

# Demonstration of the Essence of Football and Deduction of Its Docking Method with Training Practice

Liu Fuli<sup>1</sup>, Chen Jixing<sup>2,\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Institute of Physical Education, Guangdong Baiyun University, Guangzhou, 510000, Guangdong Province, China

<sup>2</sup>Institute of Physical Education, Guangzhou Huashang College, Guangzhou, 511300, Guangdong Province, China

\*Corresponding author

**Absrtact:** According to the international and domestic exploration of the nature of football and the elaboration of its views, this paper explains the important significance of defining and demonstrating the nature of football in China. Based on the basic principles of logic, this study finds the ideas and clues of exploring the nature of football through literature research, extracts representative views on the nature of football, defines and demonstrates the nature of football by using logical deduction and expert investigation, and deduces two basic methods of docking the nature of football with training practice. It also clarifies that the discussion of the nature of football is not only an important subject at the present stage of our country, but also a permanent proposition. The purpose of this study is to correct our previous mistakes and deviations in understanding the nature of football, and to promote football training to return to the track consistent with the nature of football.

**Keywords:** football essence; training practice; Docking method

## 1. Introduction

Understanding the essence of football is the fundamental problem of football training, and also the logical starting point of the construction of football theoretical system<sup>[1]</sup> The discussion of a series of problems, such as the concept, idea and method of football training, all originate from the understanding and derivation of the essence of football. Generally speaking, the discussion of "what is football" refers to "what is the essence of football". Putting forward the question of the essence of football has been regarded as mystifying by many people, but it is precisely because of the deviation in our understanding of the essence of football that the prevalence of "football gymnastics" and "football dance" on campus, the emphasis on simple technical exercises in youth training, and the wrong facts such as "10,000 meters running" every day in the preparation period of professional teams. In our training from amateur team to professional team, there are too many practices that deviate from the essence of football and that we are accustomed to and accustomed to, so that the training has been in a state of no correct concept support for a long time. It should be admitted that for many years, Chinese football has been in the dilemma of "lost development path", which has a partial return at present, but a wider range of grass-roots football training is still lost. The experience of football developed countries has proved that football training needs to recognize the essence of football and form advanced training concepts, so as to deduce and form the theory and method system in line with the law of football; once football training deviates from or deviates from the essence of football, it will go to alienation and inevitably suffer failure. If we can not form a correct understanding of the nature of football and construct advanced training concepts according to the rules of football, training will not be able to return to the right track, and our football will continue to lag behind. Therefore, we need to deduce the correct definition and interpretation of the essence of football, and form a correct understanding of a series of basic issues of football training, so as to ensure that training practice is consistent with the essence of football. We should realize that the demonstration of the essence of football is the key to our awakening and the revitalization of national football. Only when training reflects the essence of football and its essential characteristics, can we return to the right path of development. The purpose of this paper is to clarify the essential characteristics of the process of football in theory, and to extract and deduce the correct definition of the essence of football, so as to ensure the interface between training practice and the essence of football. Secondly, in terms of cognitive methods,

we should change the narrow vision and one-sided thinking, correct the cognition and practice that deviate from or deviate from the essence of football in our training practice, and promote the unification of football training and advanced international concepts.

## 2. Football Essence Hypothesis and Research Methods

### 2.1 Football Essence Hypothesis

There are representative views on the exploration of the nature of football both at home and abroad: the elaboration of the nature of football in the textbook Football Training by Dutch experts Bert Van Lingen has been highly affirmed by the international football community; Gu Mingchang, an expert in China, further analyzed and demonstrated the views of Bert Van Lingen in his monograph "What is Football", which was generally recognized by domestic experts. However, the definition of the essence of football and its docking method with training practice need to be constantly demonstrated and improved, especially in China, which is in a state of overall backwardness of football, so it is more necessary to actively explore the essence of football and improve understanding. There are two hypothesis methods in the study of the nature of football: first, suppose that the nature of football originally exists, and we discover and reveal it through research; Secondly, assuming that the essence of football is gradually revealed and formed in the historical process, we gradually unify the essence of football with training practice and express its definition by refining the essential characteristics of football in various historical periods (see Figure 1) .

