26 - DETECTION OF TALENTS IN THE CAPIXABA SOCCER AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE IMAGINARY ABOUT THE BRAZILIAN PLAYER

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Introduction

The Brazilian soccer carries a mythification about its practice. Our soccer is known by its technique, plasticity, fantastic plays, i.e., by the spectacle given by the athletes on the field: the acclaimed art soccer. What we can notice in the journalistic literature and sometimes in the analyzed academic literature is the discourse that the Brazilians carry their own playing style: ingenious, technical, skilled, a style which raises expressions like "the ball artist", related to the constituted talent of the Brazilian player.

This is the way that, not only the vast majority of supporters but also many sports journalists characterize the Brazilian players, considering the Brazilian playing style as plentiful of joy, improvisation, innovation, and full of craftiness and swing (SOARES, LOVISOLO, 2003).

Within this context, we are interested in questioning to what extent the identifying values and characteristics of the Brazilian soccer are taken into account in the soccer talent detection process.

The present study aimed to assess the national soccer identity and its inter-relationships with the orientation in talent detection from the cultural representation one has regarding the Brazilian player. This study also tried to identify the parameters used by the coaches/selectors in the early categories in the Serra Futebol Clube to choose and promote the athletes, and confront such parameters with the imaginary about the Brazilian soccer: ingenious, technical, dancer, artistic.

Through direct observation of the activities of the group studied (MONTAGNER; SILVA, 2003) and semi-structured interviews (SiLVA, 2005), we aimed to deepen the initially raised questions and problemize the ones which appeared during the fieldwork. The descriptive research was used (MONTAGNER; SILVA, 2003) with ethnographic characteristics (KUSCHNIR, 2003). The coach of the principal team of the Serra Futebol Clube (Serra F. C.) Cosme Dourado, identified as *informant 1*; the coach of Juvenile and Junior categories Rubens da Vitória, identified as *informant 2*; and *informant 3*, were interviewed. The choice of Serra F. C. was owing to the fact that this team has the largest representation in the capixaba soccer, considering its participation in the Brazil Cup (2004 and 2005), and its current condition of a three-time state champion (2003, 2004, 2005).

Established criteria *versus* Constructed imaginary

The Brazilian soccer, in the context of art soccer, has player-related characteristics that are very popular in the sport environment: technique, skill, and a very unique Brazilian style. Regarding this symbolic force and the talent detection process, we could observe that the art soccer, the skilled, technical player, is not the one pursued considering the capixaba soccer patterns, due to many factors which give basis to the talent selection process the way it is presently done, and that in one way or the other meets the team needs.

We observed that the criteria analyzed by the selectors were, mainly, the athlete's natural performance, physical condition (height, strength), and tactical criteria.

By **athlete's natural performance** one can understand the equivalence of technical, tactical, physical and psychological conditions, which makes this evaluation very subjective. These characteristics are observed specially during collective practices: "And then you put the boys to play in the collective practices". (COSTA, 2005, p. 24). The selection days were also chosen according to the club planning for games with the base teams, on Wednesdays, because it is believed that this is the best way of evaluating the players.

Precisely because it comprises so many aspects, this way of evaluation is better performed in real game conditions. During the collective practice the assessors observe the tactical behavior of the player- his positioning, movement, team-playing skills; his technical behavior passing, kicking, dribbling (ball conduction), steals; his physical condition stamina, strength and potency demonstration in disputing a high ball, power of recovery; his psychological conditions social-affective behavior in the field, leadership ability.

Physical condition was clearly an important criterion because it is, as informants 1 and 2 believe, a great differential. In this context, the relationship occurs in two ways: maturational condition related to growth, and physiological condition related to the physical valences: stamina, strength, speed (WEINECK, 2000), and especially strength. The physical condition to be assessed would be the growth level presented in terms of age, and the physical development presented in the practices.

From the maturational point of view, height is highly regarded in certain positions and justifies some ways of playing. As said by informant 2: "(…) so it can make a difference in soccer because, depending on the position he plays, it is harder and the soccer is depending on the size of the athlete; unless he is an exceptional short player." (COSTA, 2005, p. 27).

Physiologically, one has to consider strength, speed, flexibility, and stamina aerobic and anaerobic (PAVANELLI, 2004). These criteria are evaluated during the collective practice, bearing in mind that the selection of players is based on real game situations. Physical tests for selecting players were not mentioned, but the physical valences were cited as criteria to be observed, showing the importance given to growth conditions and maturational development of the player in the talent detection process instituted not only in Espírito Santo, but also throughout the country. "The coaches, however, are not sure if he can become a professional player in Inter, and it is not due to lack of talent, 'The problem is the size', they all say" (DAMO, 2005, p. 136).

"This speech (referring to a junior player of Internacional-RS, who struggles for his space in the Brazilian soccer) does not follow the tendency of art soccer either, since the talent has been 'diagnosed', but the athlete's body-built does not meet the expectations" (COSTA, p. 31). The speech above clearly shows too great a concern regarding body built and expectation of growth in height of the athlete. Considering the constructed imaginary about the Brazilian soccer athlete, the concerns regarding the athlete's technical development should be the main one in this case, talent had been detected, but the physical matter was considered first, perhaps preventing the ascension of the player.

