Improving Running Capacity to Ensure Chinese Men’s Football Ascending Top in Asia and Qualifying for the Word Cup

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Abstract. The aim of this study is to collect historical and objective data to analyze and demonstrate the necessity of improving the running capacity and kicking technique for Chinese Men’s Football based on the reality. Many methods were applied in this paper such as the Method of Comparison and Graphic Data for a scientific research. And it is suggested that Chinese men’s football must improve running capacity and kicking technique with running to ascend the top in Asia and qualify for the Word Cup because players need to run approximately 13000-170000 meters which requires their super strong running ability.

Introduction

Why football has become the first movement and is deeply loved by the world? In Europe, a common professional league will often attract the attention of over 100000 people live and TV viewers, who watch all their eyes the parquet playing technique of 22 players from both sides; the players give full play to defense, offense, and build up attacks with outstanding running, intercepting and transferring together with superb dribbling, passing and catching to grasp favorable opportunities, conquering the fort of the other side. They gather gathered the wisdom and stamina of their team and accurately stab the ball into opponent’s home. The players are proud of it and take football as encouragement and lofty professional responsibility.

The source of football can be traced to the ancient China's Warring States period and flourished in Han and Tang Dynasties [1]; but it failed to be inherited and developed. The consciousness, technique and physical demand of football are behind the pace of development of modern football; in order to ascend to the forefront in Asia and reach the Word Cup, football in China must strengthen the scientific management of modern football in which the top priority is the management for people to improve athletes and the managers’ right awareness towards football, enhance athletes’ physical training and improve the running ability and team work. To this end, this paper analyzes historical documents and data to better verify the correct conclusions of this academic point of view.
Research Results

This paper is mainly about the relation between football and running. For Chinese football, it’s necessary to integrate with Chinese football practice for historical analysis and study and to collect extensive data for credible comparison and accurate conclusion so as to better merge with the international football and rapidly enhance the level of soccer in China, to try to narrow the gap with the international football, to go all out to ascend in Asia and reach the world, achieving Chinese dream of "football coming back home" and striving for the nation’s dream of building powerful Chinese football.

Consciousness of Football Should be in Line with International Practice

Football is the product of China’s ancient culture which has a long history. It originated in China but developed and flourished in Europe; The war, natural disasters, economic stagnation and poor management adversely effect the inheritance and development of football in China, leading to widening contrast of developing speed with the world football, in which the consciousness of football comes first. In ancient China, football was called "Kemari" [1], meaning playing the ball. The ancient football not only suffered the lag in technique but also backward equipment at that time. The Kemari ball was initially filled with hair and then by blowing [2], which made it elastic; and two goals was replaced by "Kemari rooms". It’s the main means of training warriors’ defense and attack in China's Tang and Han Dynasties. For half a century, it’s the cognition and consciousness difference between kicking the ball or running and playing the ball that firstly leaves China’s football behind; It’s the unique characteristics that make modern football draw hundreds of millions people’s attention and fancy. With the expansion of the football field, football players increase to 11 in each team in a competition, respectively undertaking as goalkeepers, defenders, midfielders and forwards. They have to kick, pass, dribble intercept and head the ball in accordance with general rules. They need to actively run with the ball or without in 105×68 meters, namely 7140 square meters rectangular pitch. They strive to score dominantly in 90 minutes through team’s offensive and defensive techniques and tactics to kick the ball into the opponent's goal [3]. The players must be good at running and playing in 7140 square meters football field, while such kind of aptitude and basic ability is severely deficient for China’s football. Thus China football must establish the consciousness of running and playing to keep it in line with international football.

The merger of football awareness cannot be built in one day. It is a understanding process. Even that of Europe was developed from “playing the ball” to “running and playing” and then transmitted to a team work of running and playing. "Football is the game that 22 people running on the field and Germans win in the end." [4] In fact, Germans are not always the winner but a "legend". Football is the wealth of the whole world with only one winner requiring team’s fight based on their own strength. It at least reflects the truth in a period of time that the story has been circulated so far. In the middle of the last century when the football was popular in Europe, Germans believed that no termination, no defeat. It’s exactly such kind of perseverance spirit made them fight tenaciously to tie on scores before the end of the game. And in overtime, they won final victory with a penalty; therefore, the memory that Germans’ eventual victory was deeply bared in the European’s mind. Germans were lucky enough to win on the penalty, which initially was not taken by British. The championship is not always belong to German. The author has looked into the previous data of the European Cup and the World Cup. According to
the statistics of the World Cup: Brazil, Germany and Italy are the world first-class teams and have won the World Cup four times respectively (Table 1) [5]. Uruguay and Argentina each won two, and England, Switzerland, France and Spain each won a world cup champion (Table 1). It shows that the German football team is recognized as the world top team. And their success does not come from fortuity but from the running and exquisite technique as well as tough spirit.