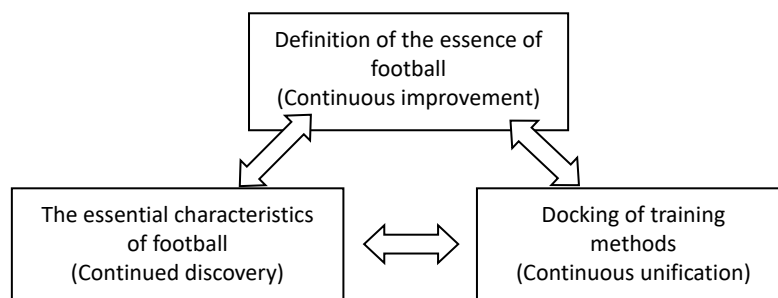


Fig. 1 Schematic diagram of the cycle of the hypothesis of the nature of football and its demonstration

According to the second hypothesis mentioned above, this paper makes an argument and deduces the following two specific hypotheses: one is that the hypothesis research can improve the understanding and grasp many essential characteristics revealed and formed in the process of football through various abstractions and judgments, and extract and deduce the correct definition of football essence suitable for the cognition of Chinese football practitioners; Secondly, it is assumed that the research can deduce and deduce from the essence of football a variety of docking methods from simple to complex and training practice that conform to the essential characteristics of football.

### 2.2 Research methods

Literature research method: to understand the research progress and trends of the nature of football at home and abroad through literature reading. This study mainly obtains research materials and materials from the research materials of football concept, football philosophy and football history.

Logical deduction method: The research is to follow the general principles of logic to determine the deduction steps of the definition of football, so that the deduction and demonstration of the nature of football can follow the correct path and adopt scientific methods.

Expert investigation method: Delphi method is used in the expert survey, which employs 12 experts from Beijing Sports University, Sun Yat-sen University, South China Normal University, Shenyang Institute of Physical Education and Guangzhou Institute of Physical Education to form an expert group. Through three rounds of investigation and repeated judgment, evaluation, feedback and integrated treatment of the problems, the expert opinions tend to be consistent. So as to determine the rationality of the design of the research content and obtain the basis for the demonstration of many problems.

### **3. Summary of International and Domestic Research on the Essence of Football**

#### ***3.1 Exploring the Essence of Football in European and American Countries***

##### ***3.1.1 Textual Research on the Cognitive Development of European Countries from Typical Cases***

Europe is the birthplace of modern football and has formed a profound football culture. Understanding the development of the exploration of the nature of football in European countries is an important prerequisite for our theoretical research to open our horizons and form advanced ideological understanding. The development of football in European countries has not risen in a straight line, and there has been a period of vague understanding of the nature of football. For quite a long time in the 1960s and before, football training in many European countries was out of touch with the game, and simple technical exercises occupied too large a proportion<sup>[2]</sup>. In the late 1970s, a football expert from the former Federal Republic of Germany came to China to give lectures. The theory and method of intensive physical training he demonstrated are wrong today.

In 1985, Michels, a Dutch football reformer, expressed the view that most coaches in European countries mistakenly focused their training on technical exercises that were out of touch with the game. Michels carried out reforms in youth training, turning training into a form dominated by small competitions. Players' technical exercises should be more in actual combat confrontation, and they should observe the attacking targets and opponents at any time, thus establishing the training concept of "taking actual combat as the core"<sup>[3]</sup>. In the 1950s and 1980s, there was a debate between "control ball play" and "direct play" in both Britain and Germany. Britain participated in the World Cup several times in succession from 1950 to 1958. Whenever they saw Brazil become the protagonist of the competition with its outstanding technical performance, they were deeply hurt and inspired. After a seesaw game, they formed the tactical idea of "controlling the ball"<sup>[4]</sup> in the mid and late 1980s. As a result, countries such as Britain, Germany, Belgium and Sweden, which have long used long pass offense in history, can no longer see the "direct play" game from top to bottom. The above examples of European countries show that the understanding of the nature and law of football is gradually deepening, and the theoretical exploration of the nature of football is an eternal subject.

