

WAYS TO ACHIEVE PROGRESSION IN THE FOOTBALL GAME

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Abstract. *The paper presents the most important aspects related to how the ball is transmitted by the players for finalisation in the game of football. Considering that there are many problems with achieving progression in the Romanian football, particularly due to the lack of some philosophy to be put into practice at the earliest age (starting with juniors), we aim to present a coherent concrete model of training based on tactical periodisation. The game model is fundamental for creating some specificity in relation to the multitude of situations that the game can offer at all times. In this case, the player needs to have as many opportunities as possible to solve the game situations, which will make him more creative. This theoretical model simplifies the way in which progression is made and highlights how individual and collective tactical actions are put into practice, each time taking into account the defensive balance in the context of creating superiority in the ball circulation and player movement related to the opponent, the possibilities of achieving these aspects depending on the physical, technical and especially mental qualities of the team players. The paper discusses how to approach progression throughout the week in the context of using some training means based on the work with the ball. The results of the research can contribute to certain national philosophy based on the specific characteristics of the Romanian football players.*

Keywords: *football, tactics, progression, model.*

Introduction

As we still do not have unitary philosophy and a coherent concept to be implemented at national level and to be put into practice at the earliest age (starting with juniors), Romanian football encounters some problems in organizing the game, especially with junior and senior national teams. If this model is not appropriately understood and efficiently used by each club, the results will have a casual effect.

This paper aims to achieve a model of progression in the football game, which is based on tactical periodisation. Progression in football has been a permanent concern for the authors of football concepts. According to Doblado (2010, p. 33), progression refers to the actions taken by a team in order to advance into the opponents' field; the author says that progression may be more or less rapid, but must be clearly conceived and established.

Tactical periodisation is a modern training model in which the main element is the preparation of all training factors, as far as tactical training is concerned. Practically, the physical, technical, theoretical and psychological factors are developed in the tactical training. Frade is recognized by the field specialists as the founder of this training concept, this model being taken up and practiced in various forms by football players.

The model of play is fundamental in creating some sort of specificity in relation to the multitude of situations that the game can offer at all times. Meneses (2016, p. 19, quoting Rui Faria) has emphasised that the specificity of the game model is fundamental and we must create conditions for the player to face as many game situations as possible. In this case, the player needs to have as many opportunities as possible to solve the game situations, which will make him more creative.

Progression can be assimilated with the time of attack, but we must take into account the phase when the ball is driven by the players to the opponents' goal. This phase requires players with an exceptional individual technique primarily based on physical fitness and genetic qualities.

This theoretical model simplifies the way in which progression is made and highlights how individual and collective tactical actions are put into practice, taking into account each time the defensive balance in the context of creating superiority in the ball circulation and player movement depending on the opponent and the possibilities to achieve these aspects according to the physical, technical and especially mental qualities of the own team players, but also of the opponents.

The paper discusses how to approach the progression based on several criteria, including: the player's qualities, the philosophy specific to the club, the days of the week, the opponent's qualities, etc., in the context of using the training with the ball. The results of the research can be a milestone in creating a national philosophy according to the specifics of the Romanian football players.

Progression is mistaken for attack; it involves the ball leading to the opponent's goal and the concrete ways to reach it. There are two ways to achieve progression: the general way of achieving tactical and technical attack and

defence actions in all systems and the specific way in which players are positioned within the chosen game system.

We intend to present a progression model for the 1-4-3-3 game system, taking into account two representative ways of achieving it, based on the football-specific factors presented above:

- The overall tactical and technical way existent for all the game systems used;
- The specific way used by the players according to the philosophy of the coach or club (in our case, in the 1-4-3-3 system).

Topic Addressed

Progression model for the 1-4-3-3 game system

General technical and tactical way to achieve progression: individual tactical actions through which a player can make a progression are player demarking, dribbling and free kick.

1. Player demarking is the individual action with the highest frequency, which occurs near the opponents' goal. The most important thing is to do it in depth. But there are plenty of situations when a lateral or backward demarcation will contribute to more effective progression. Many coaches consider that the basic technical elements of picking up and kicking the ball have a great contribution to achieving demarcation.

The most important features specific to the player who performs an effective demo are:

- To perform it in the free space for the ball not to be intercepted by the opponent;
- To represent a real solution for the teammate;
- To represent a future way of continuing the phase through a coherent (oriented) takeover.

