ON A SPECIFIC TRAINING THEORY FOR TEAM SPORTS

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Over the last thirty years of my life, I have relentlessly sought what might be called a new – or at least different – training theory, one that explains, describes and underpins sport-specific training for so-called team sports, and which is genuinely distinct from the General Theory of Training.
Step by step, we have made some progress by studying the origins of this general theory, which has been developed on the basis of research into and the practice of individual sports – particularly athletics and weightlifting – and which gained significant momentum from the 1950s onwards.
We must bear in mind that, until the 1970s, the subject of General Training Theory did not exist as a module within the Physical Education and Sport degree programme, nor was it included in the curricula of the coaching schools for the various sports in our country.
During this period of developing and applying the models proposed by the General Theory, we have identified numerous obstacles to their full utilisation in team sports training, which has led us to take a greater interest in formulating a Special Theory.
To this end, we have drawn on the contributions of the sciences that have sought to expand the body of knowledge regarding human complexity accumulated over the last third of the last century.
This knowledge has led us to conclude that the so-called 'complexity sciences' provide sufficiently valid scientific tools to aid our understanding of all kinds of events that occur in the practice of team sports.
Thanks to these tools, we have been able to establish certain principles applicable to the study and implementation of training methods that provide knowledge and enable optimal performance in team sports.

These premises can be summarised as follows:

The classical paradigm is not valid for identifying the interactive structures of games which, due to their dynamic nature, can only be identified by the complexity paradigm.

Although a specific theory may be formulated for all team sports, each sport must propose and develop specific elements within this framework, whilst ensuring they are tailored to and compatible with the specific nature of the game as defined by its respective rules.

When studying all team sports, we must focus on the athlete as an individual, on how the specific requirements of their sport engage their human nature; this undoubtedly leads us to the need to develop an understanding of the athlete as much as, if not more than, the sport they practise.

Any specific training method or system must be adapted to the complex conditions inherent in the information and interactions that arise during competition, between the players, the environment and the object involved in the activity.

Any means or technology used to assess performance must focus on specific qualitative aspects, rather than quantitative ones, which are characteristic of general theory, whilst never losing sight of the specific and contingent nature of such information.

There is also a need to provide guidelines for training planning that address the demands of competition as well as the preservation of players' sporting careers.