

Identifying talent in football players

Detección de la capacidad del talento en el jugador de fútbol

David Macías García¹ 
Ignacio González López² 

¹ SEP Villaharta, Cordova, Spain

² Facultad de Ciencias de la Educación y Psicología, Universidad de Córdoba, Cordova, Spain

Correspondence:

Ignacio González López
ignacio.gonzalez@uco.es

Short title:

Talent and football

How to cite this article:

Macías García, D., & González López, I. (2023). Identifying talent in football players. *Cultura, Ciencia y Deporte*, 18(56), 135-155. <https://doi.org/10.12800/ccd.v18i56.1968>

Received: 12 September 2022 / **Accepted:** 25 November 2022

Abstract

Identifying the elements that define a talented football player has been and is still the subject of numerous scientific papers. However, in terms of the role played by the coach in identifying and developing player talent, very few studies have been found. Based on these premises, the paper presented here aims to establish, from an empirical perspective, the elements that condition and define a talented footballer player based on the opinion of the coach. Using a non-experimental, descriptive, empirical research design, an evaluation questionnaire was prepared and sent to a total of 890 coaches and trainers affiliated to the Football Federation of Andalusia. The results obtained classify the traits of talented football players into the following factors: physical-environmental conditioning factors, interpersonal relations, personality factors, teamwork competencies, decision-making, tactical-technical abilities, and expectations of success.

Key words: talent, football, coach, personality, context.

Resumen

La identificación de los elementos que definen a un jugador de fútbol con talento ha sido y es objeto de consideración en múltiples trabajos científicos; sin embargo, en función del rol que el entrenador ejerce como garante de la identificación y desarrollo de este son escasos los estudios encontrados. Atendiendo a estas premisas, el trabajo que aquí se presenta tiene por objetivo establecer, desde una perspectiva empírica, los elementos que condicionan y definen a un futbolista con talento desde la opinión del entrenador. Al amparo de un diseño de investigación empírica no experimental y descriptivo, se ha confeccionado un cuestionario de valoración, dirigido a un total de 890 entrenadores y entrenadoras afiliadas a la Real Federación Andaluza de Fútbol. Los resultados obtenidos han clasificado las características del jugador con talento en el fútbol en siete factores: condicionantes físico-ambientales, relaciones interpersonales, factores de personalidad, competencias de trabajo en equipo, toma de decisiones, capacidades táctico-técnicas y expectativas de éxito.

Palabras clave: talento, fútbol, entrenador, personalidad, contexto.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/).

Introduction

Today, there is still no consensus in the definition of sporting talent, despite the clear goal of achieving elite sports players and athletes. Terms such as excellence, performance, capabilities, aptitudes, abilities, and skills are closely related to the concept of talent, so a clarification of terminology will allow us to understand how talent is aligned within sport in general and, in the case of this research, in football.

Gallardo et al. (2013) define talented people as those who stand out and evolve above and beyond others. This description seems overly generic and confirms the difficulties that authors like Tamayo et al. (2018) have identified in achieving a consensus-based description in the world of sport, difficulties associated mainly with vocational guidance and selection methodologies. Hopf (1997) found it difficult to define this concept since it was initially directly associated with the performance of the person in a given context. At the same time, Echevarria et al. (2020) make it clear that the lack of physical and sporting tests capable of identifying from the beginning the real potentialities of talented people towards a given sport hinders their selection, development, and maintenance.

Lizana et al. (2010) understand that talent is expressed when an individual has aptitudes in the top 10% of their peer group in terms of performance. These aptitudes can be expressed in different fields: scientific, creative, or socio affective. The reductionism of this definition is coupled with the one provided by Ewerlin (2013), who states that personal responsibility directly influences talent and that this will lead to a potential above-average performance. In these cases, performance and responsibility are indicators that allow us to understand the root of this concept. In this respect, the definition offered by Passow (1993) suggests the potential antecedents to this concept when identified in the sporting world. The author considers that gifted and talented individuals are those who, by virtue of their outstanding abilities, are capable of achieving high performance. Individuals capable of high performance include those who have demonstrated their potential accomplishments and/or abilities in any of the following areas, either in isolation or in combination: general intellectual ability, specific academic skills, creative or productive thinking, leadership ability, visual and performing arts, and psychomotor skills.

Martin & Camacho (2019) conducted a study on the origin of the concept of sporting talent, analysing the terminology of the word talent and its evolution from its origin to the present, highlighting that this term is difficult to interpret within the sports arena, encompassing both innate factors and acquired elements. They associate elements such as productivity, training, and context with this concept, as well as performance and responsibility mentioned previously.

According to Hahn (1988), sporting talent is an accentuated skill in one direction, exceeding the normal average, which is not yet fully developed. Aspects such as

predisposition and motivation to achieve high performance in sporting practice are highlighted in Hahn's research.