2. Dribbling is the increasingly rare use of the action through a collective game imposed by today's modern game. It can be done by all the team players, even the goalkeeper. Most often, players are attacked when there is a 1 vs. 1 relationship and the defender is not doubled in defence. There are plenty of situations in which the player in possession of the ball is not closely marked by an opponent, and then the best way is to attack free spaces with the ball at foot – individual progression.

The most important features specific to the player who achieves an effective dribbling/progression are:

- To have a high-level technique put into practice especially in situations of adversity;
- To have good speed in all manifestations;
- To analyse the situation correctly when making such a decision, to have motor and mental intelligence.

3. Free kick is a fixed moment in which the game continues after the opponent's inadequate interventions. It is exclusively a decision taken individually by the player who performs it and who will have to resort to the best solution taken over from the training or a new solution due in particular to the specific positioning of the opponent.

The most important features specific to the player who makes an effective free kick are:

- To have the technique to kick the ball very well;
- To have a high mental ability to analyse the situation;
- To collaborate effectively with teammates especially at fixed moments of approaching the goal.

Collective tactical actions through which a football player can make progression are ball passing, one-two tactical combinations in two or more players and tactical movement of the players as a result of demarcations according to teammate and opponent, as well as movements through which different crosses or envelopes are made for occupying the space in the opponents' field.

The specific objectives will direct, focus and channel the theoretical and practical activities. According to Gómez and Doblado (2010, p. 442), they refer to:

- Describing the historical evolution of football and knowing its current state;
- Understanding football as a team game involving a number of factors in the game behaviour, which are extracted from a structural and functional football analysis;
- Knowing the structural elements of the game and how football works;
- Establishing the principles on which the teaching model is based;
- Building a conceptual and terminological framework based on strategy and tactics, as well as the mental involvement determined by the cognitive actions adapted to the development of the football game;
- Knowing and explaining the principles of action or means of play;
- Understanding the basic game systems applicable to the game;

- Knowing and applying the main concepts of the football game through exercises with an increasingly large number of players, positioning and possession games which aim at progression.

Ways to achieve progression in football:

1. Passing the ball is the first and easiest tactical element of collaboration with a partner and is performed using the technical elements of ball transfer: kicking the ball, hitting it with the head and throwing it from the edge. The player who performs effective progression by passing the ball must:

- Possess exceptional technique in transmitting the ball: short, medium and long distance;
- Analyse the game situation correctly passing the ball to the best placed teammate and with real chances of continuing the game;
- Do it in depth.

2. Tactical combinations, but also the tactical movement of the players with and without the ball, will go according to the game philosophy. Players with solid features are needed in terms of:

- Physical and mental development;
- Creativity in complex situations and anticipation of the opponent's reactions;
- Complex possibilities of penetrating the opponents' defence.

The specific way to achieve progression in the 1-4-3-3 game system

The general lines to which effective progression relates will consider:

- Establishing a solid philosophy based on the selection that complies with the requirements of the game system used, the principles and sub-principles that the team players must observe;
- Careful analysis of the opponent that changes weekly;
- Coaches who adopt the club's philosophy because they like it.

According to these considerations, the coach will first prepare his own philosophy that will be passed on to the players.

There will be prepared situations to participate in the game by putting into practice:

- Travelling with the ball on lines and corridors – from line to line, medium and long passes forward;
- Passing back to gain space in progression – static control construction;
- Building-up ways in 1-4-3-3 – different approaches;
- Contradiction of systems – reaction on construction according to the opponent.

Every game situation will be in one of the forms of attack. We will analyse several game-specific situations 1-4-3-3, where progression is as follows:

1. Counterattack is the first tactical solution for the player who has won the ball. In this case, progression is achieved by direct attention towards the striker or an intermediary player. From his own half field, the player who has won the ball sends it directly to the striker. We have the following cases:

a. The ball is won by the goalkeeper (Figure 1). He will pass it:

- Directly to the striker in depth;
- To an intermediate player on the side of the court;
- To a teammate in the centre of the field, who has space created by the side of the team.



Figure 1. Achievement of counterattack progression-construction from the goalkeeper in the 1-4-3-3 game system

b. The ball is won by a field player (Figure 2). He will pass it:

- Directly to the striker in depth;
- To an intermediate player who will find a quick offensive solution.



