

## KICKING FORM OF FOUR-TO-SIX-YEARS-OLD CHILDREN FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF COACHING

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### **Introduction**

It is not easy to teach basic kick skill to beginners. Because a natural leg swing is not the same as an instep-kick motion. For example, a natural swing under the knee is synchronized with ankle flexion though the ankle must be extended to kick the ball with the instep kick. The natural movement might be caused by innate neural circuit, for the EMG of the *tibialis anterior* is observed even when an expert kicked the ball with the instep kick (Fumoto, 1995). Moreover, a recommended compact swing under the knee is not common for young players and a big swing using the hip joint is often observed. This bad habit might be also related to natural movement in childhood.

The purpose of this experiment is to observe younger children's natural kicking forms from the viewpoint of kicking technique used in football games.

### **Methods**

A ball for rhythmic sportive gymnastics was kicked by children four, five, and six years old aiming at a target and a VTR was taken from one side. The target with a real picture of a ball in the center was stuck on a wall three meters apart from the ball. Instruction was only to "Aim the target!" After five trails an experimenter suggested to kick the ball twice hard. Finally children were asked to kick a ball with inner side of the ankle (inside kick). The experimenter touched the inner side of the ankles of the children and instructed to kick on the surface and no more explanation was added.

### **Results & Discussion**

Many children showed typical immature form without a backswing suggested by Wickstrom(1977). However, almost half of the children extended the ankle at the impact and kick the ball with a compact swing under the knee without a thigh swing. These characteristics are desirable for instep kick. When a strong kick was instructed, however, most children kicked the ball with big swings using a thigh swing. Finally most children who were asked inside kick stood sideways and swing the leg in half circle. This form is a bad form of the inside kick mentioned by Fumoto(1995).

### **Conclusion**

Typical kicking characteristics leading to bad kick forms were observed in children's natural kicking behavior. However, some good characteristics were also observed. Therefore, coaches must be sensitive to those good and bad elements.

### **References**

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