Gabler & Ruoff (1979; in Baur, 1993, p. 6) define sporting talent as one that "in a certain state of evolution, is characterised by certain physical and mental conditions and assumptions, which are very likely to lead them, in the future, to achieve a high level of performance in a certain type of sport". Inexorably, this definition incorporates into the elements identified previously the biological conditioning factors related to the physical abilities of the individual for the practice of a sport.

When this concept is associated with collective sport, Lorenzo (2000) incorporates elements such as operational thinking, intelligence in the game play situation, and creativity. To this, Tannenbaum (2000) includes success in task execution and completion as one of the descriptive elements of the talented athlete, arguing that a society always has criteria for the attribution of what talented signifies in terms of achievements.

Based on these premises, Simarro (2001) establishes that the conditions that sustain sporting talent are classified into physical characteristics (strength, speed, resistance, and flexibility), technique (techno-motor conditions and abilities and skills), tactics (cognitive-tactical capacities), external conditions (environment, family, and coach), predisposition (mental abilities) and constitution (anthropometric requirements). Determination is added to these elements, along with the luck factor. These are identified as traits that can predict, with a high probability, success in the practice of sport (López, 2021).

Based on the perspective of the coach, identifying talent involves looking for people with abilities that will allow them to develop beyond their peers in the long term and achieve high performance levels (García, 2006). However, for Lorenzo (2000), the identification of this construct involves the use of tests related to physical, physiological, and skill qualities to achieve the expected level. Nevertheless, the results of the meta-analysis developed by Fernández et al. (2021) revealed new factors that the scientific literature considers fundamental to achieve sporting success such as the effect of relative age, training volume, early specialisation, and diversification in sports practice.

With regard to football, talent identification serves a process of recognising players not initiated in the sport and who have the potential to become elite players at the professional level (Williams & Reilly, 2000). According to the research of Fernández et al. (2004) and Lidor et al. (2005), the most outstanding variables when identifying a talented football player include anthropometric characteristics (body composition and somatotype), cognitive factor, personality traits, adaptability and versatility; to which Srhoj et al. (2006) add basic physical abilities, specific football skills (strength, speed, endurance, flexibility, etc.) and years of sports practice. Wanceulen et al. (2008) added coordination capabilities, specific technical football skills, and tactical and strategy skills to this taxonomy. These

authors also contribute as predictors of talent elements such as performance, player predisposition towards effort in training, the ability to learn in the collective game, intelligence, and attitude in the training process during the training sessions and competitions.

Pazo et al. (2012) note the relevance of context in the identification and management of talent. They highlight the existence of three types of environments that have a decisive influence on this construct: the social context, the sporting context, and the individual's personality. The social context, associated with the person's peer group, prevails in terms of importance over other environments. Looking at the sporting context, the study says that the coach is the most influential and decisive figure in the training of football players. Likewise, Gálvez & Paredes (2007) noted that the player's personality will determine their behaviour both in training and in matches. If the player has a strong and stable personality as a result of discipline and training, their behaviour at key times will be critical to success.

Considering the broad body of research that seeks to agree on the elements that define football talent, and in a bid to provide clear empirical evidence, this study aims

to identify the capabilities that define a talented football player from the perspective of the coach.

Methodology

The research presented here applies a non-experimental, empirical design, with a view to achieving an in-depth and exhaustive understanding of a particular reality (Neuman, 2014). Specifically, a survey-based study is conducted, responding to problems both in descriptive terms and in relation to variables, thus ensuring the rigour of the information collected (Hernández et al., 2014).

Data were collected using a questionnaire developed by the authors themselves, encompassing a total of 36 items. The first four aim to define the profile of the respondent, and the following 31 items are scored on a five-point scale (1=totally disagree to 5=totally agree) and seek, based on research conducted previously (Martin & Camacho, 2019 and Serra, et al., 2020), to establish the elements that condition and define a talented football player. This work guaranteed the theoretical robustness of the research, as shown in Table 1, which shows the epistemological references on which each element of assessment is based.

