

Incentive actions at the Football Academy

Paweł Jędrzejewski – Coordinator coach

The children starting their adventure with the Football Academy do not only improve their motor skills and football skills through all proposed actions included in the scope of the training but, first of all, they develop their "social competences" which will make it easier for them to find their place in the surrounding reality.

Children's football is associated with a group of players having fun and running with the ball at their feet, taking shots at the goal or playing a match. Without looking for any philosophy or deliberate actions from people managing the training process - these are football classes for the youngest, greatly simplified.

The well-thought-out concept of children's football education, apart from "purely" football skills, should assume the development of personality and mental features.

The ability to deal with successes and failures, knowledge about relevant patterns of behavior or experience in working in a group and in daily interpersonal relationships should be as important in the organized football trainings as dribbling or passing the ball.

The Football Academy training system in its details determines the principles for improving the participants' "Ego", in motivating, customized and gradually introduced deliberate actions.

Even the youngest group, which was named the "Beckham" group after the famous English player, uses the so-called incentive boards. Their main task is to affect the children's behavior, their proper approach to training and high level of participation during classes. Each player receives a specially prepared sheet on which he sticks a sticker received from the coach after a completed training. The stickers are given only to those children who earned them due to their behavior. After filling in the entire board, the winner receives a special prize thus meeting their internal need of appreciation which includes the feeling of competence and effectiveness in operation.



Another form of motivating players to a better behavior and discipline during trainings which we introduce in subsequent stages of education at the Football Academy (the "Owen" and "Lampard" groups) are the so-called card and medal systems.



The card system is aimed at motivating the children to a better behavior referring to the principle "training as match". The point is for the players to become used to the fact that bad and unsportsmanlike behavior is inadvisable. A yellow card, just like in a match, is a warning, while the red card is the final penalty and forbids the participation in further training, also in its most important point, namely the match.

The medal system, in turn, aims at supporting the children to contribute more to the trainings. In connection with the negative card system (penalties), there needs to be a positive equivalent, namely a system of prizes. The medals are awarded once a month in the three most important categories for the children: the model of behavior, the model of progress and the model of fair play. The medals are challenge medals which means that each awarded child returns the medal after one month, and the medal is again given to another winner. Apart from the medal itself, the winner's name is published at the Football Academy's website as a person distinguished in a given month. The medal system, due to the children's age and their awareness, is not used in the youngest group.

Due to the described incentive actions in subsequent stages of the Football Academy training, we do not have greater problems with maintaining the proper discipline during trainings. All listed elements of a comprehensive training also inspire the players to develop and work individually. The motivation to become better and better is greater when the goal to be achieved is realistic and truly useful.

Let us remember, however, that no boards or card and medal systems will replace the parent's work with the child. The children become similar to the adults and look for authorities among them. The best motivation factor for the children's development and proper behavior is the adults and our responses and behavior in the surrounding reality.