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CORE SKILLS IN SOCCER: A STUDY OF BASIC DRIBBLING, PASSING, AND SHOOTING TECHNIQUES IN YOUTH PLAYERS

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Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the core soccer skills consisting of dribbling, passing, and shooting among youth players. The study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design. The research subjects consisted of 30 youth soccer players aged 10–12 years who participated in a soccer development program. Data collection was conducted using basic soccer skill tests, including dribbling, passing, and shooting assessments. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in the form of mean, standard deviation, minimum and maximum values, frequencies, and percentages. The results showed that the players' dribbling ability was categorized as good, with an average score of 15.43 seconds. Passing ability obtained an average score of 12.37 and was also classified as good. Meanwhile, shooting ability achieved an average score of 8.33 and was categorized as good to moderate. Players aged 12 years demonstrated better technical performance than players aged 10 years, particularly in dribbling speed, passing accuracy, and shooting effectiveness. The findings indicated that the development of basic soccer technical skills was influenced by age, training experience, motor coordination, and the quality of training programs. This study emphasizes the importance of systematic, repetitive, and age-appropriate basic technical training to improve the performance of youth soccer players. The findings may serve as a reference for coaches in designing more effective and structured soccer technical training programs.

Keywords: Soccer, dribbling, passing, shooting, youth players, basic technical skills

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INTRODUCTION

Soccer is one of the sports experiencing rapid development in many countries, including Indonesia. Early-age soccer development is an important stage in producing quality players because, at this phase, children begin to develop motor skills, movement coordination, and an understanding of game techniques. Youth development programs are not only oriented toward match results but also toward developing basic technical skills as the foundation for long-term soccer performance. Research has shown that mastery of basic techniques from an early age influences athlete success in later stages of development (O'Connor et al., 2022; Camata et al., 2025).

Basic technical skills in soccer include dribbling, passing, and shooting. These three skills are the main components of the game because they determine ball possession effectiveness, attack

construction, and finishing ability. Dribbling is used to maintain possession and beat opponents, passing is used to build team cooperation, while shooting is the main factor in scoring goals. Duncan et al. (2024) explained that basic technical ability is closely related to fundamental movement skills in young soccer players. In addition, good technical ability also supports players' decision-making during matches (Iuliano et al., 2023).

In the youth development process, mastery of basic techniques often becomes a challenge because each child's motor abilities develop differently. Some players demonstrate good movement coordination and ball control, while others still struggle to maintain movement accuracy. Age, training experience, coaching quality, and training methods are important factors influencing the development of basic technical skills in young players. Nobari et al. (2021) showed that biological maturation and physical condition have a significant relationship with the technical performance development of youth soccer players.

Another common issue in youth soccer development is the inconsistency of players in performing passing and shooting. Many young players are able to execute basic techniques in simple training situations but experience difficulties under real game pressure. This condition indicates that technical training processes are not yet fully integrated with actual game situations. Praça et al. (2022) explained that the tactical games approach is capable of improving both technical quality and tactical understanding among young soccer players.

In addition, dribbling ability in young players is also influenced by agility, balance, and foot-eye coordination. Players with good movement coordination tend to control the ball more effectively while moving at high speed. Pradnyani et al. (2025) found that agility and foot-eye coordination have a positive relationship with dribbling skills in young soccer players. These findings indicate that the development of basic technical skills needs to be supported by physical conditioning exercises appropriate to children's developmental characteristics.

The use of modern training methods such as small-sided games has also become increasingly common in youth player development. This method provides players with more opportunities for ball touches, decision-making, and game interaction in limited spaces. Clemente et al. (2020) explained that small-sided games effectively improve both technical skills and physical capacity in young soccer players. A game-based training approach is considered more suitable for youth players because it creates an active and enjoyable training environment.

Although many studies have discussed basic soccer technical skills, studies on dribbling, passing, and shooting abilities among youth players still need to be strengthened, particularly in the context of local soccer development. Evaluating basic technical skills is important for determining players' ability levels and for serving as a basis for designing more effective training programs. Objective measurement of technical skills also helps coaches identify players' strengths and weaknesses more specifically (Ali et al., 2023).