Table 1. References for the items included in the questionnaire

Item	Reference
5. Physical ability is an important element for a talented player	Prieto et al. (2020)
6. Player versatility should be taken into account when identifying talent	Moreira et al. (2021)
7. Talent is an innate ability in football players	Martín & Camacho (2019)
8. Mentality is a conditioning factor of player talent	Roffé & Rivera (2014)
9. The level of sacrifice influences player talent	Gómez et al. (2013)
10. A balanced diet conditions the abilities of a talented player	López et al. (2019)
11. Control over rest influences player talent	Rabanal (2021)
12. A high level of commitment to the team defines a talented player	Jericó (2011)
13. Decision-making is a key aspect that defines a talented player	Casais (2014)
14. Adaptability to the game is an influential part of player talent	Fernández et al. (2020)
15. A talented player tactically adapts to different positions	Cuadrado (2010)
16. The ability to influence should be taken into account in player talent	Arce & Martínez (2010)
17. Leadership is one of the foundations of player talent	Cubeiro & Gallardo (2012)
18. The family environment helps to nurture player talent	Marina (2015)
19. Competition develops player talent	Rodolfo & Lucero (2006)
20. Talented players are players with a very refined technique	Prieto (2017)
21. A talented player usually plays in attacking positions	Moreira et al. (2021)
22. Psychological work can help develop player talent	Llopis (2015)
23. The ability to communicate is an indicator of player talent	Torregrosa et al. (2008)
24. Talent is associated with player performance	Cabeza y Brito (2021)
25. A positive coach-player relationship influences the development of talent	Mesquita et al. (2004)
26. The talent of one player is recognised by the other players	Martínez (2020)
27. Pressure should be taken into account in talent development	Llopis (2015)
28. The challenge posed by competition rivals is a stimulus that helps to develop talent	Rodolfo & Lucero (2006)
29. Player physiology should be taken into account when identifying talent	Castañeda et al. (2017)
30. A quick understanding of instructions given by the coach improves talent development	Torregrosa et al. (2008)
31. A talented player has a high tolerance for defeat	Llopis (2015)
32. A talented player is very sensitive to their own and others' feelings	Roffé & Rivera (2014)
33. A talented player memorises systematic training actions quickly and puts them into operation in the competition	Rodolfo & Lucero (2006)
34. A talented player has high self-esteem	Llopis (2015)
35. A talented player has high expectations of success	Cabeza & Brito (2021)

Table footnote. The inclusion criteria for these references were the observations made in the studies of Martin & Camacho (2019) and Serra et al. (2020), the principle of authority and the recurrent citation of the works referenced in other research.

A final open question allowed participants to provide relevant opinions based on the research goal pursued.

Having estimated the internal consistency of the measure, from a confirmatory perspective, the value found for Cronbach's alpha coefficient ($\text{Alpha}=.860$) ensured the stability of the responses and predicted indications of reliability for the measures found. In addition, the discriminating power of the items was established through the application of Student's *t-test for independent samples* ($n.s.=.05$), taking as a classification criterion the sum of the variables recoded into three groups (high, medium, and low). The results showed that 100% of the items displayed bilateral significance $p<.01$ between the high and low groups, concluding that their validity can be assured for implementation.

A total of 890 coaches belonging to the Andalusian Football Federation, participated in the study, of whom 1.9% were women, the remaining 98.1% being men. The mean age was 41 ($SD+ 10.953$; minimum age=16; maximum age=80). Access to the sample was obtained after contacting the Andalusian Football Federation, which agreed to collaborate and distribute the instrument through its databases of coaches in the region of Andalusia.

The average length of time the participants had been working as football coaches was 8.6 years ($SD=7.728$; minimum value: 1; maximum value: 50), and most of the participating coaches were from the province of Seville (30.2%), followed by Malaga (17.2%), Cordoba (14.6%), Cadiz (13.0%), Granada (8.6%), Jaén (7.1%), Almeria (6.2%) and Huelva (3.1%) (see Table 2).

Table 2. Province

Province	f	%
Seville	254	30.2
Córdoba	123	14.6
Malaga	145	17.2
Almeria	52	6.2
Jaén	60	7.1
Huelva	26	3.1
Granada	72	8.6
Cadiz	109	13.0
Total	841	100.0

Results

The main findings after analysing the information from the participating group are described below. Firstly, the

values given to the items used to define a talented football player are described (see Table 3).

Table 3. Traits of a talented football player

Elements evaluated	Mean	SD
5. Physical ability is an important component of player talent	3.99	0.888
6. Player versatility should be taken into account when identifying talent	4.22	0.793
7. Talent is an innate ability in football players	4.02	0.966
8. Mentality is a conditioning factor of player talent	4.54	0.717
9. The level of sacrifice influences player talent.	4.12	1.027
10. A balanced diet conditions the abilities of a talented player	4.24	0.939
11. Control over rest influences player talent	4.32	0.901
12. A high level of commitment to the team defines a talented player	3.87	1.178
13. Decision-making is a key aspect that defines a talented player	4.68	0.622
14. Adaptability to the game is an influential part of player talent	4.32	0.801
15. A talented player tactically adapts to different positions	3.82	1.098
16. The ability to influence should be taken into account in player talent	3.83	0.945
17. Leadership is a foundation of player talent.	3.29	1.122
18. The family environment helps to nurture player talent	4.17	1.032
19. Competition develops player talent	4.22	0.930
20. Talented players are players with a very refined technique	3.67	0.992
21. A talented player usually plays in attacking positions	2.77	1.253
22. Psychological work can help develop player talent	4.29	0.786
23. The ability to communicate is an indicator of player talent	3.46	1.067
24. Talent is associated with player performance	3.17	1.160
25. A positive coach-player relationship influences the development of talent	4.28	0.876
26. The talent of one player is recognised by the other players	4.17	0.887
27. Pressure should be taken into account in talent development	4.05	0.971
28. The challenge posed by competition rivals is a stimulus that helps to develop talent	4.22	0.871
29. Player physiology should be taken into account when identifying talent	3.29	1.115
30. Quick understanding of instructions given by the coach improves talent development	4.05	0.952
31. A talented player has a high tolerance for defeat	2.69	1.084
32. A talented player is very sensitive to their own and others' feelings	3.06	1.044
33. A talented player memorises systematic training actions quickly and puts them into operation in the competition	3.85	1.028
34. A talented player has high self-esteem	3.46	1.019
35. A talented player has high expectations of success	3.76	1.005

