

Research on Practical Problems and Counter-measures of Professional Football Manager Training in China

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Abstract: This study analyzes prominent issues in the current professional football manager training in China, including outdated curriculum systems, insufficient practical teaching, weak faculty resources, and inadequate certification and evaluation systems. It proposes strategies such as developing a modernized curriculum system, enhancing practical instruction, strengthening faculty development, and improving certification and evaluation mechanisms. The goal is to cultivate multi-skilled managerial talents with professional expertise, practical skills, and an international perspective, thereby driving the high-quality development of China's football industry.

Keywords: Chinese football, professional football managers, talent cultivation, Football industry

1. Introduction

The football industry is rapidly flourishing, with professional managers serving as central figures in club operations whose competencies directly influence industrial competitiveness. However, China's professional football manager training system currently has significant shortcomings, such as outdated curricula, insufficient practical training, weak teaching resources, and inadequate certification and evaluation mechanisms, which severely limit the cultivation of high-quality management talent. This paper analyzes these existing problems and proposes optimization strategies, including constructing a modern curriculum system, strengthening practical training, enhancing faculty capabilities, and improving certification and evaluation mechanisms, aiming to promote sustainable and high-quality development of China's football industry.

2 Analysis of Existing Problems in Professional Football Manager Training

2.1 Imperfect Curriculum System

The current curriculum for training professional football managers lags significantly behind the rapid development of the football industry. The curriculum is updated slowly, failing to timely incorporate cutting-edge international trends such as big data-driven player evaluation, AI-assisted tactical analysis, and virtual event management, causing a disconnection between trainees' theoretical knowledge and industry practices^[1]. The structural imbalance within the curriculum is also evident: it either excessively emphasizes football techniques and tactics, neglecting the integration of knowledge from management, marketing, and finance; or excessively focuses on abstract management theories, lacking contextualized teaching within actual industry scenarios, which results in trainees' difficulty in managing complex operational situations effectively. Furthermore, interdisciplinary integration remains superficial, with insufficient depth in combining sports science, economics, law, and communication, making it challenging to cultivate professional managers with comprehensive interdisciplinary perspectives, ultimately limiting football clubs' commercial competitiveness and their capacity for sustainable development.

2.2 Insufficient Practical Teaching

Practical teaching is crucial for cultivating professional football managers; however, significant issues such as scarcity of practical opportunities, monotonous formats, and ineffective collaboration mechanisms severely hinder trainees' practical skills from aligning with industry demands^[2]. Most training institutions have limited cooperation with professional clubs, making it difficult for trainees to deeply engage in core operations such as transfer negotiations, commercial sponsorships, and financial planning, thus restricting their ability to convert theoretical knowledge into practical skills. Current practical training often relies on outdated case analyses and scenario simulations, lacking real market pressure and interpersonal complexity. Consequently, trainees develop overly idealized decision-making approaches, ill-equipped to handle real-world operational challenges. Moreover, collaborations between academic institutions and enterprises often remain superficial, lacking long-term effective guidance, supervision, and feedback mechanisms, substantially weakening the practical training outcomes and failing to cultivate high-quality management professionals ready for real football industry scenarios.

2.3 Weak Faculty Resources

Qualified faculty are pivotal for professional football manager training; however, a severe shortage of "dual-excellence" teachers currently constrains the teaching quality^[3]. On the one hand, most instructors either excel in theoretical knowledge but lack practical club experience, resulting in abstract, disconnected teaching, or have rich experience as former players but insufficient theoretical foundations, preventing effective integration of theory and practice. On the other hand, there is a serious shortage of teachers with an international perspective. Limited understanding of global football industry trends, international event operations, and multicultural management strategies restricts trainees' development of global awareness and hinders their readiness for increasingly prevalent international cooperation demands. Furthermore, inadequate teacher training systems, characterized by a lack of ongoing knowledge updates and instructional skill enhancement mechanisms, make it difficult for faculty to keep pace with rapid industrial changes and technological advancements. As a result, teaching content quickly becomes outdated, significantly diminishing the effectiveness of training and increasing the risk of talent cultivation becoming disconnected from industry requirements.

2.4 Inadequate Certification and Evaluation Systems

Significant deficiencies exist within the current certification and evaluation systems for professional football manager training, impeding the precision and quality of talent development^[4]. The multiplicity of certification authorities, each with different standards and limited credibility, results in inconsistent assessments. Many certifications emphasize only theoretical examinations or short-term training, neglecting assessments of practical competencies and professional ethics, thus complicating market evaluation of managerial abilities, exacerbating difficulties in talent mobility and club recruitment. Evaluation methods are typically simplistic and rigid, primarily focused on end-of-course knowledge tests, and thus fail to dynamically assess trainees' practical decision-making, commercial negotiation, and teamwork capabilities, leading to the prevalent phenomenon of "high scores but low practical competence" and severely undermining the training effectiveness. Additionally, the absence of ongoing, dynamic evaluation mechanisms and lifelong learning frameworks for managers further limits sustained talent development, rendering professionals unable to adapt to the rapidly evolving demands of the football industry, ultimately weakening the overall competitiveness and sustainable development capacity of the sector.