##### ***3.1.2 South American countries' insightful and simple understanding***

Football in South American countries started later than in Europe. At the end of the 19th century, British talents brought football to South America. After a long period of development, they formed the style characteristics of exquisite personal skills, tacit understanding of short passes, flexible movements and excellent ball control ability. In the past 22 World Cups, South American countries have won 10 championships and become the top stars of the world. Pele, Maradona and Messi are all from South American countries. Only South American football can compete with Europe in the world.

In terms of football theory, South American countries have different insights with simplicity from Europe. European theorists have summarized the essence of football philosophically, such as "competition is the best instructor of training and the most basic form of training", "football training must be designed on the premise of meeting the needs of competition"<sup>[5]</sup> and so on. South American countries have also made many innovations in theoretical thinking, such as Brazil's 4-2-4 formation in the 1958 World Cup and Argentina's fast and fierce technical play in the 1978 World Cup. These tactics have led the world and won the World Cup championship. On the basis of drawing lessons from advanced European concepts, South American countries have formed many simple and insightful understandings. Their football thinking is highly consistent with advanced football concepts. Such as "familiar with the ball and practice techniques in the confrontation"<sup>[6]</sup>, "know the real football in the game"<sup>[5]</sup>, "compared with more training, the game is the best way of training"<sup>[7]</sup> and so on, these views are completely unified with the essence of football, their simple philosophy is not only scientific, but also practical.

##### ***3.1.3 Exploring the Essence of Football by Different Routes***

There are different ways to explore the essence of football in Europe and America. For example, there are two modes of exploration in European countries: one is the national co-ordination mode led by the National Football Association, represented by Germany and France; The second is the typical promotion model of local clubs, represented by the Netherlands and Spain. Another example is the elaboration reflecting the essence of football: the Dutch say that "learning to play football is like learning to drive a car, which must be completed on the real road"; the Germans say that "football uses non-actual technical exercises, which is like practicing swimming on land". The exploration of football theory has different paths and different viewpoints, but the understanding of the essence of football and training principles is

more convergent.

In the 1990s, FIFA and UEFA regularly organized research and theoretical discussions on international competitions, and scientific and technological progress enabled more technical information to be shared simultaneously. In this way, people's understanding of football training is constantly updated, and training concepts and methods are becoming more and more similar internationally. Under the guidance of the concept of "taking competition as the core", a series of basic concepts and methods have been formed in the world, such as football elements, basic football skills, four periods of competition, training materials, competition scenes, training modes and competition modes, etc., whether in Germany, France, Spain or Europe. Or Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Colombia in South America, the reason why football in these countries can be a world power for a long time is that they have constructed systematic and advanced training concepts and methods on the basis of a profound understanding of the nature of football.

#### **4. Demonstration of the Essence of Football and Deduction of Its Docking Method with Training Practice**

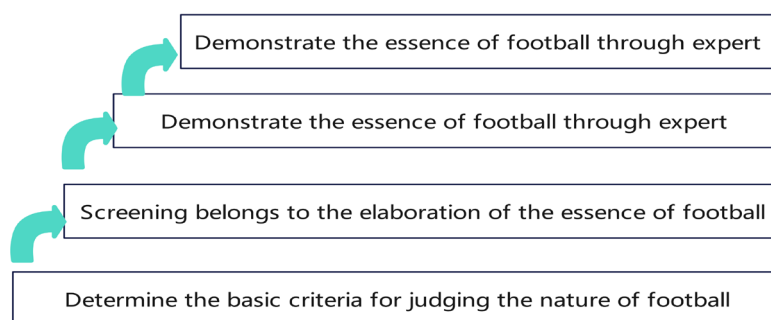
##### ***4.1 Demonstration of the Nature of Football***