The information offered here sets out the coaches' perceptions of the skills that define the talent of their footballers, as well as the tasks to be developed to manage and maintain this competence. First of all, it is important to note that the participating coaches understand talent to be an innate capacity (Mean=4.02, SD=0.966) that, in addition, is recognised by other team members (Mean=4.17, SD=0.887), which conditions their perception of the team members.

The most notable characteristics that develop the talent of a football player include: the importance of fast and effective decision-making (Mean=4.68, SD=0.622), mentality (Mean=4.54, SD=0.717), adaptation to different positions and situations on the playing field (Mean=4.32, SD=0.801), versatility (Mean=4.22, SD=0.793), level of sacrifice (Mean=4.12, SD =1.027) and the ability to understand commands in the game play system (Mean=4.05, SD=0.952).

To be a talented professional in football, controlling the amount of rest taken (Mean=4.32, SD=0.901) and a balanced diet as a factor in improving physical performance (Mean=4.24, SD=0.939) appear to be necessary.

It is also the job of the coach to maintain a good relationship with their players (Mean=4.28, SD=0.876), which allows them to develop psychological work to avoid unwanted behaviours (Mean=4.29, SD=0.786) since competition itself (Mean=4.22, SD=0.930) and rivals (Mean=4.22, SD=0.871) are two elements that generate pressure and condition talent (Mean=4.05, SD=0.971).

Special mention should be made of the family environment as a context that directly influences the improvement of player talent (Mean=4.17, SD=1.032).

Furthermore, this group of coaches considers that player talent does not depend on the position played within the game system (Mean=2.77, SD=1.253), or the player's possession of a high tolerance level for defeat (Mean=2.69, SD= 1.084).

Based on this initial description, and in a bid to demonstrate the existence of a model capable of clearly defining these distinguishing characteristics of talent, exploratory factor analysis was carried out. The results showed a set of seven components that explain 50.123% of criterion variance (see table 4).

Table 4. Results of the Exploratory Factor Analysis

Characteristics:	Components						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. A balanced diet conditions the abilities of a talented player	.756						
11. Control over rest influences player talent	.714						
9. The level of sacrifice influences player talent	.643						
8. Mentality is a conditioning factor of player talent	.538						
5. Physical ability is an important component of player talent	.518						
12. A high level of commitment to the team defines a talented player	.487						
18. The family environment helps to nurture player talent	.428						
28. The challenge posed by competition rivals is a stimulus that helps to develop talent		.656					
27. Pressure should be taken into account in talent development		.654					
25. A positive coach-player relationship influences the development of talent		.631					
19. Competition develops player talent		.520					
22. Psychological work can help develop player talent		.478					
30. Quick understanding of instructions given by the coach improves talent development		.458					
31. A talented player has a high tolerance for defeat			.707				
32. A talented player is very sensitive to their own and others' feelings			.674				
29. Player physiology should be taken into account when identifying talent			.504				
33. A talented player memorises systematic training actions quickly and puts them into operation in the competition			.497				
17. Leadership is a foundation of player talent.				.699			
16. The ability to influence should be taken into account in player talent				.574			
23. The ability to communicate is an indicator of player talent				.539			
13. Decision-making is a key aspect that defines a talented player					.699		
14. Adaptability to the game is an influential part of player talent					.613		
6. Player versatility should be taken into account when identifying talent.					.541		
15. A talented player tactically adapts to different positions					.463		
7. Talent is an innate ability in football players						.697	
20. Talented players are players with a very refined technique						.647	
21. A talented player usually plays in attacking positions						.598	
26. The talent of one player is recognised by the other players						.407	
35. A talented player has high expectations of success							.704
34. A talented player has high self-esteem							.628
Percentage of variance explained	9.799	8.535	7.368	6.674	6.367	5.994	5.386

The first factor, called “physical-environmental conditioning factors”, representing 9.799% of variance, includes healthy habits related to the maintenance of a balanced diet and the control of rest; the development of physical abilities; and contextual aspects related to the player’s level of sacrifice, commitment, the development of a positive mindset, and the influence of the family environment. This is in line with the study carried out by Asin (2016), which included aspects related to physical preparation (basic physical qualities, specific physical work and transformation into real game play, technical-tactical-strategic elements, work related to playing position, and training, planning, and management) and psychological conditioning factors (social psychological work, injury prevention and rehabilitation evaluation and control of training, coping and adaptive capacity, motivation, contextual intelligence, concentration, emotions, and anxiety) as determining elements of talent in football.