Figure 2. Progression through counterattack – 1-4-3-3 game system

The counterattack tactics will take into account the following:

- Precision in long transmission of the ball in the future position towards the striker;
- Fast-speed response in deciding to trigger and move players towards the opponent's goal;
- Strength in duels with the opponents;
- Running the ball with feint and dribbling in speed;
- Coordination of player movements, perfect timing;
- Bringing and finding the player with a perfect pass that is positioned in front of the goal.

2. Rapid attack is characteristic of teams possessing very good technique in speed and players with a rapid reaction to game situations of congestion through decisions related to the opponent's positioning. The first pass will be transmitted, if possible, to the opposing goal to leave as many opponents as possible behind the line of the ball and to have more space for quick construction in the opponents' field.

The main ways to make progression in rapid attack (Figure 3) for the 1-4-3-3 game system are:

- Progression in attack, where players act in post-specific positions without changing their places during the action;
- Progression in attack, where players change positions between themselves;

- Progression in attack, in which defence players advance into the defensive system of the opponents.



Figure 3. Making progression through direct attack – 1-4-3-3 game system

The main requirements for success in rapid attack are:

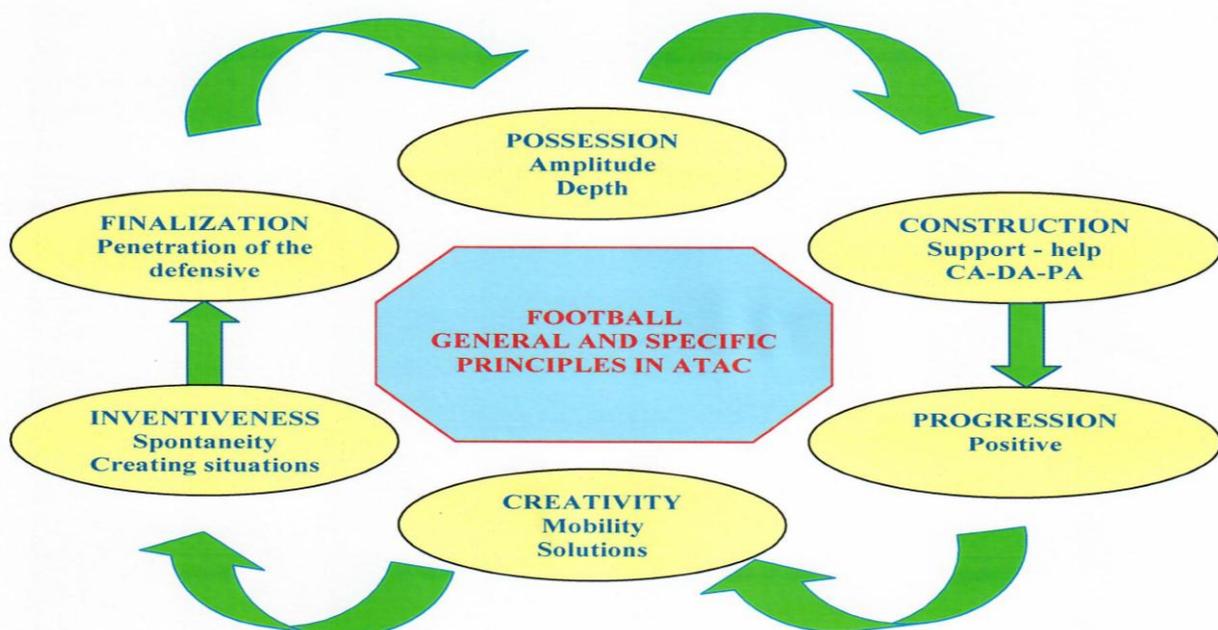
- Making the quick and accurate decision to transmit the first pass in depth;
- Control of fast and efficient construction situations according to the opponent's position;
- Progression by running the ball will be avoided;
- Rapid transition in rapid attack with actions performed with amplitude and depth;
- On finalisation, quick decisions will be put into practice at high speed;
- Permanent concern for players to provide solutions for passing on finalisation.

3. Combined attack, based on solid principles, will take into account our players' characteristics and the defensive way of settling the adverse team, as well as their reaction to our offensive movements.

The objectives of an elevated progression will include:

- The precise transfer of the ball to best placed teammate;
- Multiple-game construction solutions starting from the goalkeeper to the back line, midfield and even attacking players;
- Developing automaticity in construction where progression is conceived during training sessions;
- Making creative and inventive decisions where players resort to instinctive solutions;
- Forming the ability to attack free spaces, penetrate the defence and transmit the ball towards the opponents' goal.
- Welding the team, creating the unity in which each player self-directs, thinks and acts as part of a whole.