The example above demonstrates a characteristic of the talent detection process instituted in Brazil: the "clinical eye". The expectation lies on the ability of the talent scout to determine if the "kid" is or not able to join the team. And this is even clearer in a passage curious to say the least reported by Damo (2005, p. 110).

- What about that kid called Dada?
- Man, the kid is good alright!
- Do you think he makes it to Pro?
- I don't know. There's no way of knowing it!
- But he's got game, hasn't him?
- Yeah, he does! You can tell by the way he runs, the way he hits the ball…

- What do you mean? How does he run, isn't in the same way as the others?
- Oh! I can't explain that; that's your job, isn't it?!

The display of lack of scientificity is remarkable. According to Bracht, "the phase of empiricism, self-learning, and of lack of safe orientation in sports initiation is over" (BRACHT, 1983, apud, REZER; SAAD, 2005, p. 100).

Despite the latent production of Brazilian talents through the observation system used, we do not have data to tell if we are doing everything we could: "[…] the current model of talent detection in the teams could not give us absolute trust, therefore, the hypothesis that we are not revealing as many players as we could cannot be discarded" (MONTAGNER; SILVA, 2003, p. 196).

In the context of physical evaluation, it must be linked to the physiological demands made during a soccer match, and respect each position's characteristics. This evaluation should have direct relationship with the game characteristics, which should be as close as possible to the sport move demanded (PAVANELLI, 2004). However, strength was the valence of physical evaluation that was most highlighted, because this criterion would be conjugated with height, and thus, comparing to the imaginary about the Brazilian player, strength and height are not related to the context of art soccer. Strength would be more related to the pattern created by Europeans, the so called "strength soccer", which is many times compared to the Brazilian art soccer. This difference is shown in their own words, represented by the speech of a Scottish manager, Andy Roxburgh, during the I International Soccer Forum, held in Rio de Janeiro: "We, Europeans, respect you very much for the way you play […] Do not copy us. You treat the ball in a special way and we thank you for that" (CALAZANS, 2004).

Regarding the **tactical** criteria, the professionals regard the players based on the thought that they carry an innate talent, which just needs to be developed. "Sometimes the athlete plays in one position, but is completely out of that position's pattern. That is when we do our job: which is to add something so he can make it to pro […]. There are many positions you can change considering the athlete's characteristic and your needs, thus, you can definitely change it" (COSTA, 2005, p. 56).

Informally, in conversations during the observation of the work, the **psychological** factor was mentioned, as said by the informant 1: "He is good technically, has talent, sees the game, and has a vision […] is a weak player as far as endurance is concerned. First of all, his mind must be worked." (COSTA, 2005, p. 49). The informant's reference regarding working the player's mind is closely linked to the idea of discipline, good behavior. The player who "plays by the club's book" and keeps a disciplined life has better chances of being on the team. This situation is showed in two moments in the informants' speeches.

Informant 2: "[…] to adjust him to the standard we need" (COSTA, 2005, p. 31). By this observation, besides understanding a reference to the tactic and technical standard, we can look at this situation as a tentative to "tame" the player so that he becomes part of the team tuned to the environment created.

Informant 1: "The player has to be complete, including outside the field". (COSTA, p.33). Honneth has a passage referring to a situation of control: "[…] organizations interfere, as social institutions, in the relationships in the life of each individual to make him a member (a part) of society through discipline and control, manipulation and training.

One can notice that the criteria analyzed are very much related to team building: the necessary standard of speaking, "of what we need", refers a lot to the adjustment of the player to the team and to the norms of the team/club. However, the art-soccer discourse preaches the craftiness, the individual game, the accurate technical skill that decides the match, the breaking of the rules. The search for such player has not been shown as a concern in the capixaba soccer.

The necessary standard established by the club meets the club's needs. "[…] the apprentices are not only tutored by the masters, but also by the institutions recruiting them" (DAMO, 2005, p.188).

Conclusion

Throughout the research we noticed that the need to search for players to suit the group, not using the art-soccer as a parameter to select them, is what keeps the club moving towards the selections. The odds of finding a talent are rare, and this difficulty would be related to the juvenile tournament A Gazetinha Cup, which facilitates the exit of new capixaba players, preventing them from reaching the teams in the First Division, as showed by informant 3: "Now, real talent is rare. And very often it doesn't even make it to the Serra Club, because, by the ages of 12, 13, 14, they are chosen by the big clubs in the Gazetinha Cup, and leave early. They don't go to Serra […] But, I repeat, we have difficulties here because it is only one or two talents that passes and ends here at Serra. But that's because by the age of 12, 13, as I said before, he has already gone to some big club" (COSTA, 2005, p.32-33).

The tournament mentioned uses the criteria of considering the studies in order to define the players as able or unable to dispute the games. The premise is that the athletes must be enrolled and attending classes. "From that, another goal is reached: the most outstanding athletes are seen and chosen by the scouts to go to bigger clubs outside the State and even the country" (MORAES, 2005, p.27).