This study was conducted to analyze the core soccer skills consisting of dribbling, passing, and shooting among youth players. The findings are expected to provide empirical information regarding players' basic technical abilities and serve as a reference for coaches in designing systematic, directed, and age-appropriate training programs. Furthermore, this study is expected to support the development of more effective and sustainable youth soccer coaching programs.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design. The quantitative approach was used because the research data were obtained in the form of numerical results from measurements of basic soccer technical skills among youth players. Descriptive research aims to describe the levels of dribbling, passing, and shooting abilities without providing experimental treatment to the research subjects. Quantitative descriptive approaches are widely used in sports research to objectively and measurably evaluate athletes' technical abilities (Ali et al., 2023; Duncan et al., 2024). The study was conducted on youth soccer players participating in training programs at soccer schools.

The population in this study consisted of all youth soccer players actively participating in training. The sample consisted of 30 players aged 10–12 years selected using purposive sampling techniques. This technique was used because the sample was selected based on specific criteria, namely players who had actively participated in training for at least six months, were aged 10–12 years, and completed the entire series of research tests. Sample selection was conducted to obtain data relevant to the study objectives regarding the basic technical skills of youth players. Previous research explained that the age group of 10–12 years represents an important phase in the development of motor coordination and mastery of basic soccer techniques (Nobari et al., 2021).

The research instruments consisted of soccer basic technical skill tests including dribbling, passing, and shooting tests. The dribbling test was used to measure players' ability to dribble the ball through obstacles within a certain time measured in seconds. The lower the time obtained, the better the player's dribbling ability. The passing test was used to measure passing accuracy toward a target based on the number of successful passes hitting the target. Furthermore, the shooting test was used to measure shooting accuracy toward the goal based on the number of successful shots reaching the target. The research instruments were developed based on indicators of basic soccer technical skills and referred to the principles of validity and reliability in sports measurement.

Data collection techniques were carried out through direct testing and measurement on the field. Before conducting the tests, all players were given explanations regarding the testing procedures so that each participant understood the stages of the activities properly. Subsequently, the players performed dribbling, passing, and shooting tests according to the established instructions. All test results were recorded as research data for further analysis.

Data analysis techniques in this study used descriptive statistics. The analysis was conducted to obtain mean values, standard deviations, minimum values, maximum values, frequencies, and percentages for each research variable. The results were then classified into very good, good, moderate, and poor categories to describe the level of basic technical skills among youth players more clearly and systematically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study present an overview of the level of basic soccer technical skills among youth players, including dribbling, passing, and shooting. Data were obtained through skill tests conducted on 30 players aged 10–12 years participating in soccer training programs. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive statistics to determine mean values, standard deviations, minimum values, maximum values, frequencies, and percentages for each research variable. The analysis results were used to objectively and systematically describe the level of basic technical skills among youth players and serve as a basis for evaluation in the development and training process.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Dribbling	30	15.43	0.97	14.0	17.1
Passing	30	12.37	2.36	8	17
Shooting	30	8.33	1.70	5	11

Based on the descriptive statistics table, the dribbling skill of youth players had an average time of 15.43 seconds with a standard deviation of 0.97. The minimum value of 14.0 seconds indicates that several players possessed excellent ball control and dribbling speed. Meanwhile, the maximum value of 17.1 seconds indicates that some players still require improvement in movement coordination and ball mastery. In the passing variable, the average score obtained was 12.37. This result indicates that most players already possessed good passing ability in maintaining passing accuracy. The shooting variable had an average score of 8.33 with a standard deviation of 1.70, indicating that players' finishing abilities still varied between individuals.

