

HOW TO PREPARE A TECHNICAL COORDINATION IN A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FOOTBALL ACADEMY?

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ABSTRACT

It's consensual that the sports training provided by clubs must respond to a demanding process of preparation, development and consolidation of a methodological and pedagogical scope. So, we expose the concerns inherent to one of the four dimensions of a Technical Coordination (TC) modulation work in a football training entity, specifically at the level of its conceptualization.

TECHNICAL COORDINATION IN THE STRUCTURE OF A CLUB

A football club, regardless of its size and projection, must display a clear organizational structure. For this, it is essential to have an organization chart that can serve as a reference to the jurisdictional limits of the clubs different hierarchical levels, as well as to understand the roles and responsibilities inherent to each of its sub-structures.

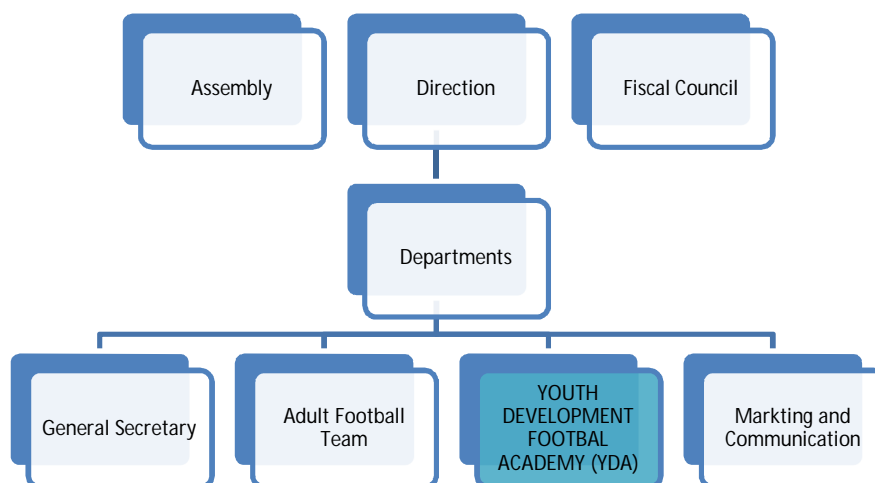


Figure 1 - Example of a simplified organization chart for a sports organization

The club's training department, which we will designate as the **Youth Development Football Academy** acquires its own position in the organization and is directly influenced by the club's objectives, the social context, the available resources, the model to be implemented, the structural and also by the competitive level of the club.

Each club is unique (has its own identity) so the adequacy of the Technical Coordination intervention has to be in harmony with the context. Thus, we suggest that Technical Coordination defines the real dimension and profile of the club.

Table 1: Evaluation criteria for defining the dimension of the Youth Development Football Academy.

Evaluation Criteria's	Dimension of the Youth Development Football Academy		
	Small	Medium	Large
Impact	Local / Regional	Reginal / National	National / International
Adult Team	Does not exist or Amateur	Amateur or semi-professional	Semi-professional or Professional
Space Resources	1 Field	1 or 2 Fields	More than 2 Fields
Competitive Level	Regional	Regional or National	National or Professional
Number of Players	20 a 100	100 a 250	> 250
Players Recruitment	With no recruitment	Regional recruitment	National or international recruitment
Central objective	Playful component / General Formation	General formation or training for income	General formation or training for income (high performance)
Budget	< 10000 euros	10000 a 80000 euros	> 80000 euros

It is important to note that in Portugal, through the *Certification Process of the Portuguese Football Federation* (2018), training clubs can even propose to be a Basic Soccer Training Center, a Soccer School or a Youth Development Academy. The study and analysis of the criteria presented are, in our opinion, important indicators for the selection of the type of club that is intended to be developed in the training area.

COORDINATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The responsibility of the Technical Coordination must be the responsibility of a leader who has a sport experience, who guarantees sensitivity and multidisciplinary knowledge of the sport, academic and/or technical training, fulfilling the qualifications required for a position of this nature and, at the same time, a personality profile that reflects a sense of leadership, relationship skills, commitment and communication skills.

Framed in full respect for the club's general statutes and regulations, the functions of the TC have an organizational, administrative, logistical, communicational, representative and control/evaluation nature.