Table 1. Statistical table of winning times in the World Cup between 1930-2014 (20 sessions) [6].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>teams</th>
<th>Italy</th>
<th>Brazil</th>
<th>Germany</th>
<th>Uruguay</th>
<th>Argentina</th>
<th>Switzerland</th>
<th>England</th>
<th>France</th>
<th>Spain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>session</td>
<td>2, 3,</td>
<td>7, 9,</td>
<td>11, 13/2</td>
<td>6/1</td>
<td>8/1</td>
<td>16/1</td>
<td>19/1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>winning</td>
<td>12,</td>
<td>15,</td>
<td>20/4</td>
<td>20/4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rate (%)</td>
<td>18/4</td>
<td>17/4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistical philosophy tells us that contingency is an embodiment of inevitability and a supplement of it.[6] Germans’ winning on a penalty definitely will bring them reputation of the football spirit. Thus the legend that "Football is the game that 22 people running on the field and Germans win in the end", has been wrongly informed for half a century. There are still some people there looking for the answer. It’s inquired that not the ancients but a English man born in the 60s of the last century, the famous football star Jari Gary Lineker, 80s’ king on the field with superb technique and noble morality who had influenced a generation of football fans; he thought highly of Germans’ character and tenacious team spirit. No terminating whistle, no defeat. Such kind of competitive style and their football spirit gave birth to the definition of modern football that “game of running and playing”. Exactly speaking, football is the game that 22 people running and playing. Running and playing is the key. That is to say, the players give full play to exquisite technique to win the final victory on the basis of running. It tells us that the first priority should be given to change of football consciousness and improve team’s running capacity and playing technique while running in order to make China’s football ascend the forefront in Asia and the world, achieving the national dream of powerful football. There must be a historical achievement.

Running is the Foundation of Winning in Modern Football

Football Players Must Firstly be Qualified Runners

Football has always been called the game of running and playing in Europe. It’s a combat in which a team can only win with more goals through collective and organized offense and defense. Modern football put the training of positive running capacity in the first place. Except goalkeepers(with a running distance of 5.2km), each professional player needs to run about 1000m in average, even 12000m in a 7140-square meter pitch. Of course, different players have different running capacity. Midfielders should run for 13km(that of forward, advanced guard and rear guard should respectively reach to 10.9km, 10.6km and 10.1km). [7]. Most of the world-class soccer players can run over 13km. David Beckham from UK ran for 16.1km in the 90-minute trial against Greece in 2002 World Cup. Alger Robben has run for 42.7km with average 10km in each round in four tense competitions of Division A League Matches of Germany Football. He has run for 55.243km in five rounds at the age of 30, far more than a marathon; while Chinese player Sun Ke from Shuntian Club of Jiangsu ran 13000m in
2012/2013 season. Before which, only Zheng Zhi once ran 12000-13000m in the Champions League, which is rare in China. However, the overall team fitness and running capacity of Chinese team ranks tenth in Asia. According to the 2011 AFC statistics, Chinese team ran only average 104865m each round, 16677m less than South Korea, 14189m and 14132m less than Australia and Japan respectively, even 7479m less than India with 7.13% gap (Table 2) [8].

Figure 1. 16 teams’ running distance in 2011 Asian Cup (note: † means overtime, — means average running distance each round, ---- means margin between Chinese team and others; original date comes from AFC statistics.)

Table 2. Chinese team ranked the tenth, far behind South Korea and India in the Asian Cup in 2011.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chinese average running distance (meter)</th>
<th>South Korea Margin (meter)%</th>
<th>(2) Australia Margin (meter)%</th>
<th>(3) Japan Margin (meter)%</th>
<th>(4) India Margin (meter)%</th>
<th>Analysis of running results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>104865 U U/P</td>
<td>-16677/15.90</td>
<td>-14189/13.53</td>
<td>-14132/13.48</td>
<td>-7479/7.13</td>
<td>Chinese team run 6km less than Indian team and 14km less than the South Korea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the review of FIFA statistics: as for professional football players, their full-court running capacity should be accumulated in formal races. The average running distance should reach to 10000 meters and that of elites should be up to 12000m;

But it’s rare for our professional players running 10000m. There are even players can not run 3000m and can only manage to compete; due to energy deficiency or excessive overdraft, Chinese football team often lose in the second half and even lose scores. The overall physical overdraft is the main cause. As a result, it’s necessary to change the guiding ideology of training and strictly implement management for players to improve comprehensively their consciousness towards running and playing the ball, fling themselves into physical training.

**Players Should have Physical Strength and Speed Ability**

In football pitch, the players need to pass, intercept and properly grasp opportunities to transfer the ball while running in tense competition. If they don’t have instantaneous speed,
especially for forwards responsible for offense, there won’t be second time once the opportunity of breaking the goal slips; thus a professional player not only can continue to run but also have speed of 100m sprint. That is to say, he needs amazing absolute velocity to win the game. The world-class great forwards such as Robben from Dutch, Walcott from Arsenal, etc., whose absolute speed of 100m sprint can against Bolt, the world fastest printer with similar speed capacity(Table 3) [9].

