

Improving My Strengths & Weaknesses

Identification

In football there are three main aspects that put together my performance; skills/techniques, strategies/tactics and fitness. My aim is to analyse my performances and then identify my strengths and weaknesses. Then, I will set some clear, realistic and achievable goals that I can reach by taking on an action plan for 6 weeks. From looking at my strengths and weaknesses I will develop this action plan mainly to improve my weaknesses. I also need to have a method of evaluating the plan, so it can be considered a success or failure, so I can learn to develop a more efficient action plan next time.

I am going to look into the three aspects (skills/techniques, strategies/tactics and fitness) to first of all identify three strengths and secondly the three weaknesses of each aspect, I can judge my strengths and weaknesses by recording myself and watching back for analysing.

Strengths

Skills/Techniques

1. Long Shot: I believe my long shot is pretty successful, as I train it quite a lot and my legs are strong enough to get quite a lot of power. Although I think I could use my long shot a lot more in a match, so I think I need to be more confident. In training I hit 8/10 on goal and in a match 1 out of 4 long shots I score.
2. Long Pass: My long passes are quite accurate; they usually land within 8 yards of my target. I often practice a variety of long passes in training, I have accomplished each technique including inside swerve, outside swerve, straight on, chips and spin passes. I could improve the speed of how long it takes my body to get into position. In training 8/10 land within 8 yards of my target and in a match ½ get to my target, this is because of the increased pressure says my manager.
3. First Touch: My first touch is often very composed, controlled and often the ball is left where I want it to be. Although my first touch is quite successful I could maybe be more aware of what's going on around me eg. If nobody is in the way I could take a first touch, which allows me to run on to, or if I'm tightly marked and the ball is in the air I could decide not to take a first touch and go for a header instead. In training my first touch is successful 90% of the time. In a match I do not try as many first touches, I stay pretty basic, my first touch in a match is successful, my manager says I succeed 85% of the time.

Fitness

1. Speed: I believe that speed is a major strength in my game although there's still a lot of room for improvement. I know when to use my speed and when not too, I can twist and turn quite well at speed and slow down pretty quickly. In a game, I usually can out pace 9/10 people.
2. Jumping: I would say my jumping is above average, I am quite confident in the air when going to head a ball, my standing jump is good and my running jump is also quite good although I don't have the bravery to do many running jumps. Maybe if I improved my technique I would be braver. There is still a lot of room for improvement, as I have never tried to improve my jump. In a game my coach says I usually out jump 2 out 3 people.
3. Upper body strength: I am quite a strong person, I do try to increase my strength by doing weights in the gym although I could do with a new programme. I often try to use my strength as much as I can because it's quite important to be able to hold the ball up as a forward, I'm pretty confident with my strength as I have experienced many battles with all kinds of players. My manager says I'm pretty capable strength wise and I usually out battle 8/10 players although if I got stronger my strength would play a major part in my game.

Strategies/Tactics

1. Motivating: When in a game I try to use the right ratio of positive and negative feedback. I also try to deal it to the right kind of player. When in a game I try to motivate the team by setting targets, e.g. to score a goal. Although if I'm not very close to my teammates I tend to sit back and leave others to motivate but after a while I begin to. After the game my Dad always tells me I should talk more in a match so I can be clearer with players.
2. Short Balls: In a game my team keeps the majority of possession with short balls. When long balls are tried we often lose possession. Short balls usually prove successful when there's a lot of player movement. I often try to move into useful space and use intelligent passes. Our manager usually begs us to keep balls short because he knows this is when we're most successful.

Weaknesses**Skills/Techniques**

1. Dribbling and flair: When I'm on the ball I can dribble quite well but I cannot keep the ball very close to my feet, defenders then have an

easy way to take the ball away from me. In my position (forward) it is very important to take on players so I need flair. I have a few tricks, but if I had more it would slow down the defender's reaction. My manager says if I improved this side of game I'd be more composed and have more time on the ball.

2. Left Foot: I do not use my left foot much as it is less coordinated, when I do, 1 in 2 times I'm successful. I don't have much confidence in my left foot and if possible I'll turn to my right. If my left foot was okay I think I would be a much better footballer, my manager says I drastically need to improve my left foot.
3. First-time short shot and heading: This is a crucial part of my game that needs to be improved because I'm required to use these skills at least twice in a game. My timing needs to be improved, my coordination needs to be improved and my composure needs improving. I score a first time shot or header once in every four games say my teammates.

