

Original Paper

Thoughts and Targeted Initiatives for the Nurturing of Youth

Football Reserve Talents in China

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Received: February 6, 2023

Accepted: March 1, 2023

Online Published: March 3, 2023

doi:10.22158/wjer.v10n2p1

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/wjer.v10n2p1>

Abstract

In order to strengthen the foundation for the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents, a systematic review of the current ideas on the development of Chinese youth football reserve talents is conducted, and based on this, a targeted response is derived from it. The study concludes that the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents should be based on the country and the world in a hierarchical and directional manner, with emphasis on the integration of the excellent Chinese traditional culture at the primary school level and the absorption of outstanding foreign achievements and experience at the secondary school level, and the promotion of three types of policy tools, namely the supply side, the demand side and the environment side, to form a protective synergy for the cultivation of youth football reserve talents, so as to build an effective and long-term development strategy that will benefit the present and the future. The aim is to speed up the construction of a reserve pool of Chinese youth football talents, improve the international competitiveness and influence of Chinese football, and contribute to the early realisation of the Chinese football dream.

Keywords

Chinese youth football, reserve talents cultivation, development thoughts and methods

1. Introduction

As the number one sport in the world today, football is a sport with far-reaching influence and is favoured by countries around the globe. However, as the world's most populous country with the second largest economy, China's long absence from the world's major football tournaments is undoubtedly a major omission from the global football development landscape. In order to strengthen

the competitiveness of Chinese football, the General Office of the State Council, under the auspices of President Xi Jinping, issued the “Overall Programme for the Reform and Development of Chinese Football” in March 2015, which clearly sets out the specific task of “promoting the growth of youth football talents on a large scale”, which indicates that China has now elevated the development of youth football talent to a national strategic level, making it an important part of achieving China’s goal of becoming a strong sporting nation and the dream of Chinese football, which has undoubtedly provided a strong incentive for the overall improvement of Chinese football.

However, Chinese football, after all, has weak roots and requires a rational approach to the allocation of available resources in order to effectively promote the development of China’s youth football reserves. Therefore, at a time when there is a great hope for the development of Chinese youth football reserve talents, it is more important to think rationally about it and to clarify the development elements that should be considered at the moment and to take targeted initiatives to ensure that youth football reserve talents are continuously transported to the Chinese football talent pool, in order to improve the competitive level of Chinese football and strengthen the foundation of youth football foundation (Hu et al., 2016).

In previous studies, few academic studies have taken Chinese traditional culture, world modern football technology and multidimensional policy guarantee as the main content. Therefore, this study starts from the above three aspects, first names the thoughts that should be held in the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents, and then explores the targeted measures for the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents in the future on the basis of these thoughts. This will be a theoretical breakthrough and practical innovation of the existing research on the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents.

2. Current Thinking on the Cultivation of Youth Football Reserve Talents in China

The Chinese youth football reserve talent development system is itself an “organization by others”, the design and implementation of which at the top level can have a profound impact on the development of Chinese football as a whole (Li P et al., 2022). At the same time, the youth football reserve talent development system is an internal “self-organization” that can effectively design and regulate itself in response to crises, a design and regulation that is rooted in the uniqueness of the vertical structure and the complexity of the horizontal extension of the Chinese school hierarchy.

2.1 Changing the Direction of Primary School Football Reserve Training in the Context of National Culture

The healthy development of football cannot be achieved without a high-quality and locally relevant football culture. In China, the rich and excellent traditional culture that has been developed over 5,000 years of history is the basis for the developing of a fusion of national cultural confidence and football improvement. Based on the concept that football starts with children, China needs to integrate good traditional culture into football training at primary school level, so that a new Chinese football culture

rooted in good traditional culture can be derived from the heritage of, and Chinese football players with high level football skills, and good cultural heritage can be nurtured from the source. Therefore, by selecting the representatives of Chinese traditional culture who can match the teaching of football, and by incorporating the unique philosophy, wisdom, spirit and temperament of excellent traditional culture into the formation of students' football skills and personality, we will have the opportunity to produce a large number of young reserve football talents with Chinese characteristics.

