



STRATEGIES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH FOOTBALL

MODULE 1. THE SOUTH
AMERICAN DNA



-EVOLUCIÓN-
ES CONMEBOL

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Introduction

CONMEBOL has a clear vision and precise ideas about what it means to work in the field of high-performance professional football with young men and women from various socio-cultural and economic backgrounds, immersed in the technological world and subject to the emotional and ethical demands of a region that identifies football as a South American trait. This vision has been enriched and strengthened by the contributions of CONMEBOL expert coaches of youth clubs in 2018, and it has become clear that it is essential to take South America as a reference place where football is perceived as a living space, in which people can have a mental imaging of the world. These are ideas that are the basis of the proposals, perspective and imagination of South American Football that coaches - teachers - and instructors who lead the training in youth clubs must know and make them their own in their daily work.

The first aspect to consider is that CONMEBOL, with the contributions of Experts of Youth Teams, promotes a work model with these clubs that aims for quality, that is, continuous improvement, where the boy or girl who plays in the National Teams can incorporate abilities, skills and values, which effectively contribute to their comprehensive training as professional football players, citizens and human beings.

In this context, the coach, along with his team, promotes and leads the football practice as a sport, a school of life and a rigorous work space, with the objective of achieving and planning the highest possible level on the field.

In this sense, it is important to remember that both at FIFA and CONMEBOL, we are all committed to promoting football, protecting its integrity and bringing as many people as possible to this passion of crowds. These are guidelines that cut across the work done with youth clubs and that force us to ask ourselves about those theoretical principles on which South American Football is based. Principles that, in simple words, are nothing more than the lessons learned from the experience of what we have and what we need to achieve in football; considering that football is a sport that is constantly evolving and that, at the same time, is part of our own idiosyncrasy.

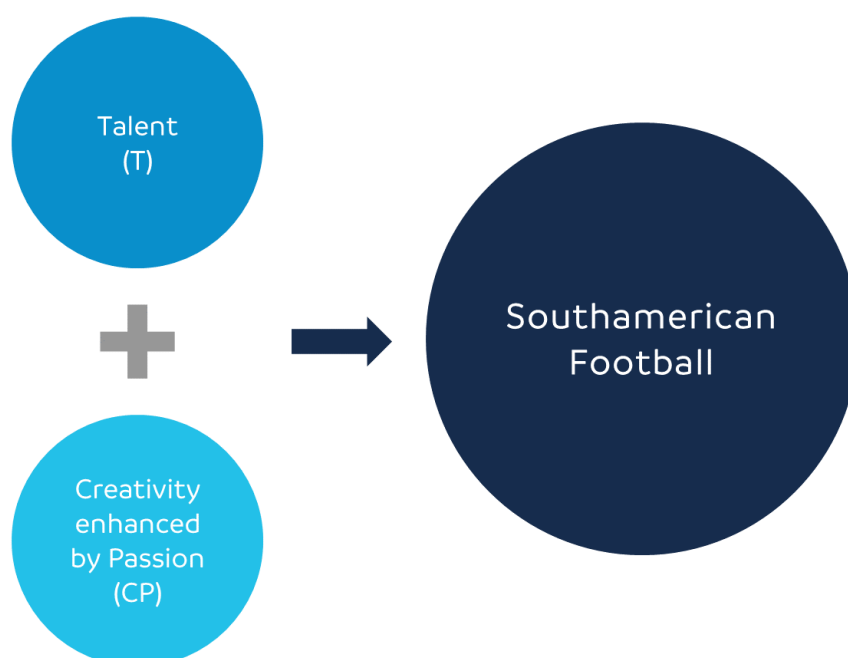
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1.1 A simple and practical theory of South American football

It is important to present simply what the theory of South American football is, which is nothing more than saying that this game of talent, with creative actions and punches, is at the base of the great principles of South American football. In addition, another principle consists in knowing the geography of the playing field and using strategic mischief and improvisation, not stated in the manual, to score, with passion and victory.

In this way, there is no impossible feat or obvious result in South American football, it is a sporting event that thrills and brings fans together. On this basis, it can be inferred that the equivalent of Einstein's theory of relativity [$E = mc^2$] in the field of South American football would be: South American Football = Talent + Creativity raised to Passion [$FS = T + CP$].

