



### Identifying Talented Players

It is often recognised that talented players are those who can demonstrate repeatable skills without relying on physical size. This is of even more pertinence in the case of the 14 to 16 year old players we look to engage in the CFC Talent Academy programs. Talent in football can come in a number of forms and any combination of the following attributes can make a promising player;

- Reading the play: Offensively; knowing **where** and **when** to move when your team is in possession or about to take possession. Defensively; covering the player in the most dangerous position or moving to where the ball is most likely to go that will most hurt your team.
- Finding space: Identifying and moving to a part of the ground to command the football in an offensive position.
- Decision making under pressure; finding the best option under time and physical constraints
- Running patterns in ensuring you're not cutting off your teammates space/lead, zonal marking at stoppages, drawing opponents to create space behind you
- Goal sense can be defined as having an excellent understanding of your positioning within the forward 50 and knowing when, and what your capabilities are in shooting for goal.
- Vision - A player with vision has an elite understanding of how the game is unfolding in real time, accompanied by exceptional decision making under pressure.
- Skill efficiency – hitting targets by hand and foot
- Evasive Skills - Navigating the traffic around a contested football and being able to avoid the tackler.
- Clean Hands – one grab player who has the ability to take the ball cleanly and quickly execute precision handballs.
- Athletic ability – any individual or combination of attributes pertaining to their athleticism. Speed, height, lateral movement, strength, endurance, vertical leap, etc. **Considering we are dealing with youths, it is imperative you consider their scope in this area. (parents height and sporting background, the age their siblings physically developed, their opportunity to demonstrate and develop their skill; are all examples of factors that require consideration).**

To simplify it can be useful to identify two key areas;

- Can they **GET** the ball?
- Can they **USE** the ball?

Proficiency in both areas is ideal however a player with an impressive competence in one of the two areas should also be given the opportunity. For example, if a player only gets the ball 8 times in a game but his **USE** of the ball is particularly effective and damaging in the context of the game, then there is something to work with.

## PERFORMANCE/POTENTIAL MATRIX

Another example of the players sought to enter the CFC Talent Academy programs can be demonstrated in a Player Performance/Potential Matrix. Because we are working with a developing product, the potential of the player is of greater importance than the current performance. For example, many players who have the advantage of physical size in a youth competition will fall into the top left hand corner. Alternatively, a tall player who has grown rapidly (his gene pool indicates there is more to come) yet he may have difficulty running and handling the ball due to his sudden development may fall into the bottom right corner of the scale. Likewise with a small player who has limited possessions but makes excellent decisions with the ball may also fall into the bottom right. It is obviously not as clear cut and can in fact be dangerous to pigeon-hole players into one of the nine boxes however the matrix can paint a picture of the significance of **potential** in which players we look to include in our programs.

PERFORMANCE	HIGH PERFORMANCE LOW POTENTIAL	HIGH PERFORMANCE AVERAGE POTENTIAL	HIGH PERFORMANCE HIGH POTENTIAL
	AVERAGE PERFORMANCE LOW POTENTIAL	AVERAGE PERFORMANCE AVERAGE POTENTIAL	AVERAGE PERFORMANCE HIGH POTENTIAL
	POOR PERFORMANCE LOW POTENTIAL	POOR PERFORMANCE AVERAGE POTENTIAL	POOR PERFORMANCE HIGH POTENTIAL
	POTENTIAL		

**When** we are looking at players it must be remembered that Talent Identification is an imperfect science and that we must make the effort to recognise what a player **CAN** do rather than what you may think they **CAN'T**.