Fitness

1. Agility: After a game I often get lots of aches and pains. I usually don't attempt overhead kicks, bicycle kicks or any other flexible movement. If I try something like this I usually land incorrectly and I'm successful 10% of the time. My manager says this is my biggest weakness.
2. Balance: My balance is good but compared to my other fitness aspects I'm quite weak. After a running at speed I find it hard to adjust in a totally different direction, I may slip or take a long time to stop. When players fly in with tackles it usually takes a few seconds to get my body shape back. My manager says my balance is not much to worry about.
3. Stamina: Once again, stamina is not that much of a weakness. Although when playing at high levels I find I may be extremely tired in some stages which can prove extremely costly. If I had more stamina I wouldn't have to think too much about pacing myself and could focus on other aspects of the game. My manager also agrees with me.

Strategies/Tactics

1. Offside Trap: As a forward I have to have ways of beating the offside trap. At the moment I simply try to stay onside and time my runs. I could maybe distract defenders by being in an offside position and coming back on when I anticipate a ball. My friends say when they watch me I get caught offside 2/10 times and I could give defenders a yard and still beat them with pace.
2. Dropping Off: Sometimes when we play good opposition the midfield need more options. I sometimes drop off to do this, but I need to be more sharp and decisive so the defenders cannot read me. My manager says I've got the basic idea, but as soon as I drop off he says I should immediately shout for the ball and this will give me more time.

Action Planning For Improvement

Now that I have identified my strengths and weaknesses I can set some clear, realistic and achievable goals.

For skill and technique my dribbling needs to be improved for me to be more at ease when on the ball and prevent being tackled, I aim to gain a lower loss of ball percentage per match, a longer time on the ball per match and to look almost effortless when in game. I currently lose the ball about 25% of the time, I aim to lose the ball 15% of the time.

My left foot is probably the weakest part of my game so I cannot aim to high. At the moment I hardly ever pass with my left foot, I aim to pass with my left foot at least 25% of the time in a match. I don't use my left foot much to do first touches, usually about 1 in 10 times, I aim to control the ball with my left foot 25% of the time and shoot at least once with my left foot because at the moment I never shoot with my left.

I feel my agility needs improving because I get a lot of comments concerning agile movements and why I do not attempt them. I aim to be able to execute overhead kicks, bicycle kicks and any other flexible movements because at the moment I do not try any of these. I aim to take many more people on in a game with agility ie. Twisting and turning, because usually I find I just take on opponents with pace. I will time myself running in and out of cones and set goals from this.

My body strength is already very good but if I improved it I think this would help in my bravery to attempt the agile movements above, I also think it would improve my jumping if I trained my legs as well as my speed. To set goals I will record my height of jump, record weight lifted in different exercises and time taken to run 100 metres.

I have 6 weeks to achieve my goals.

Method Of Achieving Goals

I am firstly going to set up a few tests to accurately identify how good I am, then I will analyse the results and set some targets. From analysing the results I will set up an action plan to improve the certain parts of the skill I to be done over 6 weeks.

Initial Tests & Results

Dribbling

1. Time myself how long it takes to dribble in and out of cones up to 80metres, each cone 5metres apart. **20 Seconds**
2. Time myself dribbling at pace keeping the ball 3metres close to myself at all times over 80metres. **15 Seconds**

3. Time myself dribbling backwards and forwards 5 times in between 5metres. **8 Seconds**

Left Foot

1. Count how many times I can bring the ball down within 1 metre out of 20. **17 times**
2. Count how many goals I score outside of the D out of 20. **12 times**
3. Count how many keeps ups I can do with my left foot (10 times add up and divide by ten to get an accurate result. **6 Kick Ups**

Agility

1. Time myself how long it takes to sprint in and out of cones up to 80metres, each cone 5metres apart. **12 Seconds**
2. Time myself jumping in and out of circles over 80metres to get to a finish line. **22 Seconds**

Strength

1. Jump on spot and record height. **9 Feet**
2. Record weight lifted for each major exercise. (Bench Press **40K**, Shoulder Press **40K**, Wide grip Pull-ups (count) **5**, Bicep Curl **20K**, Leg Press **70K**, Calf Raises **50K**)
3. Time myself over a sprint of 100metres. **12.5 Seconds**

Additional Goals

Agility: I aim to be able to run in and out cones in 11.5 sec

Action Plan

Dribbling

To improve my dribbling I am going to set up 3 training sessions which are:

Defend Your Ball Game – Page 36, Soccer Training

Purpose: To improve basic dribbling, screening and running with the ball

Slalom Drill – Page 41, Soccer Training

Purpose: To improve technique for running at speed with the ball

1v1 Game – Page 42, Soccer Training

Purpose: To improve dribbling, screening and turning with the ball to beat a player

Left Foot

For improving my left foot I am going to set up 2 training sessions, which are:

Shuttle Drill – Page 21, Soccer Training

Purpose: - To develop short/medium/long-range passing techniques and ground/aerial control with my left foot

Circle Drill – Page 24, Soccer Training

Purpose: To develop general passing and controlling techniques, as well as awareness of where to pass the ball

Agility

To improve my agility I will practice using 1 training session which is:

Mixed Circuit

(Starting, stopping, turning, falling, rolling, sliding and shoulder jostling.)