##### ***4.1.1 The support and principle of exploring the essence of football***

It is easy to make cognitive errors if the essence of things is simply judged according to phenomena. Even if there is a small deviation in the understanding of the essence of things, it will lead to a series of serious errors in the subsequent cognitive problems. [8] There are many mistakes and shortcomings in football training in our country, which are rooted in the deviation of the understanding of the nature of football, so the exploration of the nature of football is particularly important in our country. Although the international understanding of the nature of football and its related elaboration has formed a relatively unified understanding, we still have shortcomings in understanding, and even serious mistakes. Therefore, recognizing the nature of football should be the first step for us to explore the underlying logic of football development. Although some experts in our country have made in-depth research and demonstration on the essence of football, the recognition and popularization of the demonstration results are still limited. Any theoretical research needs to be based on the previous exploration, and the existing research results at home and abroad are the basis for further demonstration of the nature of football. This paper defines that the research of football essence is based on logical derivation and scientific abstraction, which is also the common principle of exploring the essence of things [9]. The reference of previous international and domestic research results is to serve the logical derivation and scientific abstraction of this paper.

##### ***4.1.2 Derivation and demonstration of the definition of the essence of football***

The logical starting point of the derivation of the definition of the essence of football in this paper is to clarify that the essence of football has the same attributes as the essence of other things. Although the definition process also adopts the methods of logical derivation and scientific abstraction, the selected path and specific methods are different. Because our country's understanding of the essence of football is far from enough, it also causes the fact that training practice deviates from and deviates from the essence of football. Therefore, the definition of the essence of football in this paper should also pay attention to correcting our cognitive errors and deviations, that is, to pay attention to the exploration of the essence of football and its elaboration to play a role in helping people change their understanding. Therefore, the derivation and demonstration of the definition of football essence in this paper is different from the previous methods, and its four-step process is also unique (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2 Four-step process of logical derivation of football essence definition*

(1) Determine the basic criteria for judging the nature of football.

As the essence of "the thing itself or its original form, it refers to the inherent fundamental attribute of the thing itself", it contains three meanings: it is the constant form of the thing; it is the "fundamental" or "original" nature of the thing; it is the basic characteristic that distinguishes something from other things. Its fundamental point is that "the internal relations of things are constituted by the internal contradictions of things". The concrete manifestation is that "the essence of a thing is not only one; the essence of different subjects of the same kind of things may be different; the essence will change with the change of various internal and external conditions" <sup>[10]</sup>. The above elaboration of the essence is applicable to the judgment of the essence of all things, and can also be used as the origin of the logical derivation of the essence of football. At the same time, it also stipulates the criteria for judging the essence of football and its differences and variability.

(2) Screening belongs to the elaboration of the essence of football.

Here is to judge the previous elaboration of the nature of football according to the established standards, arrange the elaboration that meets the standards in an orderly manner, and exclude the elaboration that does not meet the standards of the nature of football. Football is an intuitive, dynamic and repeated external thing. It has both vertical development and changes, such as higher and higher technical level, richer and richer tactical content and greater social impact. There are also horizontal links, such as the exchange of football information and experience from all over the world, as well as the technical consultation of training and competition, including the information communication to explore the essence of football. Screening the elaboration of the essence of football is to use the principle of materialist dialectics, which is an effective way to see the essence through phenomena, so as to delineate many elaborations of the essence of football.

(3) Classification and reorganization of the elaboration of the nature of football

This is to classify and sort all the international and domestic football essence and its related generalizations or metaphors, and to choose and reorganize the words and sentences with the same meaning, so as to form a refined exposition of the essence of football. For example, "football is a game" and "football is a game" are combined into "football is a game or game"; "Football is a sport dominated by feet", "Football is a game in which two teams compete for offense and defense around the ball" and "Football is a game aimed at scoring the ball into the opponent's goal". A game in which two players compete against each other for the purpose of scoring the ball into the opponent's goal.