Figure 1: South American Football Theory



Source: self-made

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It is also worth mentioning that, currently, as a result of international competitions and exchanges, the usual formula of the South American Football Theory $FS = T + CP$ must be integrated with new ideas, concepts and knowledge from the aggiornamento experience of South American football players who have improved their game and succeeded in European, American and Eastern professional leagues. It is also important to highlight that today, a South American football player's fitness required is that of a competitive athlete, since today, professional football requires speed, strength, agility and endurance to react and think quickly, in such a way that he or she can handle game situations and, all that, without getting exhausted during the 90 minutes.

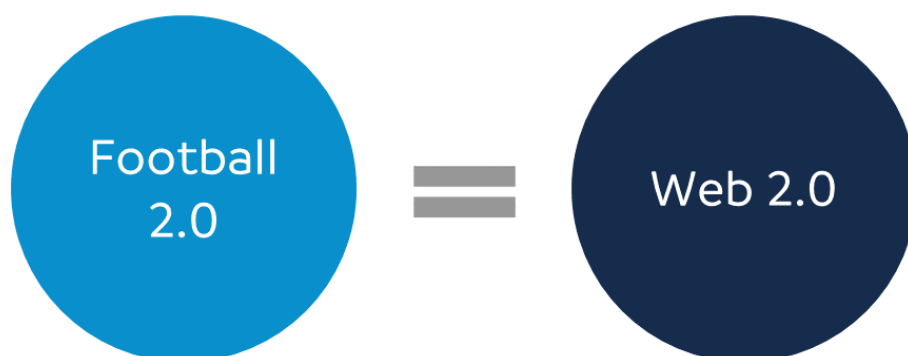
SUNDAY'S GAME OR THE LEAGUE FINAL ARE QUALITY SHOWS THAT RESULT FROM THE INTERACTION BETWEEN PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES, COACHING STAFF, REFEREES, THE AUDIENCE AND THE MEDIA.

Another important element of the Football 2.0 theory is the development of a tactical, intelligent and orderly game that, without losing the intensity of South American passion, allows the eleven players to move on the field assuming that a forward, a right or left winger, a midfielder or a center-back impacts the rest of the team and also impacts the result that will thrill the audience. Thus, Sunday's game or the final League is a quality show that results from the interaction between professional athletes, coaching staff, refereeing, the audience and the media.

Underlining the principle stated in the previous paragraph, it is appropriate to define what can be understood today by Football 2.0 in South America. In simple words, it is an analogy with Web 2.0 and that it refers to the CONMEBOL-FIFA idea of promotion and expansion of football; which means that it is a creative action carried out as a team - town both on and off the field. Similarly, Football 2.0 is focused on contributing to human beings' education and entertaining passionate crowds, transforming the field into a space where people can share a mental imaging of the world and where each people involved in football has a degree of belonging and social responsibility to protect the integrity of this sport. Thus, football is the result of teamwork and, at the same time, of everyone's individual work.

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Figure 2: Equivalence between Football 2.0 and Web 2.0



Source: self-made

This material for CONMEBOL youth clubs, which was prepared based on the reflections of the Youth Teams Expert Tables, proposes a dynamic and current theory of South American Football to coaches, teachers, instructors, and football managers. This theory can be summarised in the following formula: $FS = T + CP$, enriched with the learning of our players in the world. That is, for example, adding to $T + CP$ the athlete's high performance and the tactical decision of the individual regarding the team, bench and audience. All this is aimed at providing a quality sporting result and allowing the subjects (player, coaches, managers and people) to promote, protect and expand a football that entertains and creates identity.

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1.2 Youth clubs as areas of rights for children, adolescents and youth

At the beginning of this section, it was made clear that CONMEBOL has a certain vision and precise ideas about what it means to work in the field of high-performance professional football with young players, both boys and girls, who are minors and who are subjects of rights. For them, the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) is until the age of 18.

Figure 3: Children's Football Competition



Source: CONMEBOL and Associations Member of CONMEBOL, 2019. Own file, unpublished.