Table 3. Statistics of word-class forwards’ running speed and 100m sprinters’ absolute speed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>athletes</th>
<th>Robben</th>
<th>Walcott</th>
<th>Bolt</th>
<th>Comparison of results</th>
<th>margin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Running speed</td>
<td>Running speed</td>
<td>Running speed</td>
<td>Bolt: Robben</td>
<td>Robben (second)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100m sprint</td>
<td>100m sprint</td>
<td>100m sprint</td>
<td>Bolt: Walcott</td>
<td>Walcott (second)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kilometer/hour</td>
<td>37.6</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>1:0.84</td>
<td>0.15 (second)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.73</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>9.58</td>
<td>1:0.81</td>
<td>0.50 (second)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: 1. running speed is general persistent endurance; 2. Bolt’s running speed is estimation; 3. 100m result is the best total of points.

Football players’ average running distance each round reflects players and the team’s accumulated energy reserves. The world-class famous forwards Robben and Walcott’s running speed reach to 37.6km/h and 35.7km/h respectively [10]. Their speed is close to or reach to world-class sprinters’, and even close to the world fastest sprinter Bolt’s speed and instantaneous velocity [10]. Running capacity is the basic ability of football. Bolt once boasted that he wanted to change his profession and became a fantastic football player. It’s credible. In the final of 100m sprint in 2008 Beijing Olympics, there is no one could be his opponents after 30 meters. He left all opponents behind and rushed to cross the finish line, flapping his chest. And he left the image of flying man in hundreds of millions Chinese people and the world. He definitely can be a football elite through strengthening training and team work training based on his first-class running speed and basic technique formed in teenage (but now is too late). It reflects to some extent that football is the game of running and playing the ball, which is recognized as worldwide definition.

Players Must Have Personal and Team-Playing Skills

As for a strong football team, in addition to good personal playing skills that traveling, passing, dribbling the ball under normal or special conditions, the players should also be able to work closely with the team with skilled organized offense and strict defensive technique and tactics. It’s must be under the premise of advanced football technique in the modern concept of running and playing the ball. Being good at running is the foundation of modern football.

Generally speaking, technique of football includes dribbling skills (including comprehensive skills of speed with the ball and reacting speed of breaking through without the ball), shooting and free kick, passing and heading, etc.. Some technical features are summarized as following:

1) Dribbling skills: football stars all have delicate footwork with strong sense of ball. Ronaldinho from Brazil looks like the ball sticking on his feet while dribbling, and he becomes elves of Samba while passing the ball. Dribbling, breaking through, passing or shooting are finished at one go.
(2) Shooting technique: it’s the key to win. Shooting requires precise force and accuracy of footwork. The forward Robben is the master of internal breaking through and shooting the goal.

(3) Positioning free kick: Robben and Ronaldinho from Brazil have strong shooting force with high accuracy in placement, especially Ronaldinho from Brazil. His run-up free kick fully relies on strong explosive force of the crush and shot in arch, becoming a world-leading technique.

(4) Pass skills: on matter pass in front field or return pass in back court, stability and accuracy are necessary. Forwards like Robben, Messi and Ronaldinho have best pass and assist technique in the world with the best placement; Messi’s pass has strong overall consciousness, creativity and assist skills. He is good at cooperate closely with team mates; their both feet are playing masters. No matter the left of the right, they can help or create an accurate pass or unexpected placement kick.

(5) Heading: it’s a significant skill. Heading is not only used for shooting but also intercepting punt, creating passes in different direction or assist for team mates. It usually helps to break the deadlock on the field and score a wonderful goal, creating opportunities for winning.

In short, the technique and tactics of football are the important links. Thus it can be concluded that running is the material base of physical reserves, and technique of the key means of winning.

Conclusions

In order to achieve the first goal that ascending top in Asia and qualifying for the World Cup, Chinese football can not just rely on the input of “modern football idea” but needs to strengthen the management for the leadership and the led of football, which should be the first priority. The decentralization of football is exactly for better organization, plan and implementation to correctly implement the plan. If the guiding ideology deviates from the target, the officials’ wrong ideas will inevitably cause unhealthy practice, no abiding by the law and the rules. Due to the overlapping institutions, even the physical test can not be carried out before new seasons. Some players who cannot reach the 3000-meter running distance are still forced to participate, leading to the chaos of football management and getting half the result with twice the effort. Therefore, current leaders of football should be well-behaved, if not, even issue repeatedly will not work[11]. In a tour of different occasions, Xi Jinping quoted Confucian dictum to warn politicians to act impartially and set an example. One’s behaviors conforming to his words can achieve decent physical education and management.

References


[8] Zhou Meifang (the author). Statistics and analysis of original data according to figure 1.


[10] Baidu. Robben’s speed VS Bolt’s. Note: Bolt’s running speed is obtained by experts’ projection based on his 9.58s. www.sniews.ned.cet.cet./yds1