Purpose: To develop agility and stamina

Strength

For improving my strength I will use 4 training sessions advised by my gym instructor for each major part of my body which are:

Chest & Triceps

Bench Press, Bench Press incline, Flies, Pec Dec and Tricep Curl.

Shoulders & Stomach

Shoulder Press, Side Raises, Rear Pec Dec, Shrugs and Sit-ups

Back & Biceps

Row, Widegrip Pull Downs, Close Grip Pull Downs and Bicep Curls.

Legs

Lunges, Quadriceps Raises, Leg Curls and Calve Curls

For each of the above, exercises will be done firstly 10 times, then 9 and 8 times.

Schedule**Action Plan Results**

| Dribbling | Initial Result | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 |
|---|----------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Time myself how long it takes to dribble in and out of cones up to 80metres, each cone 5metres apart. | 20s | 19s | 18.5s | 18s | 18s | 17.5s | 17.5s |
| Time myself dribbling at pace | 16s | 15s | 15.75s | 15.5s | 15.5s | 15s | 15s |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-----|--------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| keeping the ball 3metres close to myself at all times over 80metres. | | | | | | | |
| Time myself dribbling backwards and forwards 5 times in between 5metres. | 12s | 12s | 11.5s | 11.5s | 11s | 10s | 9s |
| Left Foot | | | | | | | |
| Count how many times I can bring the ball down within 1 metre out of 20. | 17 | 17 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 19 |
| Count how many goals I score outside of the D out of 20. | 12 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| Count how many keeps ups I can do with my left foot (10 times add up and divide by ten to get an accurate result) | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Agility | | | | | | | |
| Time myself how long it takes to sprint in and out of cones up to 80metres, each cone 5metres apart. | 12s | 12s | 11.75s | 11.75s | 11.5s | 11.5s | 11.25s |
| Time myself jumping in and out of circles over 80metres to get to a finish line. | 22s | 21s | 21s | 20s | 20s | 19s | 18.5s |
| Strength | | | | | | | |
| Jump on spot and record height. | 9ft | 9ft | 9.1ft | 9.2ft | 9.3ft | 9.3ft | 9.4ft |
| <u>Record weight lifted for each major exercise</u> Bench Press | 40K 40K | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Shoulder Press | 5 | | | | | | |
| Wide grip Pull-ups | 20K | | | | | | |
| Bicep Curl | 70K | | | | | | |
| Leg Press | 50K | | | | | | |
| Calf Raises | 65K | | | | | | |
| Time myself over a sprint of 100metres. | 12.5s | 12.5s | 12.5s | 12.25s | 12.25s | 12.15s | 12.10s |

Evaluation

My 6 week action plan has aided my football game and helped my perform at a higher level within my sport. All the aspects I set out to improve at the start of the 6-week program have been achieved so therefore this was a success for me and it will hopefully continue to help my football as I practise these aspects more.

My results were good with the biggest improvement coming in strength I think this is because I'm at the age where muscle is built easier, this is proved because I have added 20% of my first lifted weight on average before the 6 week action plan. I have looked back over my strengths and weaknesses I evaluated before I completed the 6 week action plan and several things have changed, for example my stamina is no longer a weakness, I think this is because I've been doing allsorts of training e.g. running, jumping and weights. My agility is no longer a weakness I think this is mainly because of the mixed circuit as I found it quite challenging and there are a lot of techniques used.

My strategies towards football have changed and I now try to drop off to the midfield a lot more, I think this is because I've identified this as a weakness therefore I am more aware.

As I said my fitness weaknesses have improved e.g. stamina; I now have more energy spare towards the end of the game and I do not have to pace myself as much. My agility has improved and I now feel a lot less injury prone and I can now attempt a variety of agile movements.

If I were to do this program again I would change these aspects: I think I would try to improve my first time shot and heading because this is one of the most used skills as a forward. I would also work on my first touch and long shot so I have a better chance of holding the ball and scoring from a one-off long shot.

Overall my action was a great success as I've improved all of my weaknesses, I would recommend to most footballers at my level to use it to their needs.