3 Strategies for Optimizing Professional Football Manager Training

3.1 Constructing a Modern Curriculum System

Building a modern curriculum system is pivotal for optimizing the training of professional football managers, requiring precise alignment with trends in football industry digitalization and interdisciplinary integration. Curriculum content should incorporate cutting-edge practices such as big data-driven player evaluation, artificial intelligence-assisted tactical decision-making, and virtual event operations. Specialized courses like "Digital Transformation of the Football Industry" should be introduced, leveraging experiences from top European leagues to foster trainees' awareness of technological frontiers. Moreover, it is essential to deepen interdisciplinary integration, for instance, utilizing sponsorship negotiation courses to incorporate knowledge from law, economics, and communication, thereby enhancing trainees'

comprehensive decision-making and commercial expansion capabilities. Additionally, emphasizing scenario-based teaching using domestic club brand operations can effectively improve problem-solving abilities. Structurally, curricula must transcend single-dimension limitations by developing a modular progression system balancing professional skills, organizational management, and commercial marketing, catering to various stages of talent growth and fostering sustainable industry development.

3.2 Enhancing Practical Teaching Components

Strengthening practical teaching is essential to enhance the operational abilities of professional football managers and to align training closely with industry demands. Firstly, partnerships should be deepened with domestic and international professional clubs, event organizers, and sports marketing institutions to establish extensive internship platforms, enabling trainees to actively participate in local event management, international transfers, and global brand promotion, thus broadening their international perspectives. Secondly, overcoming traditional teaching limitations by introducing real commercial project-driven and immersive practical teaching methods—such as involving trainees throughout the entire process of club ticketing strategies and match-day operational management—can effectively cultivate project planning, market execution, and on-the-spot adaptability. Additionally, applying virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technologies to simulate commercial negotiations and event operations enhances realism, while integrating online-offline platforms comprehensively improves practical skills. Lastly, establishing detailed practical experience archives for trainees can precisely track capability development trajectories, facilitating accurate matching between talent training and club positions.

3.3 Strengthening Faculty Development

Enhancing faculty strength is critical for improving professional football manager training quality. On one hand, international recruitment channels should be expanded to attract professional managers experienced in top European leagues and interdisciplinary experts in sports economics and marketing, thus enriching practical depth and theoretical robustness in teaching. On the other hand, nurturing local faculty by organizing regular overseas training in leading football leagues helps localize advanced teaching methodologies and management philosophies. Moreover, establishing interdisciplinary collaboration platforms within institutions can cultivate dual-skilled instructors proficient in both theory and practice. Furthermore, developing a comprehensive mentor network combining academia, industry professionals, and retired football stars provides personalized and targeted guidance for trainees. Concurrently, encouraging faculty research on the football industry and facilitating the transfer of cutting-edge findings into teaching ensures curricular alignment with industry developments, continuously enhancing instructional quality.

3.4 Improving Certification and Evaluation Mechanisms

Refining certification and evaluation systems is crucial for enhancing training quality and standardizing talent criteria for professional football managers. Firstly, aligning proactively with international standards by integrating certification frameworks and course resources from authoritative bodies like UEFA and FIFA enhances domestic certification credibility, creating pathways for professional managers to engage in international assignments. Secondly, developing diversified evaluation systems encompassing three core dimensions—knowledge mastery (policy regulations, digital operational trends), practical competencies (player transfer negotiations, commercial planning, crisis management), and professional attitudes (ethics, teamwork, learning commitment)—and employing a comprehensive assessment approach combining online evaluations, practical tests, and enterprise mentor feedback, ensures precise evaluation of trainees' overall qualifications. Additionally, establishing continuous dynamic feedback mechanisms based on professional development trajectories and employer feedback facilitates timely optimization of curriculum design, instructional methods, and

certification standards, ensuring training relevance and competitiveness.

4. Conclusion and Prospects

This study analyzed core issues in China's professional football manager training system, primarily identified as outdated curricula, insufficient interdisciplinary integration, scarce and monotonous practical teaching resources, a shortage of dual-skilled faculty with international perspectives, and chaotic certification and evaluation mechanisms lacking dynamic tracking. Drawing from advanced domestic and international experiences, strategies proposed include constructing modernized curricula, enhancing practical teaching, optimizing faculty development, and refining certification and evaluation systems. These approaches aim to comprehensively elevate training quality and cultivate versatile talent possessing professional expertise, practical skills, and international outlooks, precisely meeting football industry demands. Future efforts should focus on digital transformation, international cooperation, faculty internationalization, and dynamic talent assessment to continuously adapt to the evolving industrial landscape, ultimately driving the high-quality development of professional football manager training in China.

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