Table 2: Scopes of intervention by the Technical Coordination

Organizational and Methodological Plan	Administrative Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Philosophy, models and structures • Organization and orientation of resources • Methods and procedures • Dynamics and guiding principles • Application of regulations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracts • Registrations, opinions and records • Information management • Storage / archive • Data base
Logistic Plan	Communication Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resource management • Management of meetings • Coordination of work teams 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication (internal and external) • Dissemination and promotion • Advertising and marketing
Representative Plan	Control and Evaluation Plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Meetings • Participation in Social Events • Sports monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observations of training and competitions • Application of control and evaluation systems

PLANNING AND STRATEGIC OUTLINE OF TECHNICAL COORDINATION

Conceptual planning is an assessment that precedes and directs the action to generate the future and, therefore, increase the capacity to predict it. In this perspective, the knowledge of the club and the strategic outline of the Youth Development Academy are two assumptions adjacent to the preparation of the Technical Coordination that allow defining a relevant assumptions on the set of attitudes, values and beliefs that emerge in the behaviors of people within the institution.

Gathering and analyzing information about the club's identity and its dynamics becomes imperative for the Technical Coordination planning process to be adequate.

Table 3: Informative variables to be collected in the TC preparation process

The Club Identity	The Club Dynamics
Denomination	Departments / Modalities
Foundation (context)	Organization
Location	Number of Members
Symbols	Competitive Plan
Statutes	Teams
Hymm	Players
Figures	Resources (human, space and logistical)
Facts	Club Templates (Training and game)
Relevant Milestones	Sports results
Others	Others

Based on this analysis the Technical Coordination is in a position to clarify, in line with the senior staff of the club, the vocation, mission and objectives of the Youth Development Academy.

Table 4: Constituent elements of the strategy for the Youth Development Football Academy

Vocation	Mission	Objectives
What purpose?	Who we are?	Goals to achieve?
What is it for?	What we do?	What kind of objectives? (short, medium and long term)
	Why do we do what we do?	

This conceptual definition is exposed in a document (physical or digital) which, in turn, is made available to all elements that intervene directly and indirectly in the Academy.

Concomitantly, and for the Technical Coordination to complete its multifactorial analysis, we suggest the application of a SWOT analysis that allows the realization of a diagnosis regarding the existing relationships between the entity's strengths and weaknesses (internal aspects), with the opportunities and threats that are verify in the context in which it is inserted (external aspects).

Another peculiarity in the strategic delineation is the need to establish an effective plan with regard to the orientation and basic monitoring of the club's players.

We highlighted six basic issues that influence strategic guidelines:

- What number and characteristics of players to integrate?
- What is the minimum and maximum limit of training levels and teams to adopt?
- How is the management of players between teams and the dynamics of their transition between the various levels of formation carried out?
- How are the dynamics of acquisition, loan, assignment, sale and dismissal of players processed?
- What methodology to use to accompany the players along the training course and their relationship with the parents?

The answer to these questions identifies the characteristics and policy of the Youth Development Academy, which, directly, will condition the paradigm of technical and methodological intervention at the level of the various levels of training.

In summary form, and since this theme is already framed in the dimension of “design and implementation of a training model” (to be developed in a next article), we present a proposal to adapt the various training stages. Thus, Technical Coordination can choose for a 4 stage model (suitable for basic training centers and football schools) or for a 5 stage model, suitable for entities that invest in training for high performance.

Table 5: Proposed organization of training stages in football

Training Stages in Football				
Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3	Stage 4	Stage 5
Animation	Initiation	Pre-Specialization	Specialization	High Performance
Football 3 Football 5	Football 7	Football 9 Football 11	Football 11	Football 11
Under-6	Unuder-9	Under-13	Under-16	Under-18
Under-7	Under-10	Under-14	Under-17	Under-19
Under-8	Under-11	Under-15	Under-18	
Under-9	Under-12		Under-19	
	Under-13			
Childhood stadium	Pre-pubertal stadium	Pubertal stadium	Post-pubertal stadium	

In order to complete the strategic outline, it is necessary to project the budget that is destined to the club's formation football in order to adapt the TC own intervention in technical, logistical options and operational aspects that will have to be assumed, namely: in the design of salaries, premiums, subsidies and allowances for the various human resources; the maintenance of sports spaces (control, security, cleaning, water, electricity, gas, rents, among others); the acquisition of material and logistical resources; registration of teams, players, coaches and other members of the technical and managerial staff in the respective regional associations; in food; in the costs intrinsic to the competitive participation of the teams (game fees, arbitration fees, fuel, tolls, car rental, among others); and, also, the organization of various activities and events of a technical scope.

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

The successful preparation of the Technical Coordination will strongly affect the future work to be carried out in the Youth Development Academy. Based on this premise, we proposed a set of steps that should be taken in the operationalization of this dimension.

