**What are the key skills in football?**

I analysed my performance in football. Within football there are many key skills and basic tactics which are required to ensure there is a good overall performance in sport. The main generic skills needed within football for outfield players include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strength</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shooting</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossing</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dribbling – right footed</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dribbling – left footed</td>
<td></td>
<td>weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heading</td>
<td></td>
<td>weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleying</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercepting</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing – right footed</td>
<td>strength</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing – left footed</td>
<td></td>
<td>weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st touch</td>
<td></td>
<td>strength</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Good tactical awareness within football is also crucial in games, and can often be the difference between a team winning, to losing a game. The main generic tactics in football include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attacking</th>
<th>Free kicks</th>
<th>Screening the pass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Defending</td>
<td>Positioning</td>
<td>Closing down players</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set Pieces</td>
<td>Playing out from the back</td>
<td>Closing the angle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counter attack</td>
<td>Formation</td>
<td>Off the ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corners</td>
<td>Blocking off the line</td>
<td>Goal kicks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Which key skills and techniques are my strengths in football and how they affect the game?**

- I identified my strengths as shooting; crossing tackling; intercepting; volleying; dribbling, passing right footed and first touch
- I believe I do these things well as I have a good technique when shooting which allows me to get into good positions in the box and I can connect with any ball passed to me and direct it toward the goal. (this is classed as a complex skill as an attacker needs to be able to control any ball they receive in a goal scoring position and direct the ball towards the goal)
- Communication is another one of my strengths, I am able to communicate well with my fellow forward or forwards if there are three of us in the front line. I also communicate well with the midfield which is important as I need to be in a position to move forward with the ball into goal scoring positions.
• Passing to my fellow forwards or to a midfielder if they are nearer goal than me is one of my strengths as I am able to read the game and look round for team members who are in a better goal scoring position than I am.

• Lastly, my footwork is good enough to mean that I can move quickly and with balance along and around the goal (this is classed as a simple skill as footwork and moving quickly is a skill used in a number of sports).

Which key skills are my weaknesses in football and how they affect the game?

• I also identified my weaknesses. These were dribbling, passing left footed and heading

• Passing with my left foot is also another one of my weaknesses. I often can’t get height or as much distance on the kick with my weaker foot as my stronger one. This means that I cannot start counter attacks quickly if the ball starts on my weaker foot. I can only pass short. This often means that I put more pressure on my team mates as if I’m being closed down by a player and don’t have the chance to switch to my stronger foot, I only have the option of playing short. By being able to play long with my weaker foot, I’d be able to clear the ball quickly reducing pressure, and possibly starting an attack.

• Ensuring I have a good set position when the ball comes into me from a corner is essential to giving me the best chance of scoring. Often the ball will come in towards my head and as my heading is one of my weaknesses this may prevent me from scoring. This is due to the fact the set position provides a balanced position; this means there is more chance of my connecting with the ball and scoring (this is classed as an open skill).

Methods to improve my own performance in football

I am going to specifically target two of my weaknesses for improvement. These two weaknesses are passing and dribbling with my weaker foot and heading.

I have chosen these specifically as I believe they have the biggest detrimental effect on the game, and on my team. By improving my passing with my weaker foot, it will improve the general attacking and the counter attacking within the team, as it means we can move the ball up the pitch quicker, and with more accuracy. Improvement in heading will mean that when the ball comes in from a corner I am more able to connect with the ball and either head it towards one of my team members or head the ball towards the goal and score.

Improving on these aspects of my game also improves the team’s confidence and morale, and both increases the attacking chances we have and increases the chance of the team scoring in a game.

I have constructed a six-week action plan. This action plan is specifically developed to target my weaknesses, and to improve and to develop these skills. Each training session will be for the duration of one hour, once a week; it will include warm up and a cool down. After drills and practices have been done there will be an opportunity for me to apply what I’ve learnt into a small or full sized game. This will help me transfer the skills to a more realistic, game like situation, providing me with more experience of using the new skills to my full potential. I have selected a certain number of repetitions and sets to complete to fully ensure that I benefit from the plan. The action plan is also specific to my weaknesses and ensures that there is progression throughout the weeks to truly challenge and improve myself, and also a change in drills to ensure that tedium doesn’t take place.
Different types of practice

An example of my action plan is given below

Weakness 1 – passing with the left foot
Weakness 2 – heading
Weakness 3 – dribbling with the left foot

Drill 1 – Weakness 1

My coach will begin by giving me a demonstration and explanation of the correct technique to follow then kicking/passing the ball with either foot. They will then specify the parts of the technique of which allow a player to kick the ball with height and gain distance on their kick and other technique points.