Table 2. Dribbling Assessment Categories

Interval	Category
< 14.5	Very Good
14.5 – 15.5	Good
15.6 – 16.5	Moderate
> 16.5	Poor

Table 3. Distribution of Dribbling Categories

Kategori	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	8	26.7%
Good	11	36.7%
Moderate	7	23.3%
Poor	4	13.3%

Based on the dribbling category distribution table, most players were in the good category with a percentage of 36.7%. These results indicate that the majority of players possessed sufficiently effective dribbling abilities in controlling direction and movement speed. However, 13.3% of players were still in the poor category, indicating the need for more intensive coordination, agility, and ball control training.

Table 4. Passing Assessment Categories

Interval	Category
15 – 17	Very Good
12 – 14	Good
9 – 11	Moderate
< 9	Poor

Table 5. Distribution of Passing Categories

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	9	30.0%
Good	11	36.7%
Moderate	8	26.7%
Poor	2	6.6%

The passing category distribution results indicate that players' passing abilities were predominantly in the good and very good categories. A total of 30.0% of players were in the very good category, indicating that their passing accuracy and decision-making ability when performing passes had developed well. The percentage in the poor category was only 6.6%, suggesting that overall, the passing ability of youth players was adequate.

Table 6. Shooting Assessment Categories

Interval	Category
10 – 11	Very Good
8 – 9	Good
6 – 7	Moderate
< 6	Poor

Table 7. Distribution of Shooting Categories

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Very Good	8	26.7%
Good	10	33.3%
Moderate	10	33.3%
Poor	2	6.7%

In shooting skills, most players were in the good and moderate categories with percentages of 33.3% each. These findings indicate that players' finishing abilities still require further development, particularly in shooting accuracy and composure when shooting toward the goal. Nevertheless, 26.7% of players were already in the very good category.

The analysis results showed that the basic soccer skills of youth players were generally in the good category. In dribbling skills, most players demonstrated good ball control with an average time of 15.43 seconds. In passing skills, the average score of 12.37 indicated good passing accuracy. Meanwhile, shooting skills obtained an average score of 8.33, indicating that players' finishing abilities were in the good category.

In general, 12-year-old players demonstrated better technical performance than 10-year-old players. This was reflected in faster dribbling times and higher passing and shooting scores. These findings indicate that increasing age and training experience influence the development of basic soccer technical skills among youth players.

The core soccer skills of youth players consisting of dribbling, passing, and shooting were categorized as good. Passing was the skill with the highest average score, while shooting still required improvement through more structured and continuous technical training programs.

The findings of this study indicate that the basic soccer technical skills of youth players were categorized as good in terms of dribbling, passing, and shooting. These findings show that youth players already possess sufficiently developed basic motor abilities to support the implementation of soccer techniques. Basic technical ability serves as the primary foundation in youth player development because it is directly related to game mastery, attack effectiveness, and long-term performance development. Previous studies explained that basic technical skills are important indicators in talent identification and youth athlete development processes (Camata et al., 2025).

In the dribbling variable, the results showed that most players were in the good category with an average time of 15.43 seconds. This indicates that players already possessed good ball control and movement coordination abilities. Dribbling is one of the most important soccer skills because it relates to players' ability to beat opponents, maintain possession, and create attacking opportunities. Iuliano et al. (2023) explained that dribbling effectiveness among youth players is influenced by decision-making ability and the quality of ball control while moving.

The findings also showed that 12-year-old players demonstrated better dribbling performance than 10-year-old players. This was evident from the faster dribbling times among the older age group. These differences were influenced by motor coordination development, training experience, and players' physical maturity. Gråstén et al. (2018) explained that the development of dribbling ability in young soccer players improves gradually with increasing age and continuous training intensity.

The results for the passing variable showed an average score of 12.37, with most players categorized as good. Passing is a primary skill in building team play because it is related to accuracy, decision-making, and communication between players. These findings indicate that youth players were

able to perform passes with a relatively good level of accuracy. Duncan et al. (2024) explained that soccer technical skills, including passing, are influenced by fundamental movement skills and playing experience among young players.

Good passing ability in youth players may also be influenced by the training methods used by coaches during the development process. Small-sided games-based training has proven effective in improving passing ability because it provides players with more ball touches and real game situations. Fahrezi and Bulqini (2025) showed that the combination of small-sided games and speed endurance training significantly improved passing and dribbling skills in soccer players.

