

The Player Development Jar

Players are like the mayonnaise jar in the “Mayonnaise Jar and Two Cups of Coffee” story. Although seemingly full, many players have several deficiencies or “holes” in their ability caused by improper development.

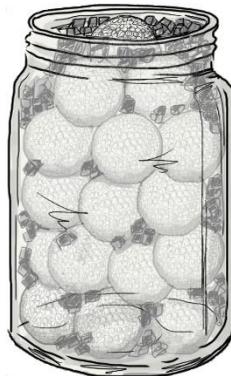
The Story:

A professor stands before his class with an empty mayonnaise jar. He fills it to the top with golf balls and asks the class “Is this jar full?” The class confirms that it is.

Upon hearing their answer, the professor pours a bag of small pebbles into the jar. These pebbles fall into the jar and fill up the holes left by the golf balls all the way to the top. Once again, the professor asks “Is this jar full?” Recognizing that the pebbles filled the rest of the holes, the class responds “Yes.”

The professor then pours sand into the jar. The sand further fills the jar, taking up the tiny holes left by the pebbles. Again he asks “Is this jar full?” Believing that the jar could not possibly fit anything more, the class responds yet again with a resounding “Yes.”

Finally, the professor takes two cups of coffee and pours them into the jar. The coffee flows into the jar filling all the seemingly invisible holes left by the sand.



Players are like mayonnaise jars:

When applying this story to the development of a soccer player, the golf balls are basic, obvious concepts. Meanwhile, the coffee represents the finer points and details within the larger, broader ideas.

Many players are full of golf balls. Some might even have some pebbles or sand in them. Very few, if any, players are full of coffee. Coaches, players, and fans around the world will look at a player full of golf balls and believe that he is “full” or a complete player. But in reality, he has many “holes” or deficiencies.

It takes a long time to brew coffee and pour it into the mayonnaise jar. But if we do it, it will benefit our players in the long run. Do not take the short cut and fill players with golf balls, pebbles, or sand because it is faster. Add coffee to these concepts and ensure that our players do not have holes in them. If we skip steps or jump to the next golf ball in order to get our players to the top of the jar in a certain amount of time, they will be left with holes in them. It is better to take longer and avoid holes than get to the top faster by skipping details.

How full are your players?