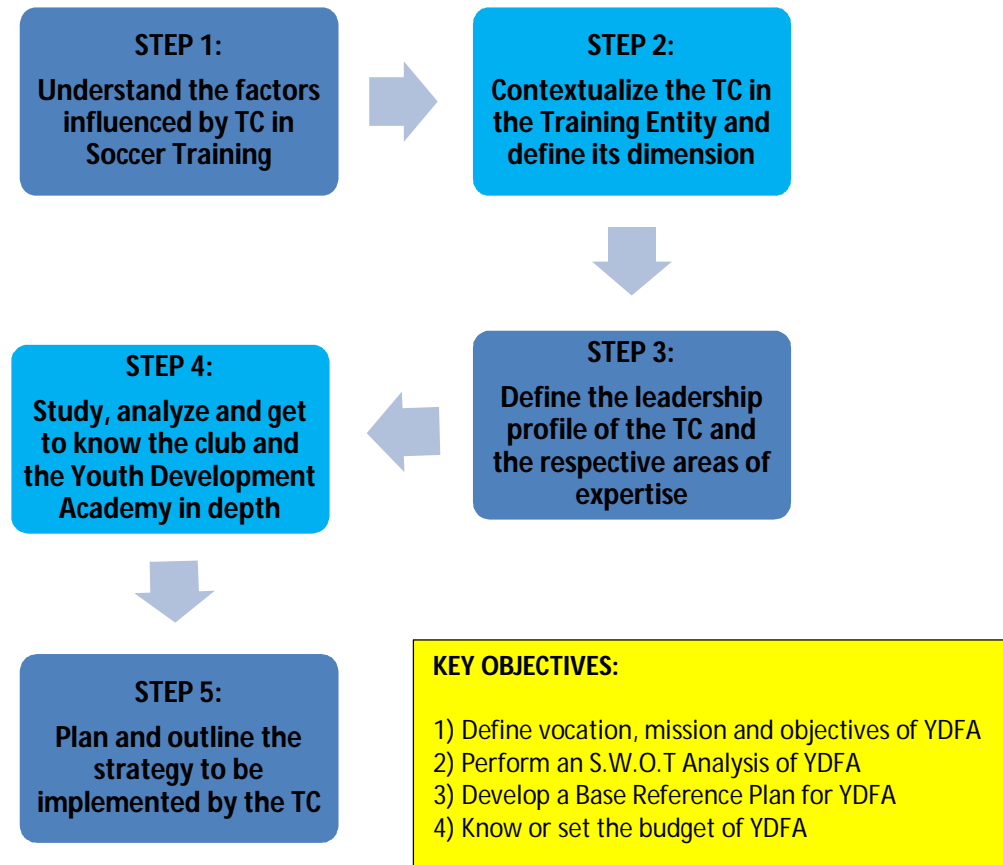


Figure 2: Summary of the stages of preparation of the Technical Coordination in a Youth Development Football Academy

This entire preparation phase is supported by a structural option having as a special reference the number of teams to integrate in each level of training.

Therefore, and in conclusion, we present the functional areas that can be part of a training entity's Technical Coordination, as well as the respective needs in terms of human resources.

Table 6: Functional areas of the Academy and respective elements of intervention

TECHNICAL AREA
Coaches / Assistant Coaches / Physical Trainers / Goalkeeper coaches / Game observers and analysts
DIRECTIVE SUPPORT AREA
Team Managers
LOGISTIC SUPPORT AREA
Technical Secretaries / Equipment Technicians / Field Officers / Drivers / Others
MEDICAL AND HEALTH AREA
Doctors / Physiotherapists / Massage Therapists / Nurses / Others
PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT AREA
Psychologist / Teachers
SCOUTING AND RECRUITMENT AREA
Scouts Coordinators / Scouts
SPORTS PERFORMANCE OPTIMIZATION AREA
Physiologists / Nutritionists / Other Sports Science specialists

Based on the assumptions evidenced throughout this preparation phase, we consider that the theoretical conditions are met for the Technical Coordination to sustainably organize the club's football formation, namely: in the definition, articulation and operationalization of the functional areas and the respective levels of formation; in the design and implementation of a technical training model (adapting a game learning model and its preparation model); and in carrying out all the operational work inherent to the functions assigned to it (production of general regulations, internal and external organizational communication, general planning of technical activity, promotion and organization of activities, supervision and control of activity and in the application of guiding principles planning, intervention and control and evaluation technicians).

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