In the shooting variable, the results showed an average score of 8.33, with most players categorized as good and moderate. These findings indicate that players' finishing abilities still require improvement. Shooting is a complex skill because it requires movement coordination, leg muscle strength, body balance, and shooting accuracy. Harahap and Hendryanto (2025) also found that shooting ability in youth players tends to be lower than passing ability, requiring more structured and repetitive training.

Differences in the results for each skill indicate that the development of basic soccer techniques is influenced by various factors such as age, training experience, physical condition, coordination, and the quality of development programs. Recent studies have shown that agility, foot-eye coordination, and basic motor abilities are related to dribbling skills in young players. In addition, the quality of measurement instruments also affects the accuracy of evaluating youth players' technical skills. The use of valid and reliable instruments is essential for obtaining objective descriptions of players' technical abilities.

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce motor learning theory, which explains that mastery of basic technical skills develops through repetitive, systematic, and age-appropriate training processes. Youth players require training programs emphasizing movement repetition, variation in technical drills, and game-based approaches to optimize skill development. The development of basic technical skills from an early age is an important factor in shaping soccer performance at higher levels.

Other studies have also explained that game situation-based technical training can improve decision-making skills and game effectiveness among young players. Training methods involving real game situations help players understand when and how to use dribbling, passing, and shooting techniques appropriately during matches. Praça et al. (2022) showed that the tactical games approach positively influences technical abilities and tactical understanding among young soccer players.

In addition to training methods, physical condition also has a significant relationship with basic soccer technical abilities. Players with good agility, balance, coordination, and speed tend to demonstrate more effective dribbling and passing performance. Nobari et al. (2021) explained that the development of soccer technical skills is closely related to physical condition and biological maturation in youth players.

The results of this study also support findings that consistent repetition of shooting practice improves shooting accuracy in young players. The higher the frequency of shooting practice, the better the players' movement coordination and ball direction control. Sánchez-Sánchez et al. (2019) found that target-based shooting training improved accuracy and finishing effectiveness in youth soccer players.

The use of modern training approaches based on small-sided games has also proven effective in improving the basic technical skills of youth players. Small-sided games provide more opportunities for ball touches, rapid decision-making, and active player involvement during training. Clemente et al. (2020) explained that small-sided games are capable of improving both technical skills and physical capacity in young soccer players.

Furthermore, the development of technical abilities among youth players is influenced by coaching quality and the design of training programs implemented during the development process. Coaches capable of providing appropriate technical feedback can help players improve movement coordination and technical efficiency. O'Connor et al. (2022) explained that the quality of coaching instruction has a direct relationship with the development of technical skills in young players.

The findings of this study also indicate that evaluations of basic technical skills need to be conducted periodically using valid and reliable instruments. Objective measurements help coaches identify player development and determine training programs suited to individual player needs. Ali et al. (2023) emphasized that the use of standardized skill tests is essential in monitoring the development of youth athletes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, the core soccer skills of youth players consisting of dribbling, passing, and shooting were categorized as good. Dribbling ability showed that most players already possessed good ball control and movement coordination when moving with the ball. In passing skills, players demonstrated sufficiently effective passing accuracy in supporting team play. Meanwhile, shooting ability still showed variations among players and therefore requires improvement through more structured and repetitive training. The results also showed that 12-year-old players demonstrated better technical performance than 10-year-old players. These differences were evident in dribbling speed, passing accuracy, and shooting effectiveness. These findings indicate that age development, training experience, physical condition, and motor coordination influence the improvement of basic soccer technical skills among youth players. This study emphasizes the importance of systematic basic technical training programs adapted to children's developmental stages and combined with game-based approaches such as small-sided games. Periodic evaluation of basic technical skills is also necessary so that coaches can design more effective training programs according to players' needs. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for coaches, soccer schools, and sports academies in improving the quality of youth soccer development.

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