Considering that, with moving the team from defence into attack, there are a lot of offensive movements, it is



important that these should be theoretically known by the team players and practiced very hard during the training sessions. There is practically a new settlement where the team will have amplitude and depth, which means large spaces among the players. We will continue to present some situations of progression originating in clearly determined principles (Figure 4) in the positional-combinative attack within the 1-4-3-3 game system:

Figure 4. Progression in the football game

According to Marziali and Mora (2008, p. 194), construction and organization can be very effective when all the knowledge and motor experience lead to the storage of situations. The implementation and learning of construction in the football game is done gradually, starting from one individual up to the total number of players involved in the offensive organization. After setting up the game system, the coach starts working on compartments, individual and group progression.

A. The construction of the game after the ball has gone out of the goal with the goalkeeper getting it back from the 5.5 m box can be done as follows (Figure 5):

- Transmitting the ball to a centre back that is positioned at the edge of the 16 m box:
 - this will continue to the defensive midfielder with progression;
 - transmission to the fullback and then to the defensive midfielder (the first exercise will be made without adversity, then with two and three semi-active and active opponents, with the four defenders and the defensive midfielder - 1 + 5 vs. 2 (3));
- Transmitting the ball to the centre defensive midfielder descending between the central defenders;
- Transmitting the ball to one of the fullbacks positioned with amplitude.



Figure 5. Progression through combination attack – 1-4-3-3 game system

According to Lucchesi (2015, pp. 77-78), the central defender often performs progression with the ball at foot from zone 1 in zone 2, creating offensive pressure for the opposing team. The defender has two solutions in this situation: to continue individual progression if he has space or to pass it to a close teammate. Through individual progression, he creates numerical superiority. Depending on the opponent's position, the central defender has the following solutions:

- Play between lines behind the midfielders;
- Play with fullbacks on the edge of the field;
- Continue individual progression up to the pressure from the opponent.

B. After working with the five players, the two midfielders are introduced into the training. Their movements may be different depending on the requirements. They will work primarily without adversity, and then five defenders will be placed in a 1 + 7 vs. 5 adversity relationship (Figure 6), from the goalkeeper in lines 1 and 2, then in line 3. The offensive movements will be developed according to the figure below:



Figure 6. Progression through combination attack – 1-4-3-3 game system

C. Then they will work with the entire team, possibly without adversity, or in the 1 + 10 vs. 8 (Figure 7), from the goalkeeper in lines 1 and 2, then in line 3 or 4:



Figure 7. Progression through combination attack – 1-4-3-3 game system

Discussion

Progression in the 1-4-3-3 game system has special features, being considered beneficial if executed within a game system with three strikers. Each player has tasks specific to the position in which he performs. The construction of the game model with progression as its main element is made differently according to the club's philosophy and put into practice by a coach who agrees with this philosophy.

When there is such philosophy, it is important that there should be more variants of response to the opponent's possible reactions.

The 1-4-3-3 game system offers a multitude of game construction variations where progression will focus on the possession of the ball. There were many cases (Barcelona) in which it took 40-50 passes to reach finalisation. Therefore, progression is often preceded by backwards passes in order to unbalance the opponent, which is not positive but beneficial in the strategy of the team.

The construction with progression is based on principles and sub-principles established in the game philosophy and put into practice by the team players. The characteristics of the players implementing the 1-4-3-3 system must be well established. The selection within the team is based on these features. Such players will put into practice individual and collective tactical actions in which progression will gain specific connotations.

The occurrence of the forms of attack will depend on the quality of the own team, as well as on the opponent. The more prolonged possession will be, the more positional attacks will occur to the detriment of counterattacks and rapid attacks.

Conclusion

Teams in advanced football countries such as Spain, Italy, England, France or Germany are based on carefully built philosophy initiated a long time ago, so now every team knows very well how to attack.

Any player, first of all, theoretically knows the basic principles of the game he puts into practice very easily. Players have very good mental training mainly built through psycho-sociological training and theoretical training, with information mostly acquired in practical training.

Progression is the individual and collective tactical principle of attack based on some philosophy which has been built on the characteristics of the own players, as well as on a careful analysis of the opponent, and put into practice in the competition.

The need to build some own philosophy of training in the football game at the level of the clubs and federation will obviously lead to positive results.

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