The second factor, “interpersonal relationships,” which accounts for 8.535% of criterion variance, includes elements relating to the challenge of facing rivals and competition, the pressure to which they are subjected, the relationships between footballers and coaches, the psychological work developed, and the ability to understand the messages given by the coach. Following Mesquita et al. (2004), a large percentage of a team’s success will depend on the relationships between the coach and the players. They verified the importance of positive feedback where two-way affectivity behaviours become relevant, along with the creation of a pleasant and close working environment that eliminates elements of internal and external pressure and emphasises expressive-affective body and oral language.

The third factor, referred to as “personality factors,” explaining 7.368% of variance, refers to the player’s tolerance for defeat, their ability to manage their own and others’ emotions, their own physiology, and the ability to memorise situations to be applied on the pitch. These elements are in line with the research carried out by Abele-Brehm & Brukmuller (2015), in which these factors were included in two dimensions: agency and communion. Agency encompasses elements related to competence, control, self-awareness, goal orientation, and tolerance, i.e., factors related to the individual; while communion integrates the defining characteristics of group membership, such as friendliness, reliability, adaptability, loyalty, and emotions derived from the activity itself.

The fourth factor, called “team-work competencies,” which accounts for 6.674% of variance in the model, brings together elements relating to leadership capacity, the capacity to influence, and communication skills. In this sense, Jericó (2011) stated that it is necessary to be able to harness the capabilities of team members, with all their possibilities of organisation and with all the creativity that may arise through combining shared efforts. She argued that people who exercise leadership through effective communication skills and who have a strong capacity to influence will enable a group of people to develop their skills to the fullest.

The fifth factor, which accounts for 6.367% of the model variance, is called “decision-making” and specifies the importance of decision-making, adaptability to the game, versatility, and adaptability to different situations. A study by Casais (2014) indicated that decision-making is a mediator between high performance and correct action in game development, in which there was a link between motor responses and mental processes associated with tactical aspects. Therefore, in football, players are immersed in a state of continuous instability when competing and that adaptation to the game through decision-making, coupled with great versatility, is what will maintain and develop the player’s talent.

The sixth factor, “Tactical-technical skills”, explains 5.994% of the criterion variance and includes elements related to the player’s technique, the position played on the pitch, and the personal recognition they have within the group. Moreira et al. (2021) argue that improvement in players’ technique and skills, as well as recognition of the mechanised game structures when facing a match (by memorising the actions developed in training), enables players to anticipate the different actions to be developed and encourages effective decision-making.

The seventh factor, contributing 5.386% to the model, has been termed “expectations of success”, and shows the importance of expectations of success and self-esteem among talented football players. Holding expectations of success or the collective belief that football players are capable of obtaining positive results provides additional motivation in the team, since a good atmosphere can be created, allowing them to be more determined and generate a greater perception of control (García & Refoyo, 2014) The results obtained in the work cited showed the existence of a significant relationship between expectations of success and team performance.

It should be noted that item 24, which relates talent with the player’s performance, is not part of any factor in the resulting model.

Having asked the group of respondents to provide observations and suggestions in a free text format about the subject studied, a total of 132 valid contributions were obtained, which were subjected to content analysis to extract common elements to optimise the definition of talent and the characteristics that define this construct in relation to football. Having eliminated responses that did not provide information for the research goals set, the set of valid responses were read in depth to define the following system of categories and their frequency of appearance.

The 29 categories present on 152 occasions in the responses provided by the coaches offer interesting information about the construct of talent among football players. It describes, firstly, the nature of talent, continuing with the influence of context on identifying and maintaining talent, and concludes with a prioritisation of the traits that define a talented player (see table 5).

Table 5. Categories and frequencies of appearance in free responses

Dimension	Categories	f	%dimension	%category
Nature of talent	Innate	32	59.25	21.05
	Enhanced through training	24	40.75	15.79
Contextual conditions	Influence of the family environment	10	38.46	6.58
	Influence of peer groups (social relations)	6	23.07	3.95
	Influence of team	3	11.54	1.97
	Diet	3	11.54	1.97
	Influence of the technical team/coach	2	7.69	1.31
	Availability of time for training and practice	1	3.84	0.66
	Rest	1	3.84	0.66
	Physical condition	11	17.71	7.23
	Tactical	9	12.86	5.92
	Technical	8	11.43	5.26
Characteristics of talent	Teamwork	7	10.00	4.61
	Sacrifice	5	7.14	3.23
	Humility	5	7.14	3.23
	Empathy	3	4.28	1.97
	Continual learning ability	3	4.28	1.97
	Effort	3	4.28	1.97
	Ability to make decisions	2	2.86	1.31
	Creativity	2	2.86	1.31
	Communication	2	2.86	1.31
	Fellowship	2	2.86	1.31
	Respect	2	2.86	1.31
	Motivation	1	1.43	0.66
	Adaptability	1	1.43	0.66
	Commitment	1	1.43	0.66
	Leadership	1	1.43	0.66
	Responsibility	1	1.43	0.66
	Emotional management	1	1.43	0.66

In terms of the nature of talent, it is understood to be innate (59.25%) with opinions stating that it can be enhanced through training (40.75%).