2.2 Secondary School Football Talent Development Needs to be Guided by the Laws of Talent Development and Learn from Foreign Experience

Talent development itself is an internal "self-organization, with secondary school talent development being independent in its own right, and secondary school youth football talent development being able to plan and regulate itself in the process of reform and stimulation. However, as every country in the world is part of a chain of global football development, it is difficult for any system of youth football development system outside the chain to "stand alone". Faced with the complex and individualistic system of secondary school youth football talent development system, China's secondary school youth football reserve talent development at secondary school level should be based on an open macro framework, with a global perspective and rational reference, and through a dissipative structure to provide targeted guidance to each segment of the system, so as to form a "wave" of secondary school youth football talent in a variety of fields. The phenomenon of the "emergence" of youth football talent in a wide range of area.

2.3 To Ensure the Long-Term Healthy Development of Youth Football with the Linkage of Policy Tools

The development of youth football in China, as a long-term systemic project, is now moving from "incremental" to "qualitative", and the need for youth football reserve talent is becoming increasingly urgent, requiring stable and appropriate macro policies. The choice of appropriate policy instruments is an effective means of aligning development objectives with policy implementation, but no matter how well-designed a single category of policy instrument is, there are often multiple linkages between the objectives to be achieved, and new contradictions may arise between the different affected in the original pattern. Therefore, in addition to a single effective individual policy tool, it is important to integrate the internal driving force of youth football talent cultivation with the macro guiding force of the government from a high level, and to provide a strong and supportive supporting policy solution for all levels of society, so as to develop a sound policy system for youth football reserve talent cultivation in China and promote youth football talent cultivation. The policy system will be unified and rationalized.

3. Targeted Initiatives for the Future Cultivation of Chinese Youth Football Reserve Talents

Only by constantly trying to give an all-round answer to the development direction of China's youth football reserve talent cultivation with Chinese characteristics, can we make clear the development direction of China's youth football reserve talent cultivation and its position in the field of world

football competition. Only by grasping the essence and law of the development of Chinese football and clarifying the development direction of the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents can we construct the targeted measures for the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents which are suitable for the needs of China's national conditions. As mentioned above, the cultivation of Chinese youth soccer reserve talents should be influenced by high-quality traditional Chinese culture in primary school, and learn from the experience of youth soccer reserve talents cultivation in foreign developed soccer powers in middle school. Besides, comprehensive policies and measures should be adopted to ensure the smooth cultivation of Chinese youth soccer reserve talents. The above ideas can not only provide prescriptions for practical problems, Moreover, it also helps to update the cognition of Chinese football personnel on the reality of the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents, and provides a new idea for the next development measures to update the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents.

3.1 Starting with Children: Integrating Quality Traditional Culture into Modern Football Training

Football training classes and daily physical education classes are an important way for Chinese primary school students to participate in football training. As a vehicle for primary school football training, classroom teaching is an important vehicle for integrating quality traditional culture into modern football training (Liu et al., 2021). Educators need to deepen the reform of primary school football education with the aim of improving football skills and deepening traditional cultural heritage by introducing quality traditional Chinese cultural content and concepts into the curriculum specifically designed for primary school football education. For example, the "Five Educations", which are based on virtue, intellect, physical fitness, aesthetics and work, and the fine traditions of Confucianism, which are based on benevolence, righteousness, ritual, wisdom and faith, are highly representative and can be integrated into school physical education in line with the strategic goal of developing football talent with Chinese characteristics.

Taking the Chinese tradition of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and work education and the Confucian tradition of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and confidence as examples, in the daily football teaching process, firstly, at the artefact level, the two types of excellent traditional culture are expressed in the form of artefacts on the In the football field. Some representative cultural sculptures and cultural instruments that are useful for the presentation of the two types of quality traditional cultural symbols are appropriately placed, so that the cultural symbols are embedded in the football training environment and the children can improve their football skills in an environment where the cultural representations are particularly obvious. Secondly, at the spiritual level, it is important to fully play its own regulatory role, to make appropriate adjustments to the planning of primary school football education, to change the traditional way of teaching primary school football, to actively adopt a ritual process system of teaching in accordance with the two kinds of quality traditional culture, break the shackles of the conventional process of football education, and carry out football education teaching activities, which will enable the children not only experience quality

traditional culture through football but also to improve their football skills and develop their interest in football while appreciating traditional culture, so as to cultivate both cultural heirs and football talents. Finally, in terms of the final evaluation, it is necessary to redesign the evaluation objectives of the course based on the cultivation objectives and the curriculum. In this study, we have designed a highly relevant assessment form, as shown in Table 1, based on the “five disciplines” of moral, intellectual, physical, aesthetic and work education and the “five constants” of benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and trust in the Confucian tradition. The aim is to test the effects of integrating quality traditional culture into modern football training, effectively combining it with both the material and spiritual dimensions.

