

Football teambuilding in the pre-season

For the teams and especially for the coaches, the most important time in the year of a football team begins in the early summer, the season preparation. The focus of planning for the new season is usually stamina, strength, speed, athleticism, coordination, technique and tactics. Meanwhile, an increasingly growing aspect of preparation also lies in the mental and socio-emotional field and the so-called teambuilding.

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Conceptualization team, team building and team spirit

Especially about the terms team, teambuilding and team spirit, there are currently no clear definitions, delimitations, more detailed classifications or even comprehensive curricula that focus on the training of cooperation, communication, cohesion and the sense of togetherness.

Team building is a collective term for various types of activities that are used to improve social relationships and define roles within teams, often involving collaborative tasks. Team building actions aim to improve the interpersonal relationships in an organization and make service delivery more successful and friendlier.

Nevertheless, to systematically approach the problem, we have compiled several statements and assumptions on the subject of team spirit that can be widely read about this topic in the field of football training:

- Team spirit leads to success
- Team spirit cannot be measured
- Team spirit is a socio-emotional effect
- The emergence of team spirit presupposes a certain social competence (empathy ability) among the system members
- Team spirit cannot be experienced alone
- Team spirit can only arise in a group of people. In addition, they must interact in a positive way and consensus on their values and goals.
- Team spirit is a synergetic process
- In the presence of team spirit, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.
- Often the work of team spirit is assumed when a low-class club defeats a higher class.
- The emergence or presence of team spirit can be felt by system members, triggering positive emotions.
- Team spirit seems to be closely linked to our human capacity for cooperation
- The path to the emergence and preservation of team spirit is a fragile process that can only be exercised or strengthened to a limited degree.
- Team spirit can become a kind of "perpetuum mobile" in the best-case scenario.

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In our opinion, team spirit is a positive feeling that can only be experienced in the community, and that can also transport or promote a set of common values and goals. Team spirit is thus a socio-emotional phenomenon that provides the decisive impulse for the functioning of a team, often consisting of several individual specialists in the respective positions, to make games successful and victorious as a whole.

But how can this socio-emotional process be evoked or even "trained"? We assume that you can train team spirit, as well as other focuses of training such as athleticism or coordination and tactics, and indeed must - and regularly - to achieve a true sustainability.

If we assume that the team spirit is a socially evoked emotion, then this process takes place in the neural networks of the individuals involved. And as with cognitive learning, we can or must assume that the first theoretical exploration of this topic does not yet provide the appropriate impetus to bring about a real change of behavior in the player. No athletic trainer would assume that after the first strength training session, the corresponding impulses for a significant muscle growth are set. Instead, he will design the training plan so that it comes as regular as possible repetitions of the strength exercises to specifically develop muscle parts.

Analogously, a training of the team spirit should be designed so that a regular repetition of the achievement of this condition is planned from the beginning. As with learning cognitive content, long-term internalization of content is only consolidated through repeated learning / practice. Somewhat different is the longer-term accessibility when learning by experiencing, because here, too, a feeling and further sensory impressions are stored along with the actual content, which demonstrably leads to an easier and more sustainable internalization of content.

Special feature of the socio-emotional state Team spirit

The peculiarity of training and anchoring of team spirit is that this is a (community) feeling, which consequently can only be practiced in the community and, above all, must be felt comprehensibly by all players.

So much for the theory - but how can team spirit be created?

In recent years, we have repeatedly had the experience that a well-rehearsed orchestra is an excellent metaphor for a well-functioning football team. The saying "after the break we have not found our rhythm" does not describe the incidents in a musical ensemble, but that of a football team, after the half-time break, when they had no more real access to the game.

Very important in this context is a musical phenomenon called Groove. The term describes a musical state that can emerge when different rhythmic patterns superimpose and complement each other in a positive way, and the rhythmic-musical process becomes a communal flow experience for those involved in it. This usually leads to the persons acting, that the neurotransmitter ("happiness messenger") dopamine is distributed. The common groove thus creates a collective feeling of happiness that makes the "musician" feel good.

Perceiving and feeling Groove does not require any special musical ability, and even musical laypeople have fine "antennae" for whether or not Groove came into existence, simply by paying attention to their gut feelings and deciding if they feel comfortable or not. There is a whole range of similarities and direct relationships between the musical phenomenon Groove and the socio-emotional phenomenon team spirit.

Ultimately, Groove is nothing more than a team spirit evoked by a common, rhythmic-musical process. Everyone involved in the musical groove process can feel this phenomenon as a feeling of well-being and happiness.

In our team workshops, we pay particular attention to this phenomenon and repeatedly create situations in which real groove can be sparked and felt. A very special moment is the first, shared experience of Groove. Especially for the newbies of this phenomenon, it feels like a kind of limbo. To work out exactly these situations is the great art of this team-building measure.