Taking as a reference the contextual conditions in which talent is formed and developed, the family setting is felt to have the strongest influence on player talent, indicated in 38.46% of responses. The second most influential factor is a player's peer group, as indicated by 23.07% of coaches in this dimension, followed by the influence of the team (11.54%) and the coach (7.69%) Diet (11.54%), training time (3.84%), and rest (3.84%) are considered essential to the characteristics that define a talented football player. This information corroborates the findings of the factor analysis as the main element that conditions the management of talented players.

Finally, they note that, the main characteristics that define a talented player are physical condition (17.71%), elements such as tactics (12.86%) and technique (11.43%), the relevance of teamwork (10%), and another series of elements including sacrifice (7.14%) and humility (7.14%). These elements support the importance given to aspects grouped previously into the factors described above.

Conclusions

According to the data obtained in this study, the participating football coaches understand that talent is an innate capacity, which is recognised by the members of the team and which, in turn, conditions the perceptions of different team members. It is also understood that talent can be nurtured through training.

It has been determined that the most prominent characteristics of player talent in football are: speed and effective decision-making on the pitch, mentality, adaptations to different positions and situations during game play, level of sacrifice, and the players' ability to understand orders given by the coach and the technical team. Furthermore, talented professional football players must take into account the importance of rest and a balanced diet, given that these factors enhance their physical performance.

Regarding the coach's responsibility when it comes to managing this talent, the most important function described involves maintaining a good relationship with

the players, so as to inhibit undesirable behaviours within the team and achieve optimal control over pressure and other factors that condition talent and which are generated by competition and rivals.

In relation to the context, the family environment has a direct influence on improvements in players, as well as peer groups, the team, and the coach.

The position played is negligible when it comes to explaining whether a player has talent or not. It is also significant to note that talented players do not possess a high level of tolerance for defeat.

From an empirical perspective, this study provides a profile for talented football players, made up of thirty traits distributed across seven weighted dimensions (physical-environmental conditioning factors, interpersonal relations, personality factors, teamwork competencies, decision-making, tactical-technical capacities, and expectations of success), understanding that the specific weighting of each of them provides a foundation for the coach to design training models, game play strategies, and relationship systems.

Bibliography

- Abele-Brehm, A. E., & Brukmuller, S. (2015). Los dos grandes factores de la personalidad. *Mente y cerebro*, 75, 40-45.
- Arce, E., & Martínez, R. (2010). Capacidad de influencia y orientación al cambio. *Observatorio de recursos humanos y relaciones laborales*, 47, 12-13.
- Asin, I. (2016). Las necesidades condicionales en el fútbol. Metodología integrada en la planificación de la preparación física. *RED: Revista de entrenamiento deportivo. Journal of Sports Training*, 30(3), 1. <https://revistadeentrenamiento.com/articulo/las-necesidades-condicionales-en-el-futbol-metodologia-integrada-en-la-planificacion-de-la-preparacion-fisica-2168-sa-s5817998ae760d/>
- Baur, J. (1993). Ricerca e promozione del talento nello sport. *Rivista di Cultura Sportiva, suplemento a SdS*, 28-29, 4-20.
- Cabeza, C. B., & Brito, J. G. (2021). La gestión del talento humano para un rendimiento laboral eficaz. *Polo del Conocimiento: Revista científico-profesional*, 6(11), 742-761. <https://polodelconocimiento.com/ojs/index.php/es/article/view/3296>
- Casais, L. (2014). Estrategias para optimizar la toma de decisiones en el entrenador de fútbol. Entrenamiento mental en el fútbol moderno: herramientas prácticas. En M. Roffé & S. Rivera (Coords.), *Entrenamiento mental en el fútbol moderno: herramientas prácticas* (pp. 286-306). Librofútbol.com.
- Castañeda, A., Hernández, L., & Hernández, M. C. (2017). Percepción de la salud física y emocional del equipo de fútbol sub-17 de la Universidad autónoma fútbol club año 2015. *Encuentros*, 15(1), 163-175. <https://doi.org/10.15665/re.v15i1.861>
- Cuadrado, J. (2010). Fútbol: talento, táctica y entrenamiento. *Training fútbol: Revista técnica profesional*, 169, 14-25.
- Cubeiro, J.C., & Gallardo, L. (2012). *Liderazgo Guardiola: descubre los secretos de su éxito*. Allienta.
- Echevarría, O., Tamayo, Y. S., & Jeffers. B. (2020). Acercamiento a las particularidades de la iniciación deportiva y la selección del talento deportivo. *Didasc@lia: Didáctica y Educación*, 11(2), 259-270. <https://revistas.ult.edu.cu/index.php/didascalia/article/view/1004/1569>
- Echevarría, O., Tamayo, Y. S., & Jeffers. B. (2020). Talento deportivo: reorientación vocacional. *Mundo FESC*, 10(1), 7-13. <https://www.fesc.edu.co/Revistas/OJS/index.php/mundofesc/article/view/389>
- Ewerlin, D. (2013). The influence of global talent management on employer attractiveness: an experimental study. *Zeitschrift Fur Personal-forschung*, 27(3), 279- 304. https://doi.org/10.1688/1862-0000_XfO_2013_03_Ewerlin
- Fernández, J., Escudero, A., García, J., & Ibañez, S. J. (2020). La importancia de la localización del partido en la primera división española de fútbol. *Journal of sport and health research*, 12(3), 17-27. <https://recyt.fecyt.es/index.php/JSJR/article/view/80779>
- Fernández, J. A., Rodríguez, J. A., & Sánchez, D. A. (2021). Aspectos centrales de la identificación y desarrollo de talentos deportivos: revisión sistemática. *Retos*, 39, 915-928. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v0i39.79323>
- Fernández, J. J., Vila, M. J., & Rodríguez, F. A. (2004). Modelo de un estudio de la estructura condicional a través de un análisis multivariante enfocado a la detección de talentos en jugadores de balonmano. *Motricidad: European Journal of Human Movement*, 12, 169-185. <https://eurjhm.com/index.php/eurjhm/article/view/107>
- Gallardo-Gallardo, E., Dries, N., & González-Cruz, T. (2013). What is the meaning of "Talent" in the World of Work? *Human Resources Management Review*, 23(4), 290-300. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hrmr.2013.05.002>
- Gálvez, A.J., & Paredes, J. M. (2007). Aspectos psicológicos que influyen en el futbolista. *EFDeportes*, 106. <https://efdeportes.com/efd106/aspectos-psicologicos-que-influyen-en-el-futbolista.htm>
- García, P. (2006) *Introducción a la investigación bioantropológica en actividad física, deporte y salud*. Universidad Central de Venezuela.
- García, D., & Refoyo, I. (2014). Establecimiento de Metas y la Relación entre las Expectativas de Éxito y el Rendimiento en un Equipo de Fútbol Profesional.