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CONMEBOL stresses the importance and relevance of South American football today, so that those responsible for grassroots training, and particularly youth clubs, are very attentive to sensitive issues such as: schooling in sports in relation to the legal right to education, any precautionary actions or circumstance that may lead to abuse or harassment, the interaction between adult-minor players which today is mediated by the best interests of the child as a guiding legal principle. Also, other issues can be the bond with the family and the representatives in a professional football context, the balance between the demands of high-performance training and the right to health, leisure and the treatment that subjects with physical and psychological characteristics typical of underage players, who are involved in a youth club or in basic football training, deserve.

In the opinion of experts and leaders of our contemporary society, this approach concerning the rights of minors in the world of football is not an impediment or a problem for high-performance processes. On the contrary, it is a fundamental variable to consider when making a work plan that is efficient and effective in relation to the maximum possibilities for a boy or a girl during their childhood, adolescence or youth in the framework of a professional sports career.

The awareness of working with minors allows the technical team to adapt their language, develop strategies specially designed for the biopsychological realities of growing boys and girls; it allows them to combine football-specific sports training with basic learning that every human being must acquire (analyse, value, decide, rectify, respect, think, etc.).

Considering children and their rights, it can be stated with absolute conviction that the scope of youth clubs today must be a safe, educational space and promoter of human development, which is essential in the relationship of the Football Institution with a society susceptible to the issues mentioned in previous paragraphs. Above all, sexual abuse and commercial exploitation of children are hypersensitive issues.

The interaction between adults and minor players today is mediated by the "best interests of the child" as a guiding legal principle.

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The scope of youth clubs
today must be in a space

- Safe
- Educational
- That promotes human development



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1.3 Football in South America includes and dignifies

As mentioned before, CONMEBOL is committed to promoting football, protecting its integrity and bringing as many people as possible to these passionate crowds. In this sense, we must see the global and regional boom in women's football, tournaments for people with disabilities, and the development of socially-promoted football in low-income neighbourhoods and community centres.

As it was analysed in the Expert Tables of Youth Teams, in August 2018, there are new realities that have been gradually consolidated at the end of the 20th century, with Football for Diversity being one of them, and that today are a part of football; although it must be acknowledge that at an institutional level there is still a lot of work to do, especially in the adaptation of infrastructure, the use of an inclusive language for men and women, financing and visibility in Clubs and Federations of people with disabilities. Lastly, it is important to say that, in the institutional vision and mission of the entities linked to professional football, important progress is being made in acknowledging diversity and human dignity even more explicit, from a legal approach.

Figure 4: Competition between Two Women's Teams



Source: CONMEBOL and Associations Member of CONMEBOL, 2019. Own file, unpublished.

In the diagnosis of the Expert Tables, it became evident that this progressive process of acknowledging diverse people also applies to youth clubs, which today are both for men and women; boys and girls from different countries, who speak different languages and belong to different cultures, who can be tremendously talented athletes; but that can also have a

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personal limitation or some type of particularity in their individuality. Certainly, this subjective situation does not prevent the child from becoming a football star; a very own special and personal need that needs to be considered in their comprehensive development professionally and as human beings, within a youth club, for example.

THE PROGRESSIVE PROCESS OF ACKNOWLEDGING DIVERSE PEOPLE ALSO CONCERNS YOUTH CLUBS, WHICH TODAY ARE FOR BOTH MEN AND WOMEN.

In brief, it should be clear that CONMEBOL is part of that social and current movement that sees this sport as more than just entertainment; which understands that promoting, protecting and expanding football practically translates into concrete events such as the open doors for women's football, which implies the validation and respect towards women, on and off the field. It also denotes the recognition and inclusion of people with disabilities; as well as special attention to the football player or players, who always require care that go beyond the physical and psychological axes of highly competitive sports training.

CONMEBOL, together with FIFA, consider that in football, everyone has a place and everyone will be respected as worthy human beings. This is a principle that is at the base of this Guiding Notebook for CONMEBOL Youth Clubs.

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1.4 Youth clubs as spaces where children are valued and also learn to value

The CONMEBOL Youth Tables of Experts dedicated a space for special reflection of the idea that youth clubs and highly competitive professional football work with football stars, that is, with those players who stand out for their movements, technique, mastery of the ball and for their values.