Emotional bonding of the team

The drum has always been the instrument with which people could connect and assure themselves in an increasingly complex and individualized world of community. The drum is usually an instrument with which one can playfully enter a collaborative music without long previous lessons. With other instruments (such as a violin or a saxophone) it often takes several weeks and months until the appropriate playing technique is mastered so that can be thought of playing together, not to mention the groove phenomenon described above.

Even when playing drums together, achieving a solid groove for drumming is not easy to accomplish, since Groove presupposes different rhythmic patterns, which complement each other in a positive way, becoming a "higher" whole.

Samba Batucada, the music of the Rio Carnival, which is made exclusively with percussion instruments and drums, has clear advantages against other

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rhythms. All instruments used in the Samba Batucada Drum Event have a clear sound spectrum. In the diversity of these different timbres, also layman are able, under guidance, to "hold together" the various rhythmic patterns of each instrument and thus to fulfill the musical requirements for the emergence of Groove perfectly. In addition, Samba is a music known to us and often causes the positive association of Brazilian zest for life.

The term "Samba Kicker" is well established in the German media and is certainly characterized by the many world titles that the Brazilian Football Association has already won and stands for a high-culture and imaginative and offensive football and perfect ball control. Brazilian football is closely linked to the samba.

Ambitious goal

But only a little bit of fun while playing the drums is it not enough. Because the positive effects, which are caused by the groove, end in the moment in which the drumming stops. To ensure a profound, sustainable effect of team spirit we tie the collective drumming into a very ambitious goal. This means that at our teambuilding workshops, we challenge participants to be able to record a Samba Batucada musical piece at the end of the drum event that is so good that you want to listen to the recording again and again. Another challenge is that the recorded piece includes a distinctive samba beginning, various samba groove parts, as well as various solos and breaks. Such an ambitious goal seems almost impossible in the short amount of time available at the beginning of the teambuilding workshop.

This high goal, however, can only be achieved as a real collective, as a well-functioning Bateria (Samba drum-group), that can respond to the respective other instrument groups. For example, if one group of instruments speed up the tempo, then everyone else must respond to it and adjust their tempo to make the groove work. Otherwise, the musical process "tilts" and is perceived as cacophony rather than music. On the pitch, this could mean that when a striker attacks and the other part of the team does not move forward accordingly, they create spaces for the opposing team.

Besides all the fun, the drumming workshop is thus also about solving the challenging task. If the Bateria creates a successful recording at the end, the very positive feeling is spread across the group that they have solved this ambitious challenge as a real team and as a successful Samba Bateria. Now it is about enjoying and celebrating this success as a team (just like a soccer team after a victorious match) and, above all, anchoring it sustainably.

Pack the success

With the positive feeling of successfully mastering a real big challenge, supported by the hyped flow experience of the groove, we anchor this winning mentality with Escola-de-Samba-techniques.

And before the next real challenging game we can unleash that outstanding emotion and mental attitude, this "we-can-win-ALL" feeling with just a few bars, so that all players are motivated to the tips of their hair in the shortest possible time and go to the field with the best sense of confidence and a winning mindset.

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The next step is to pick up on this outstanding event in various training and preparation phases - but then with less effort, as in the initial drum event. In the next few weeks, the team must be able to get into the groove without any tools and supportive guidance. For a real sustainable and successful effect to be generated, it is almost inevitable to develop a groove ritual. During this process, the goals for the season as well as values and rules are integrated into the groove ritual.

Values that can optionally be included in the groove ritual:

- dealing with the opponent / respect / thank you
- Football is a game
- Real sportsmanship
- Commandment of fairness
- Follow the rules
- Peace Idea of Sports (after Coubertin)

Conclusion

There are a lot of parallels, associations and metaphors between a well-functioning soccer team and a grooving Samba Bateria that can perfectly be used to convey the importance of team spirit and its state as a positive experience. The art of this team-building experience, however, is to anchor this team spirit in such a way that this performance-enhancing, communal emotion can be transferred to the performance of the competition and can also be reactivated in the cabin shortly before the match.

Background



Since 2008, Frank Vollet, the founder, developer and conductor of Escola de Samba GmbH & Co. KG, has been team building with Samba drums. In 2016, together with the entire team of the DFB women's national football team, he was allowed to carry out the central teambuilding action in preparation for the Olympic football tournament. The joint project was called "Groove for Gold". The team succeeded in Rio for the first time to win Olympic gold by the victory of the Olympic tournament in Rio2016. Thus, the desired goal of the "Grooves for Gold" was achieved.

Quote

Doris Fitschen (2016 manager women's national team of the DFB): "Developing a Samba rhythm together in the team was a fascinating experience and also great fun. The groove ultimately carried us to the Maracana Stadium in Rio. "

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