Table 1. Integration Course Assessment Form

Five-Year Assessment Syllabus	Assessment content	Assessment methods
Moral Education	Awareness of the “Five Permutations” culture	“Quiz and examination on the “Five Permutations
Intellectual Development	Understanding of the culture of sports football knowledge	Football Sports Quiz and Exam
Sports	Improvement of physical function	Physical fitness and athletic ability test
Aesthetic Education	The initial establishment of a healthy aesthetic	Closing “P5” Football Reflections Speech
Labour and Education	Initial mastery of football skills	Football Performance

3.2 Bending the Curve in Talent Development: Learning from Youth Talent Development Measures in World Football Powerhouses

While European countries are currently at the forefront of the world football scene, their Asian neighbors, Japan and South Korea, are undoubtedly ahead of China in terms of football development, despite their geographical proximity to China. Based on this, this study selects representative football powerhouses in Europe and Asia, namely France, Germany, Japan and South Korea, and compares their training philosophies, training institutions, competition models and training pathways in comparison, as shown in Table 2, with the aim of providing mirror support for the development of youth football reserve talents at the secondary school level in China.

Table 2. Comparison of Youth Football Reserve Talents Cultivation in Different Countries

country	Cultivation idea	Training institution	Competition mode	Culture path
France	Attach importance to the cultivation of civic consciousness, cognitive ability, competition ability and physical and mental quality	The school system and the French Football Association	School competitions and club competitions	Amateur football club → junior high school with football characteristics → elite football school → National Football Academy, professional club youth training Center
Germany	Happy, social, team football	German Football Association and German government departments, clubs, schools, etc	Professional club competitions and amateur club competitions coexist with age-group regional competitions	From the fun, savvy, attack and defense team consciousness, professional football training, high intensity training 5 levels in turn according to the progression of age
Japan	Culture and football attach equal importance to football personality education	Joint media agency of Japan Football Association and Japan Sport Association	The school competition system intersects with the professional club echelon competition	The training mode of “walking training system” coexists and interweaves with the campus-level youth training and club youth training
South Korea	Develop learning football players	The Korea Football Association under the Korea Sports Association leads the management	Youth football leagues coexist and intersect with club age group echelon leagues	Youth football, professional football club and football school trinity training

Based on the above table, this study elaborates on the learning outcomes that Chinese youth football reserve talent cultivation should achieve at the secondary school level should achieve in terms of cultivation philosophy, cultivation platform (cultivation institution and cultivation path) and competition model.

In terms of talent development, it is important to pay attention to the overall development of students, focusing on comprehensive quality training, focusing on improving young people's football skills, but also taking into account the academic culture and physical and mental health development of young people, so as not to lose sight of each other. In China, secondary school students are under great academic pressure, and the opportunity cost of time is not to be underestimated. If time is arbitrarily allocated to football training, academic performance to drop to the point where they give up their studies and switch to football, neither of which is a good idea. Neither of these is the original purpose of football preparation at secondary school level. Therefore, the cultivation of Chinese youth football reserve talents at the secondary school level should be done with both football training and academic performance, and both hands should be strong, so as to educate people with culture and educate people with football, which can promote the cultural achievement of young people, but also ensure the amount of football training required at this age, and strive to cultivate excellent youth football reserve talents with both moral and physical talents (Wu et al., 2022).