Currently, CONMEBOL, considering the challenges and demands of South American society in the 21st century, places special emphasis on coaches, teachers and instructors working with grassroots football and youth clubs- also taking into account that an athlete from the World Football 2.0, in South America, must make evident, in their game and in their bond with society, certain values because it is not possible to avoid the fact that before or after the game, the player is always exposed to being approached by the press, which then, together with social media, make their opinions on football or a wide range of topics viral.

Figure 5: The Passionate Women's Team Celebrating Orderly.



Source: CONMEBOL and Associations Member of CONMEBOL, 2019. Own file, unpublished.

The fan, the housewife, the politician, the girl who goes to school or the young man who is wondering what to do with his life, pay a lot of attention to the concrete fair play on the playing field or to how much value is put on the football star off the field. Because of this, a locker room or bench talk that addresses the values of football and life must be present in a high-performance work plan with the youth club.

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THE COACH'S WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD BE AIMED AT TRAINING FOOTBALL PROFESSIONALS WHO RUN AFTER THE BALL, WHO PASSIONATELY SCORE A GOAL, WHO PLAY FAIRLY BOTH ON AND OFF THE FIELD, AND WHO LEARN VALUES.

Just to mention some significant axiological lines -which were highlighted by the Experts- regarding work with young people, it is worth mentioning that this highly complex and high-performance sport requires commitment, effort, discipline, responsibility, respect, tolerance to frustration, healthy enjoyment of life, knowing how to deal with fame, objectivity, self-esteem and all this along with knowing how to play as a team with colleagues, with the coaching staff, sports authorities, with the audience and with the media.

This guidebook for youth clubs, in the spirit of South American football, proposed by CONMEBOL, gathering the recommendations of the Expert Tables of Youth Teams, considers that the coach's work with young players should be aimed at training football professionals who run after the ball, passionately score a goal, play fairly both on and off the field, and that learn values that help them in life and that, later, can transmit a constructive, positive and human message to today's society.

A little history after 100 years of football in South America

The performance of South American football between the years 1930 and 1994 was the most outstanding when getting 8 World Cups. Between 1960 and 1994, 21 intercontinental club championships were won. However, in the mid-1990s, this region's history of football achievement radically changed performance, winning just one World Cup between 1998 and 2014, and for 10 years in the club world championship (FIFA and Intercontinental Cup), only 6 cups in the period 1996-2016.

In 2017, the Copa Libertadores de América and the Copa Sudamericana were redesigned, increasing the level of sport in tournaments in each country, along with the quality of the game in continental competitions, changing club licenses and adopting of high standards in infrastructure and audio-visual production. This led to the professionalisation of sports management to offer a better experience to football lovers in stadiums and at home. And the Unique Finals represented a historic decision in 2018. The football party moved to a country on the continent under rigorous studies of criteria, selection processes, considering parameters related to organisation, logistics, security, technology, political, social, environmental and legal aspects, accommodation, mobility and commercial matters such as television broadcasting and the commercialisation of the great event. The strategic objective is to promote the sports development of South American football through greater resources, more investment and better-quality standards in stadiums, and in the regional and world promotion of tournaments, clubs and players.

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Transforming, evolving, integrating and implementing technology in each of the clubs of the continent involves the creation of projects that respond to the needs of each association in the context of each country. Projects that support the licenses of clubs and coaches, projects of women's football tournaments, improvement of the playing fields' infrastructure, the implementation of the VAR, training in the different modalities of football, the organisation of more competitions and good governance that allow raising the quality of South American football.

Figure 6: Evolution is CONMEBOL, representative of current football.



Source: CONMEBOL and Associations Member of CONMEBOL, 2019. Own file, unpublished.

Developing the potential of all our natural talent and improving sports competitiveness on our continent requires organisation, method and a new organisational culture to generate and reinvest more value into the development of football. The implementation of processes, clear accountability, diagnosis with an objective map to achieve efficiency and proactivity within sports organisations adjusted to the requirements of football 2.0.

When speaking of South American passion, we refer to the set of 10 countries in South America that with effort and sacrifice work daily towards social transformation, which makes them heroes in their countries who embrace the feat of triumph after hard training, discipline, abilities, dexterity and spatial and emotional intelligence to navigate different territories in the pursuit of glory.