This exit of players causes the athletes to be trained in the capixaba soccer, in the context of first division clubs, to be those considered hard-workers, the ones who win because they work hard, because they insist.

That is showed in the words of informant 1: "And there are those who are insistent. Those that are not so talented, technically speaking, but do want to play soccer, and thus go on improving" (COSTA, 2005, p. 27).

In the words of informant 1, what calls the attention is the emphasis given to the insistence and hard work in the ascension of the athlete considered limited. Marcos Seixas, physical coach, of the juvenile team of Fluminense, shares the same discourse:

"There are technically good players, with good strength, very good kicking and physical capabilities, but with thinking deficiency, almost laziness, and that gets in the way when developing the game. On the contrary, sometimes you have more limited players, but who use their heads, thus finding the spaces, making things easier […]" (DAMO, 2005, p. 109).

The search for players who meet the group's needs, within the club's parameters, is a reality that is necessary to the existence of the club, who is inserted in a context that does not allow it to do more than what is already done. And that work has recently given the club its Three-time State Championship (professional). The club's work realized in the base categories does not consider the sciencitificity involving the players' formation and part of this long term work to form the player, finding the one who has the acclaimed technical, skilled art-soccer.

One of the basic methodological questions about the talents detection constitutes the prognosis. Prognosis is the predictable scientific fundaments, relative appreciation of an object (the athlete in our case) in a given moment or in relation to the paths to reach such conditions, determined in the quality of the objective (SELUIANOV et al., 2005, p. 85).

Thus, the process of talent formation and detection occurs in the "school" clubs, which work with early categories and participate in tournaments that serve as showcases to the national soccer. With the purpose of showing these players, they make possible their transferences before they reach the juvenile and junior categories in the clubs disputing the First Division of the Capixaba State Championship. Prepared within the Long Term Preparation patterns, they would reinforce their clubs and, consequently, raise the level of the First Division games.

Therefore, the thinking of talent detection is lost, for the athletes that make to the clubs hardly show superior conditions, or some skill differential. Thus, the art-soccer concept instituted in Brazil would not be applicable to the capixaba base categories, because the talent detection has already happened and the talents have already been "exported".

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DETECTION OF TALENTS IN THE CAPIXABA SOCCER AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE IMAGINARY ABOUT THE BRAZILIAN PLAYER

ABSTRACT: The present study described and analyzed the talent detection process instituted in the Serra Futebol Clube, relating it to the identifying characteristics of the Brazilian soccer, making a parallel between empiricism and scientificity. To do so, we interviewed three professionals who directly work with the detection of talent in the team. The descriptive research based on the direct observation of the activities showed that the applied system does not use the art-soccer as a parameter to select athletes.
Key-words: soccer, identity, talent detection.

DETECTION DE TALENTS DANS LE FOOTBALL DE L´ÉTAT DO ESPIRITO SANTO ET RELATION AVEC L´IMAGINAIRE AU SUJET DU JOUEUR BRÉSILIEN

RÉSUMÉ: L´étude décrit et analyse le processus de découverte de talents instituée au club de Football de Serra, la reliant aux caractéristiques d´identité du football brésilien, en traçant un parallèle entre empirisme et science. Pour cela, trois professionnels qui travaillent directement avec la découverte de joueurs du club ont été interwievés. L´enquête de caractère descriptive à partir de l´observation directe des activités a démontré que le sistème utilisé préconise la sélection d´athlètes sans utiliser l´Art du Football comme paramètre.
Mots Clés: football, identité, recherche de talents.

DETECCIÓN DE TALENTOS EN EL FÚTBOL "CAPIXABA"Y SU RELACIÓN CON EL IMAGINARIO SOBRE EL JUGADOR BRASILEÑO.

RESUMEN: el estudio describió y analizó el proceso de detección de talentos instituído en el Serra Futebol Clube, relacionándolo a las características de identidad del fútbol brasileño, trazando un paralelo entre el empirismo y la cientificidad. Para ello, entrevistó a tres profesionales que trabajan directamente con la detección de jugadores en el club. La investigación de carácter descriptivo a partir de la observación directa de las actividades demostró que el sistema empleado prioriza la selección de los atletas sin el uso del fútbol-arte como parâmetro.
Palabras claves: fútbol, identidad, detección de talentos.

DETECÇÃO DE TALENTOS NO FUTEBOL CAPIXABA E RELAÇÃO COM O IMAGINÁRIO ACERCA DO JOGADOR BRASILEIRO

RESUMO: O estudo descreveu e analisou o processo de detecção de talentos instituído no Serra Futebol Clube, relacionando-o às características identitárias do futebol brasileiro, traçando um paralelo entre empirismo e cientificidade. Para tanto, entrevistou três profissionais que trabalham diretamente com a detecção de jogadores no clube. A pesquisa de caráter descritivo a partir da observação direta das atividades demonstrou que o sistema empregado preconiza a seleção de atletas sem pautar o futebol-arte como parâmetro.
Palavras-chave: futebol, identidade, detecção de talentos.