

Technical – Tactical Radius

Techniques are the tools to execute tactics. Fitness is the engine that provides the physical ability to execute technique and tactics. Psychology controls the emotions during a match and allows players to think tactically. These four components are the building blocks of the game. All of them are important and must be developed in players throughout their soccer careers. Yet technique and tactics go hand in glove.

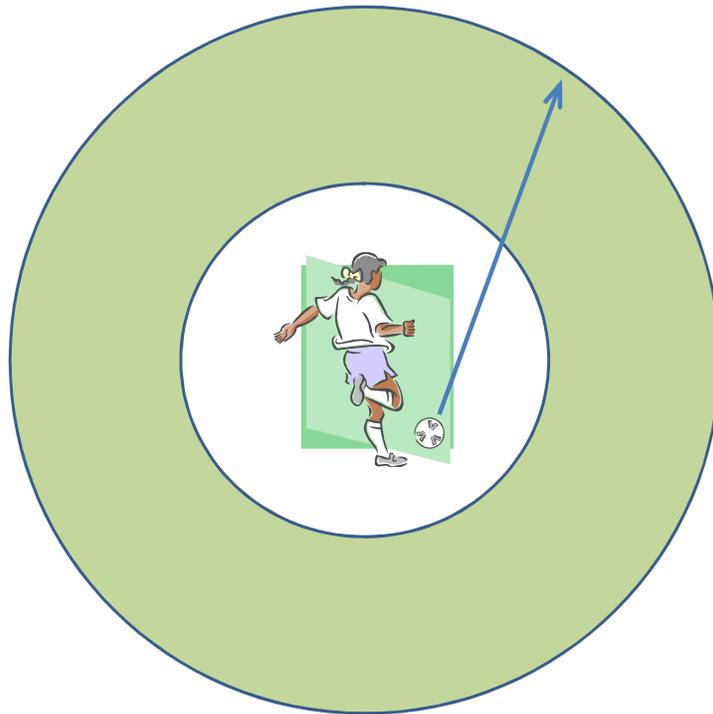


Figure 1 Technical-Tactical Radius

A player can only execute the tactics that he or she has the skill to pull off. If the best tactical option in a moment in the game is to cross the ball to the far post, but the player with the ball does not have the skill to make that pass then another tactical option must be chosen. No matter how well a player understands the game the tactical options chosen in an instant in the game are dictated by the techniques the player possesses. Every player has a technical-tactical radius.

The radius is the effective range around a player in which he or she can execute a technique. How wide the radius is will be impacted by age, quality of technique, power, tactical experience and awareness, vision, technical speed and quick thinking. It is expected and hoped that as a player matures, chronologically and soccer experientially, the technical-tactical radius will expand. As that process evolves technique becomes skill.

Skill is the tactical application of technique under pressure of time, space and opponent in a match. In a sense it is using the right tool for the right situation in a match. To this end coaches must be sure to place a greater emphasis on teaching technique before tactics. Keep the horse in front of the cart so to speak. Particularly with preteen players the majority of time spent in training sessions should be on technique. Those techniques must be taught in game-like activities that should be fun for the kids. The fun provides the motivation to learn new skills. Players in the U12 and U14 age groups have learned to a good extent the 'how to' of technique and are ready to learn the why, when and where of the use of those techniques.

Players in the U16 and U19 age groups will continue their development within all four components of soccer. As they do their techniques will truly become ball skills.