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The professionalisation of football is a task that is developed day by day with the commitment of the federations and clubs aimed at training football developers, adding experience, knowledge and management.

How the Strategy Book was created

On May 17, 2017, the Glories of Football event took place for the first time in the history of CONMEBOL. The participants of the Global Symposium in the Present and Future of Football in South America contributed their vision, their ideas and the hope for better times for the professionalisation of this sport, insisting that the best way for transformation consists in the training of trainers.

The participants of that historical meeting were:

Table 1: Participants of the Global Symposium in the Present and Future of Football in South America

Glories of Football, participants in the Global Symposium on the Present and Future of Football in South America		
Carlos Alberto Parreira	Luis Pescarolo	Milciades Morel
Javier Zanetti	Nery Alberto Pumpido	Rubén Paz
Paulo Sergio	Mauricio Soria	Francisco Arce
Francisco Maturana	Teofilo Cubillas	Ever Hugo Almeida
Gabriel Batistuta	Stalin José Rivas	Nicolás Olivera
Emily Lima	Marco Etcheverry	Raúl Vicente Amarilla
José Ignacio Prieto	Héctor Chumpitaz	Diego Latorre
David Trezeguet	Daniel Bertoni	Edison Méndez
Roque Santa Cruz	Ricardo Gareca	Oscar Ruggieri
Elías Ricardo Figueroa	Mauro Silva	

Source: self-made.

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Below are excerpts from the meeting of some of the participants in that memorable meeting of the South American Football Stars:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL4A2cX5iL_omdwNfgNj8HvK_eiYWkPtWw

- **Gabriel Batistuta:**

Comprehensive education for children- It is important that the child who is not going to be a footballer has other resources to be able to defend him or herself in life, in different environments. But, also, it is important that the footballer, who becomes a professional, has comprehensive training for his or her management aware of his or her rights.

- **Carlos Alberto Parreira:**

The greatest concern is the training of players, improving the quality of coaches, improving the bases that will make our football level move upwards.

We must schedule our competitions- we have many competitions in just a few months. Today's players have an impressive workload. They have 70 or 80 games per year.

The distance now with Europe is enormous. The distance is now 4-1, from 94. Something happened, something happened in world competitions, something that improved. I think there is something essential, basic training, investing in the technical part, training of coaches.

An example from Germany: it invested more than a million dollars, more than a thousand professionals, thousands of children. They ended up improving the Bundesliga, which today is one of the most profitable leagues in the world.

So, we have to change the mind-set of the clubs, improve the quality of the coaches, improve marketing and improve our schedules.

- **Javier Zanetti**

Football and life have very similar nuances and, in each situation, there is an opportunity in which one can demonstrate that he or she can overcome them.

- **Pibe Valderrama**

The Symposium achieved an approach that had never happened before. I think the invitation from the president and the board of directors of CONMEBOL brought football closer, which is what we want. We are all football people, and we want football to continue growing for the better.

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This gives a great message: you can work as a team in South American football. I have a phrase that says: Long live football; that we give it life, each one with its space and I believe that this is the rebirth of South American football.

- Nery Pumpido

The kid begins to watch football and, from there, they begin to create a personality with their education, discipline, their way of living, because sometimes they fail not only in football, but as a person. It is necessary to emphasize the person's education, as it is done in school, it should be done in football. To be able to use all the technology in favour of football and that the kid can learn in a comprehensive way in football.

- Edison Méndez

We need to create development training spaces starting with CONMEBOL- A place to prepare coaches, physical trainers and goal keepers, both in the sporting and managerial areas. We believe that ex-footballers should also prepare for sports management, marketing, anything that can help based on our past experience. Why not to aim for a managerial career?

Closing

- CONMEBOL's commitment

Promote football, protect its integrity and bring as many people closer to these passionate crowds.

- The formula of South American Football

Talent and Creativity raised to Passion gives us the South American Football formula: $FS = T + CP$.

- Minors: subjects of Rights

The interaction between adults and minor players today is mediated by the best interests of the child as a guiding legal principle.

- Football for diversity

Important advances are being made in professional football to make the acknowledgment of diverse people even more explicit, from a legal perspective.

- Values as guiding principles

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An athlete from the Football 2.0 world of South America must make evident, in their game and in their bond with society, certain values above their performance.

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