(4) Demonstrate the essence of football through expert investigation

The research confirms that the essence of football is that football is a kind of competition or game, which is mainly based on the foot to control the ball, and the two teams compete for the ball in attack and defense, with the purpose of scoring the ball into the opponent's goal. The elaboration of this definition of the essence of football possesses distinct "Chinese characteristics," such as incorporating text that reflects the essential features of football, like "mainly controlling the ball with the feet" and "both sides competing on the same field." These additions aim to clarify the essence of football in a more intuitive and concrete manner, making the definition more vivid and appropriate. This helps correct misunderstandings or deviations from the essence of football in training practices. The elaboration of the definition draws from a broad range of international and domestic classics and textbooks, all adhering to the fundamental standards of football's essence. The expert investigation method employed in demonstrating the definition involves designing a questionnaire in advance and testing the validity of its content. The content of the investigation includes whether the definition meets the standard of the essence of football and its scientific and rigorous requirements, as well as the necessity and rationality of the elaboration with "Chinese characteristics" at the present stage. After three rounds of repeated questionnaires, the results show that the definition of the essence of football is not only correct, but also creative and practical.

## ***4.2 Deduction of the docking method between the essence of football and training practice***

### ***4.2.1 Deducing the elements of football from the essence of football***

The docking method of football essence and training practice is actually how training practice reflects the essence of football. The purpose of this paper is to correct the mistakes in training practice, so the definition of football essence is to meet the actual needs of football training. The four fundamental characteristics of football, in the context of training science, are as follows: primarily controlling the ball with the feet; both teams competing for the ball through offensive and defensive maneuvers; competing

on the same field; and aiming to score by getting the ball into the opponent's goal. This description captures the "constant essence and basic characteristics distinct from other activities" intrinsic to football training. Clarifying these aspects is essential for constructing a theoretical framework for football. If football training does not align with these core "essences" and "characteristics," it will inevitably deviate from the true nature of football, leading to unsuccessful training outcomes. Therefore, a correct understanding of the nature of football is the first fundamental problem to be solved in football training. However, understanding the essence of football is only a beginning. Football training is a complex and regular process. Training must be controlled according to its process rules and scientific principles and methods. The derivation of football elements is an important step in the connection between the essence of football and training practice. The Dutch proposed very early that football training needs to derive several essential elements of training from the essence of football. After repeated argumentation, they finally determined the six elements of football: the core element-ball, the target element-goal, the confrontation element-opponent, the team element-teammate, the space element-field area and the restriction element-rules.

#### ***4.2.2 Deduction of docking method between football essence and training practice***

##### **(1) The deduction of simple docking method between football essence and training practice**

In training practice, the form of "match or game" is a simple connection with the essence of football. The premise is that six football elements should be added to the match or game, and the training method should not exclude the six elements. The development of children's and mass football popularization activities only needs to clarify three simple rules with simple docking methods: first, handball foul; second, score into the opponent's goal; third, kick the ball out of bounds and serve the opponent. With this rule, as long as the number of people in the game or game is above "two to two", it can fully reflect the essence of football. Our grass-roots campus football development or club children's training should be based on the principle of reflecting the essence of football. Of course, the number of people and rules in training can be gradually increased, and the number of people can be arranged equally and differently, but it should be noted that the training methods should be gradually from simple to complex. To advocate the concept of "taking competition as the core", first of all, we should turn training into more forms of competition or games.

There are deviations in our understanding of the essence of football and the form of matches or games. For example, in order to pursue "uniformity" and "from easy to difficult", we adopt the practice of "football gymnastics" and "too much simple technical practice", which deviates from the essence of "mainly controlling the ball by foot" and "both sides compete in the same field". In fact, one of the reasons why football is widely popular is that the "threshold" for participating in activities is low and easy to organize. Even some three-year-old children without any football foundation can experience real football matches as long as they are guided by simple methods. The game or game is a dynamic order, and it can be used in a way that is simple and consistent with the nature of football. It is justifiable to use football gymnastics or other hand exercises occasionally or in secondary links in training, but taking these as the main content deviates from the essence of football, which must be denied.

##### **(2) The deduction of the docking method of football essence and training practice system**

Organizing long-term and systematic football training is not as simple as popular football activities, and the connection between its training practice and the essence of football is also complex. Systematic training requires an accurate grasp of the training rules, principles and methods, and requires coaches to understand the nature of football and master advanced training concepts and scientific training methods. Therefore, the theory and method of systematic training and football essence docking are more detailed and complex. For example, according to the growth stage of players, training can be divided into enlightenment stage, primary stage, intermediate stage, advanced stage and professional stage. According to the composition of competition elements, it can be divided into technical training, physical training, tactical training, psychological training and competition training. Each combination of the above training elements has different principles and characteristics, so long-term systematic football training is a complex and huge system.