In terms of the cultivation platform, we advocate the joint cultivation of "government-school-family-society-media" to create a broad platform conducive to the cultivation of young football talents. The government should play a leading role and do a good job in the top-level design, high-level promotion, financial support and facilities for the cultivation of young football reserve football talents; schools, as the grassroots unit and the main body for the cultivation of young football reserve talents at the secondary school level, should make reasonable planning for the curriculum of students participating in football training, and try to promote the cultural and physical progress of students at the same time; families should provide financial and emotional support for students who have certain talents and are interested in participating in football training. Families should provide financial and emotional support to students who have some talent and are interested in taking part in football training; society can create good social conditions and external support for the development of young reserve football talents through various channels, such as organizing private tournaments, providing financial support and donating facilities; the media can provide oriented publicity on the progress of the nurturing of young reserve football talents, actively report on the latest developments in youth football, and praise young football players for their success. The media can provide oriented publicity on the development of youth reserve football talent, actively report on the latest developments in young football and commend the success of youth football players to create a good momentum for the development of young football talents (Chen et al., 2023). In general, the government, schools, families, society and the media should join forces to provide all-round support for the development of young football reserves and create a broad platform for the development of the

five-in-one.

In terms of the competition model, a scientific secondary school football competition system should be established, the functional nature of the secondary school football league and its importance to the cultivation of talent should be clarified, and the size of the league and the level of players included in it should be favorably expanded on the existing basis, not only to provide a platform and circulation path for players with more outstanding performance at secondary school level, but also to provide a sufficient number of quality competition opportunities for ordinary players (Ludic, 2018), which has the advantage of this is that it will allow players to participate in different levels of competition during their school years, not only to get more opportunities to play, but also to play against teams of different levels, thus gaining more experience in the game, thus promoting the emergence of a large number of football reserve talents, expanding the number and scope of selections for clubs at all levels of the league and national teams at all ages, and aiming to build the Chinese Secondary School Football League into The league will be an important base for the development of young football talents.

3.3 Rational Application of Policy Tools: Supply-Side, Demand-Side and Environment-Side Promotion on all Fronts

Policy instruments are the methods used by governments to translate policy ideas into concrete actions to achieve policy goals (Zhao & Su, 2007). This study draws on Rothwell and Zegveld's classification of policy texts to develop a theoretical analytical framework that classifies the policy instruments for youth football reserve talent development into three categories: supply-side, demand-side and environmental-side (Roy & Walter, 1985). The first is the supply-side policy tool, which refers to the process of youth football talent nurturing, guided by important national policies, and the government's effective support through various aspects such as policy support, financial expenditure and venue facilities to strengthen the youth football reserve talent nurturing work, which is an important guarantee for the sustainable development of youth football in China. Secondly, the demand-side policy tool refers to the government's efforts to stimulate the internal driving force of youth football reserve talent cultivation through market-oriented and third-party participation, and actively promote the cultivation of youth football reserve talent and the realization of the value of youth football career. Finally, the environmental policy tool refers to the formation of an institutional mechanism and social environment conducive to the cultivation of young school football talents through strong administrative means by the government.

Supply, demand and environment are three different types of policy instruments, each with its own advantages and disadvantages (Roy & Walter, 1985). Therefore, they need to work together to promote the development of youth football talent in China, as shown in Figure 1, in order to maximize the benefits of their respective policies. On the supply side, the government can provide funding to youth football reserve talents to help them solve their financial difficulties in the training process; provide adequate football equipment and field facilities to create a better training environment for training youth football reserve talents; and develop age-appropriate football training courses to help youths

improve their football skills and overall literacy. On the demand side, while improving the quality of local youth football training, increase the introduction of outstanding foreign coaches to bring cutting-edge ideas and fresh blood into Chinese youth football training; increase market awareness: Increase social awareness and demand for youth football reserve talent training by promoting and publicizing the importance and value of youth football reserve talent training; be good at sports procurement or service outsourcing to improve the efficiency of talent development services and market resource allocation through the introduction of social and market resources. On the environmental side, it is prudent to establish the strategic objectives of youth football reserve talent cultivation and not to change them at will, so as to avoid the unwarranted waste of social resources caused by the lack of continuity between the preceding and subsequent policies; sound laws and regulations related to youth football reserve talent development should be established in a reasonable manner and adjusted in real time according to the specific analysis of the situation in the process of youth football career development. In short, supply-based policies focus on the supply of elements directly related to the development of youth football reserves, demand-based policies focus on guiding the demand for youth football reserve talent development from all sectors of society, and environmental policies focus on improving the environmental conditions for youth football reserve talent development. This is the only way to support the development of youth football talent in China in a long-term and efficient manner.

