

Implicit beliefs, goal setting and behaviour on the pitch in youth elite football players.

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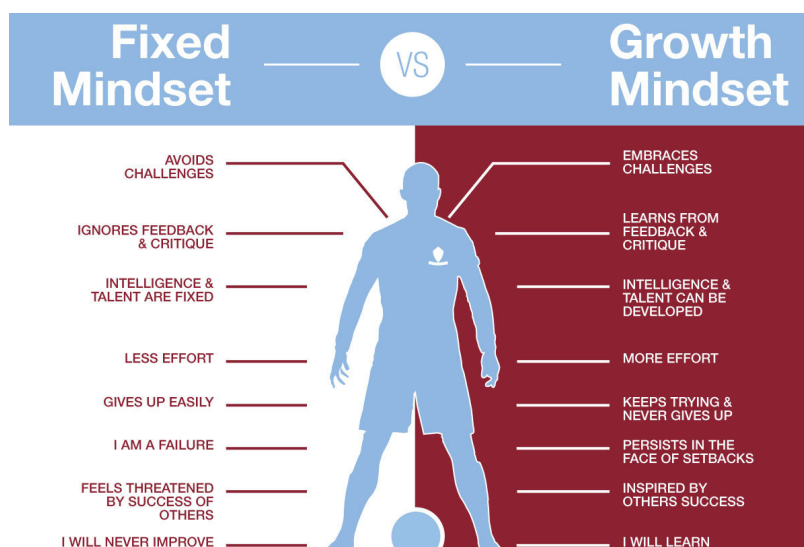
Introduction:

A lot of talented football players do not make it as an elite football player. This is partly due to the immense competition. However, psychological factors like implicit beliefs and goal setting might also be of influence. Implicit beliefs (mindset), is about how players see their talent. Do they believe that their football talent is fixed then they have a fixed mindset. Do they believe that their football talent is malleable through effort and learning, then they have a growth mindset. With these different mindsets different characteristics come forward. Players with a growth mindset give up easily and avoid challenging situations, and with that pass up valuable learning opportunities. Players with a growth mindset embrace challenging situations, these situations come with the greatest learning opportunities. These are situations in which talent can be most improved.

Besides the theory of implicit beliefs there is also the achievement goal theory. This is about how and what kind of goals people set for themselves. There are performance goals and mastery goals. Performance goals are focused on the results and therefore doing well and improving is also depended on the result. Mastery goals are focused on yourself, for example play no wrong passes during a match. This goal can be achieved even when you are losing. Therefore, this goal is not depending on the result.

The research question:

Is there a change of behaviour in youth football players after a setback and is there a smaller change of behaviour in incremental (growth) youth football players after a setback in comparison to entity (fixed) youth football players?



Method:

18 elite youth football players participated in this study. Through CNAAQ-2 and AGQ-R-NL-Sport the mindset and type goal setting per player was determined. Then every training they played two matches, during these matches the GenGee performance variables distance covered at different speed levels was measured (external load). The external load of the first match has been used as baseline. The second match after the win or loss also certain distance were covered. The differences between the two matches in distance covered at the different speed levels is the reaction on a setback, losing the match were measured and related to the mindset of each player.

Questionnaires used for:

- Mindset
- Goal-setting

GenGee data used:

- Running distance
- Effective running distance
- High speed running distance

Results:

The results suggest that players with a growth mindset and setting mastery goals show more steady behavior after a setback compared to players with a fixed mindset and setting performance goals. Steady behavior means that they react less to a setback, which is favorable when the team is behind or ahead during the game. However, the results are not of significant influence.

Recommendations:

Guide/train youth players in to having a growth mindset and set mastery goals!

Further research:

Further research should focus on the same research question. However a new method should be designed and more players should be included.



"Amateurs call it genius, masters call it practice."

Thierry Henry

Theories:

- Carol Dweck (1999) –Theory of implicit beliefs
- Nicholls (1984) – Achievement goal theory

A special thanks to:

- Sparta Rotterdam
- Forward Football
- Beer Flik and Flip de Bruijn
- Prof. dr. Geert Savelsbergh

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