- Kronos. *La revista científica de actividad física y deporte*, 13(1). <https://revistakronos.info/articulo/establecimiento-de-metas-y-la-relacion-entre-las-expectativas-de-exito-y-el-rendimiento-en-un-equipo-de-futbol-profesional-1700-sa-Q57cfb272420e8>
- Gómez, A. J., Bradley, P., Díaz, A., & Pallares, J. (2013). Percepción subjetiva del esfuerzo en fútbol profesional: relevancia de los indicadores físicos y psicológicos en el entrenamiento y la competición. *Anales de psicología*, 29(3), 656-661. <https://doi.org/10.6018/analesps.29.3.175791>
- Hahn, E. (1988). *Entrenamiento con niños: teoría, práctica, problemas específicos*. Martínez Roca.
- Hernández, R., Fernández, C., & Baptista, P. (2014). *Metodología de la investigación*. McGraw-Hill.
- Hopf, H. (1997). Problemas generales del talento deportivo. *Revista Educación Física y Deporte*, 19(2), 59-67. <https://doi.org/10.17533/udea.efyd.3595>
- Jericó, P. (2011). *La nueva gestión del talento: construyendo compromiso*. Pearson.
- Lidor, R., Falk, A., Arnon, M., Cohen, Y., Segal, G., & Lander, Y. (2005) Measurement of talent in team handball: The questionable use of motor and physical tests. *Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research*, 19(2), 318-325. [https://doi.org/10.1519/1533-4287\(2005\)19\[318:motih\]2.0.co;2](https://doi.org/10.1519/1533-4287(2005)19[318:motih]2.0.co;2)
- Lizana, P., Almagià, A., Simpson, M. B., Henríquez, R., Gómez, M., González, M., & Conejeros, M. (2010). Evaluación de la Enseñanza y Aprendizaje por Parte de Estudiantes de un Programa de Talentos Académicos (BETA-PUCV) Frente a un Curso de Neuroanatomía Funcional. *International Journal of Morphology*, 28(4), 1245-1249. <https://doi.org/10.4067/S0717-95022010000400041>
- Llopi, D. (2015). Escuelas de fútbol y aportaciones desde la psicología del deporte. *Abfutbol: revista técnica especializada en fútbol*, 77, 89-96.
- López, P. A. Chena, M., Asin, I., Moreno, A., & Moreno, R. (2019). Efecto de factores contextuales en la composición corporal de jugadores profesionales de fútbol. Un estudio retrospectivo. *Nutrición hospitalaria: Organó oficial de la Sociedad española de nutrición parenteral y enteral*, 36(6), 1324-1331. <https://doi.org/10.20960/nh.02783>
- López, V. (2021). La detección y el desarrollo del talento deportivo, ¿la foto de hoy servirá también para mañana? En V. López, P. Hidalgo & M. Pons (Eds.), *Nuevas tendencias en el desarrollo del talento deportivo* (pp. 15-32). Universitat de Girona.
- Lorenzo, A. (2000). *Búsqueda de nuevas variables en la Detección de Talentos Deportivos. Aplicación al Baloncesto* [Tesis de doctorado no publicada]. Universidad Politécnica de Madrid.
- Marina, J. A. (2015). La educación como generadora de talento. *Panorama Social*, 21, 11- 22. https://www.funca.es/wp-content/uploads/Migracion/Articulos/FUNCAS_PS/021art02.pdf
- Martín, A., & Camacho, P. (2019). Origen etimológico del concepto de talento deportivo: ¿genética o práctica deliberada? *EmásF: revista digital de educación física*, 58, 108-120. https://emasf2.webcindario.com/EmasF_58.pdf
- Martínez, F. (2020). Anna Caballé: "Somos demasiado pasivos a la hora de reconocer el talento ajeno". *Historia y vida*, 623, 13-17
- Mesquita, I., Rosado, A., Gutiérrez, M., & Palma, N. (2004). La relación entrenador-jugador en Fútbol. *RED: Revista de entrenamiento deportivo. Journal of Sports Training*, 18(4), 5-10.
- Moreira, P., Brito, R., Pérez, J. C., Greco, J. P., Moreno, M. P., & Moreira, G. (2021). Comportamiento táctico de jugadores de fútbol de diferentes posiciones, durante una temporada deportiva. *Retos: nuevas tendencias en educación física, deporte y recreación*, 39, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v0i39.75970>
- Neuman, W. L. (2014). *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Pearson.
- Passow, A. (1993). National/State policies regarding education of the gifted. En K. Sélter, F. Mönks y A. Passow (Eds.), *International handbook of research and development of giftedness and talent* (pp. 29-46). Pergamon Press.
- Pazo, C.I.; Sáenz-López, P., & Fradua, L. (2012). Influencia del contexto deportivo en la formación de los futbolistas de la selección española de fútbol. *Revista de Psicología del Deporte*, 21(2), 291-299. <https://archives.rpd-online.com/article/view/874.html>
- Prieto, A. (2017). *La formación del talento en el ámbito deportivo: la transferencia de los procesos formativos en el ámbito educativo al joven jugador de fútbol*. [Tesis de doctorado no publicada]. Universidad de Castilla La Mancha.
- Prieto, A., Onofre, R., & Pastor, J. C. (2020). La formación del talento en el ámbito deportivo: transferencia de los procesos formativos en el ámbito educativo al joven jugador de fútbol. *Apunts: Educación física y deportes*, 141, 97-107.
- Rabanal, M. A. (2021). El descanso del deportista. *Sport Training Magazine*, 98, 52-55.
- Rodolfo Lovisoló, H., & Lucero, F. (2006). Educação física escolar: esporte, competição e talento. *Lecturas: educación física y deportes*, 92. <https://www.efdeportes.com/efd92/efesc.htm>
- Roffé, M., & Rivera, S. (2014). *Las diferentes inteligencias en la práctica del fútbol. Entrenamiento mental en el fútbol moderno: herramientas prácticas*. Librofutbol.com.

