TIME BETWEEN PRACTICES
- ATTENTIONAL FOCUS AND COACHING FEEDBACK
HOW TO DIRECT FOCUS DURING SOCCER PRACTICE

TO INCREASE PLAYER’S AWARENESS BY USING VERBAL AND VISUAL CUES

INTERNAL FOCUS
Directing attention to the body’s movements

▪ Keep your body straight when you are shooting
▪ Lock your ankle when you impact the ball
▪ Open your chest when you control the ball
▪ Coordinate your steps before chipping
▪ Use outside foot

EXTERNAL FOCUS
Directing attention to the effect of the movements

▪ Look at the trajectory of the ball when you are shooting
▪ Passing ball to teammate’s feet
▪ Control the ball to an open space
▪ Chip the ball over the wall
▪ Bend the ball to the side

SHOOTING PASSING CONTROL CHIPPING BENDING

YOUNGER AGES OR LOW-SKILL PLAYERS OLDER AGES OR HIGH-SKILL PLAYERS
INTERNAL VS EXTERNAL FOCUS OF ATTENTION

Effects of focus of attention depend on golfers’ skill (2003)

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH 1:

- Two groups of golfers divided into High-skill (HS) and Low-skill (LS)
- Pitching from 10, 15, 20, 25 meters
- Two levels of instruction: Internal Focus (IF) and External Focus (EF)
- HS performed better with EF and LS performed better with IF
FEEDBACK TO EXTERNAL FOCUS OF ATTENTION

The Role of External Action-Effects in the Execution of a Soccer Kick: A Comparison Across Skill Level

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH 2:

- Three groups of soccer players divided into Novice (NP), Intermediate (IP) and Skilled (SP)
- Chipping the ball from Near (2m) and Far (4m) range
- Three levels of feedback: Full Vision (FV), Knowledge Result (KR) and No Vision (NV)
- SP performed better than IP and NP, Players make less error with FV rather than NV

PAUL FORD, NICOLA J. HODGES, RAOUl HUYS, AND A. MARK WILLIAMS
Ronaldo was asked to read the body’s movement of the player crossing the ball

Lights were turned off creating 2 conditions:

1. Right after ball was crossed
2. While the ball was crossed

Ronaldo states that in C1 he had to memorize the trajectory, in C2 he had to predict it.

He was successful in both conditions

Cristiano Ronaldo, Testing to the limit, Youtube video of Andin Ahmeti
HOW TO ENHANCE FOCUS DURING SOCCER PRACTICE TO FACILITATE MOVEMENT'S AUTOMATICITY

- **INTERNAL FOCUS**
  Directing attention to the body's movements
  SHOOTING PROGRAM by Matteo Masucci with Apex IFC

- **EXTERNAL FOCUS**
  Directing attention to the effect of the movements
  COGNITIVE PROGRAM by Matteo Masucci with Apex IFC
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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Cristiano Ronaldo, Testing to the limit, Youtube video of Andin Ahmeti

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