The main purpose of exploring the essence of football is to complete the docking with systematic training, which is mainly completed by coaches, so the key to complete the docking lies in the quality of coaches. The training of coaches organized by FIFA, the Continental Football Federation and the Chinese Football Association, and the training of football teachers organized by the Ministry of Education and its subordinate organizations are all aimed at improving the professional quality of coaches. Here is a brief summary of the main points of the docking method between systematic training and the essence of

football: First, organize manpower to study the essence of football and a series of training concepts and methods, and establish a scientific training theory and method system. Secondly, we should establish a method system for coaches' performance evaluation, formulate incentives and preferential policies for coaches, link coaches' performance with their promotion, wages and bonuses, and mobilize coaches' initiative and enthusiasm to participate in training. Thirdly, we should do a good job in the strategic design and public opinion propaganda of the overall football development, establish a perfect training and assessment system for coaches in accordance with advanced concepts and methods, and strengthen the correct understanding and professional ability of coaches.

## 5. Summary

The 160-year development history of modern football enlightens us that there are some historical limitations in people's understanding of the nature of football, and with the development of football, the progress of tactics and the improvement of competition rules, people will inevitably have a new understanding of the nature of football. The reason why the study of the nature of football is important, on the one hand, is to improve people's understanding of the inherent attributes and laws of football, on the other hand, is to help people establish a correct concept of football development, which is particularly important in our country. The research of this paper has gone through rigorous logical conception and design, but the definition of the essence of football and the related demonstration results are only the results of the stage. At most, it plays a leading role in understanding in a certain time and scope. It is impossible to have eternal correctness and scientificity, that is to say, the exploration of the essence of football is an eternal subject. The propaganda of the understanding of the essence of football should advocate the use of some image metaphors and easy-to-understand methods, and the understanding of the essence of football is not necessarily through the method of writing and discussion. A coach has a correct concept of football and advanced ideas, so the training process is the best "what is football" education. There are many successful football training paths and methods, but the key is not to deviate from the essence of football in terms of ideas and methods. At present and for a long time in the future, China needs to strengthen the research and popularization of the essence of football, correct the mistakes and deviations in the past, and promote the return of football training to the track consistent with the essence of football.

## Acknowledgement

Guangdong Philosophy and Social Sciences Planning Project: Research on the Construction of Football Training Theory System in China (GD20XTY04)

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project of the Ministry of Education: Program Design and Empirical Research on the Joint Construction of Football Courses by Chinese and British Sports Colleges(19YJA890017)

## References

- [1] Yuan Haiqiang, Jiang Liang. *Logical Analysis of the Essential Development of Sports in China and the West* [J]. *Sports and Science*, 2014, 35 (3): 109-112.
- [2] Bill Murray. *History of World Football* [M]. Beijing: Guangming Daily Press, 1998:33.
- [3] Bert Van Lingen. *Football Training* [M]. Beijing: People's Sports Press, 2003: 1-4.
- [4] Simon Clifford. *Brazilian Football Training Method* [M]. Beijing: People's Sports Press, 2001:2.
- [5] Karl Heinz. *New Football* [M]. Beijing: People's Sports Press, 1988:12, 18.
- [6] Will Cooper. *Attacking Football Training* [M]. Beijing: People's Sports Press, 1988:6.
- [7] Ying Hongxia. *Meiji Restoration of Japanese Football* [M]. Hangzhou: Zhejiang Ancient Books Publishing House, 2012:125.
- [8] Liu Dachun. *Introduction to Science and Technology* [M]. Beijing: China Renmin University Press, 2005:159.
- [9] Gu Mingchang. *What is Football* [M]. Beijing: Beijing Sport University Press, 2012: 22-23.
- [10] Robert Solomon. *The Big Question: a Concise Introduction to Philosophy* [M]. Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2011:59.