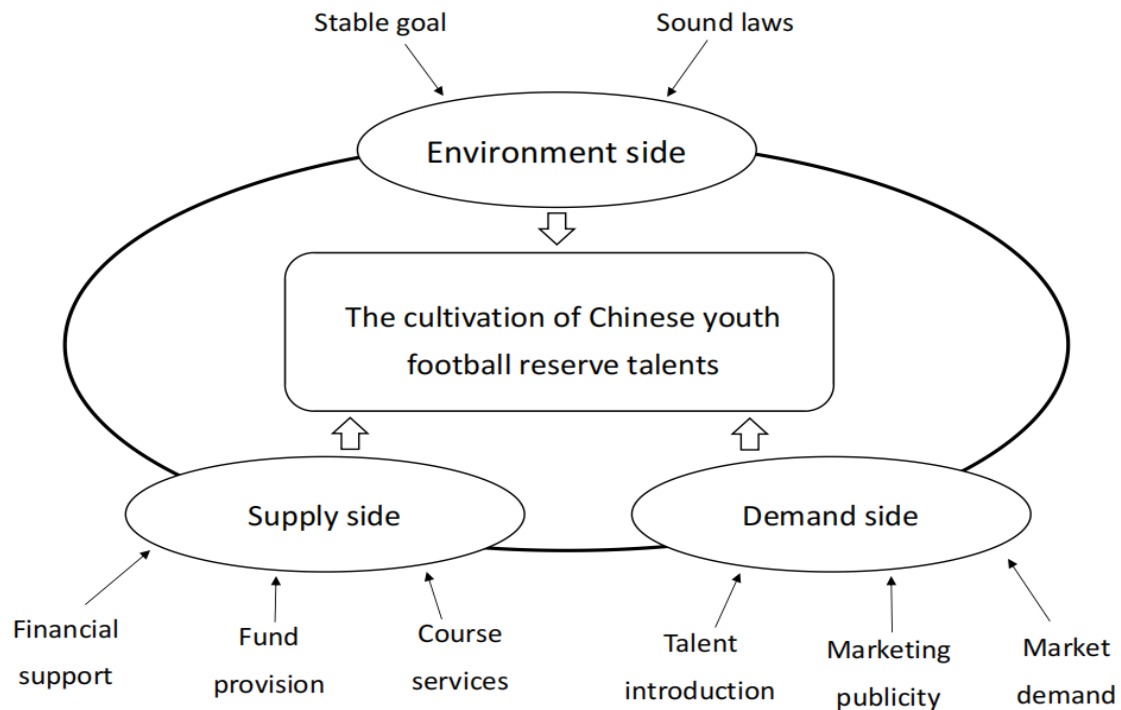


Figure 1. The Policy Support Path Diagram for the Cultivation of Chinese Youth Football Reserve Talents

4. Conclusion

As an indispensable part of the Chinese youth and even the entire Chinese football career, the training of Chinese youth football reserve talents has become a key part of the process of improving the competitive level of Chinese football. From the primary school level, it is important to play a role in promoting the quality traditional Chinese culture; from the secondary school level, it is important to look at the world and make use of all the favourable factors that are conducive to the training of young football reserves to achieve the desired outcome; from the policy measures, it is important to build a multi-dimensional policy operating community with the aim of maximizing the effectiveness of policy tools. In short, it is important to clarify the proper way of thinking about the cultivation of youth football reserve talents in China, to develop a series of targeted development initiatives with Chinese characteristics, to consolidate the talent pool of Chinese football, to enhance the international competitiveness of Chinese football, thus improving the competitiveness and influence of Chinese sports in international sports, and to promote the implementation of the construction of a strong sports nation.

Acknowledgement

Fund Project: This research has been supported by the Key Project of Chinese Ministry of Education during the 14th Five-Year Plan Period (Title: Research on the bottleneck and collaborative governance of the construction of Chinese campus football characteristic schools in the new era; Serial number: DLA210371).

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