This type of practice is a part practice as the skill is broken down into parts. Each of the parts of the technique of kicking the ball are practiced and then the whole skill is performed. The whole skill being performed is also a type of practice.

I am then going to stand with the ball on the 6-yard line of their box and have a receiver stood around two yards out of the 12-yard line. I am then simply just going to practice kicking the ball to the receiver, focusing on using the correct technique to kick the ball. This type of practice is fixed as it is practicing a specific skill repeatedly practiced in the same way.

The focus in this drill is to simply use the right technique and perform all the right teaching points, and to simply get used to kicking the ball with my left foot. If I am finding the distance too easy to add a progression to the drill then the receiver will move an extra yard further away from me to see if I can continue to get more distance on my kicks, whilst still using the correct technique.

I will perform 20 kicks with my coach at one distance, and if I am finding this too easy, then add in the progression for another 20 kicks. After every 20 kicks I will allow my coach to give me feedback on my technique, such as leaning back more to get my foot further under the ball, and provide my kick with more height.

Drill 1 – Weakness 2

My coach will begin by giving a demonstration and explanation of the correct technique to follow when heading. My coach will specify which part of the head should connect with the ball. He will then tell me the correct position my body should be in in order to successfully connect with the ball when moving. The correct position for heading the ball is connecting with the ball in the middle of the forehead. You must keep your eyes open. If you do not connect with the ball on your forehead but connect with your nose or the top of your head it is going to hurt and as I have done that before I know it hurts which is why I need to practice. When I have got used to heading the ball in a static situation I will progress to jumping to head the ball.

This type of practice is a part practice as the skill is broken down into parts each of the parts of the technique of heading the ball are practiced and then the whole skill is performed. The whole skill being performed is also a type of practice.

Once I have achieved the correct body position and made contact with the ball I will then move on to accurately heading the ball back to the feeder who will be 2 metres away. When I can do this 20 times I will move onto practising with three other people.
This type of practice is fixed as it is practicing a specific skill repeatedly practiced in the same way.

We four people will form a square and one player will throw the ball to me when I am facing him. I will head it to another player which means I will have to direct it to my left. He will catch it and repeat the move. After doing this 4 times we will change direction and do the same heading to the right.

We will then progress to us all being close together and head the ball to one another in a clockwise direction then an anti-clockwise direction. We will then move further apart repeating the same sequence.

The practice then progresses from us starting off in static places to moving around so that I can practice receiving a header and directing one on the move. I will then practice jumping to head the ball as this will reflect what will happen in the game situation.

This type of a practice is a variable practice as the skills are being performed with the feed coming from a variety of positions dependent on where the other members of the group are. This reflects what will happen in the game situation.

Weakness 3 the practices described for weakness 2 can be adapted for weakness 3.

Types of practice

Variable, i.e. the skill is practiced in the range of different situations that could be experienced in a performance.

Altering context of performance

As I progress from week to week my practices will include defenders and attackers playing a more active role in the practices to make the situation more realistic and ensuring that I practice against a good standard of player as the defenders in my team are of a good standard. By practicing against defenders of a good standard this will help me improve my game.

Use of tools to aid evaluation

When I play matches and during my action plan my coach and the assistant coach will do match analysis and analyse my action plan skills to see if I need to modify my action plan to include further skills that I need to improve. I will also ask for any videos that have been made of my matches and will watch these and these will help with improving my drills in my action plan and devising drills for my action plan.
How to measure improvement in skills, techniques and strategies developed

Completion of proficiency awards

The FA runs courses throughout the school holidays in my local area. I could go on one of the courses. I could also contact my local football league club to see if they run any FA courses.

Keeping video diaries, keeping individual logs of performance and monitoring competition results over time.

In monitoring the success of my action plan I have videoed my performance before analysing it. In analysing my performance it is clear to see that after drills were performed my skill levels became more consistent and technique improved.

I was gaining more height and distance on my kicking, as well as greater accuracy. My heading is improving and I have even scored two goals with my head and managed to head the ball to my teammates. I am able to jump up in order to head the ball when it comes in from a corner.

This meant that the attacks would be started quicker, and less pressure was put on my defence. It also put the team in a better positioning in an attacking sense due to by increased ability to switch play with either foot.

Due to the fact I have increased ability to kick with my weaker foot, I am more adaptable, making me a bigger asset to the team. The improved collection of crossed means there is a higher morale in the team, and more confidence in myself. These improvements were due to the repetition of practice of the technique, and the progressions to more game like situations.

I will continue to monitor my performance and keep an individual log for all of the matches that I play over a season and monitor my improvement.

Peer observation

As can be seen from the comments I have made above my team had greater confidence in me as an attacker and they praised me for my efforts. This boosted my confidence and I felt I contributed a great deal to my team’s performance.