- Serra, J., Prieto, A., Pastor, J. C., & González, S. (2020). Propuesta de evaluación multidisciplinar del talento en jóvenes futbolistas. *Retos*, 38, 782-789. <https://doi.org/10.47197/retos.v38i38.73118>
- Simarro, A. (2001). La captación de talentos y su entrenamiento dentro del ámbito académico. En Consejo Superior de Deportes, *Estrategias de fomento del deporte de los niños ciegos y deficientes visuales en edad escolar* (pp. 18-25). Consejo Superior de Deportes.
- Srhom, V., Rogulj, N., Zagorac, N., & Katic, R. (2006). A new model of selection in women's handball. *Collegium antropologicum*, 30(3), 601-605. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/27599>
- Tamayo, Y. S. Echevarría, O., & Jeffers, B. (2018). Sugerencias didácticas sobre el Hockey sobre césped (s/c) para los profesores en la iniciación deportiva de base categoría 11-12 años. *Revista Innovación Tecnológica*, 24, 259-270.
- Tannenbaum, A. J. (2000). A history of giftedness in school and society. En K. Heller, F. Mönks, R. Sternberg & R. Subotnik (Eds.), *International Handbook of Giftedness and Talent* (pp. 3-27). Pergamon Press.
- Torregrosa, M. Sousa, C. Viladrich, M.C. Villamarin, F., & Cruz, J. (2008). El clima motivacional y el estilo de comunicación del entrenador como predictores del compromiso en futbolistas jóvenes. *Psicothema*, 20(2), 254-259. <https://www.psicothema.com/pdf/3457.pdf>
- Wanceulen, A., Wanceulen, J., & Wanceulen A. (2008) *Bases para el proceso de selección y formación de jóvenes futbolistas para el alto rendimiento*. Wanceulen.
- Williams, A. M., & Reilly, T. (2000). Talent identification and development in soccer. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 18(9), 657-667. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02640410050120041>